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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCYTHIAN-GREEK RELATIONS IN GREEK SOURCES

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ABSTRACT

SCYTHIAN-GREEK RELATIONS IN GREEK SOURCES

The horse tracks of the Scythians, whose homeland was Central Asia, can be traced from the west of the Caspian Sea to the Danube River between the VIII century BC and the II century BC. The Scythians, who spread over a vast geography, turned into an empire over time, although they were initially a little-known nomadic community. Since they dominated a wide geography, they interacted with many civilizations such as Persia, Urartu, Assyria, Greek, Rome and were included in the historical sources of these civilizations. While historians have studied more on the relations of Scythians with eastern civilizations such as Persia, Urartu and Assyria, their relations with western civilizations have remained mysterious. The migration of Scythians to the north of the Black Sea in the VIII century BC marked the beginning of their interaction with western civilizations. Since they were neighbors of the Greeks who started colonization activities in this geography, they were frequently mentioned in Greek sources. It is not a coincidence that the VIII century BC, which is accepted to be the period when the Scythians appeared on the stage of history, coincided with the period in which they were neighbors with the Greeks.

The crossing point of the Greek and Scythian people was the path from the Black Sea ports to the Ural region. The first relations were friendly and trade-oriented; while the animal products of the steppes of the Black Sea, furs, cattle skins, and Acipenser filled the Greek cities, the necessities of civilized life such as fabrics, clothes, wine, Greek ceramics, silver and bronze ornaments adorned the Scythian cities. The relations that started with trade also brought cultural interaction. Scythian style of dressing became widespread among the Greeks, Scythian Archery units were established in Athens under the leadership of the Scythian philosopher Anacharsis, and Scythian masters and slaves, who were very successful in the art of goldsmithing, were found in Hellenic workshops. Thus, a common understanding of art began to develop between the two civilizations.

Keywords: Black Sea, Friendly, Greek, Neighbors, Scythian, The Relations

ÖZET

GREK KAYNAKLARINDA İSKİT-GREK İLİŞKİLERİ

Ana yurtları İç Asya olan İskitlerin at izleri, M.Ö. VIII. yüzyıl ile M.Ö. II. yüzyıl arasında Hazar Denizi'nin batısından Tuna nehrine kadar sürebilmektedir. Geniş bir coğrafyaya yayılan İskitler, başlangıçta adı az duyulan göçebe topluluk iken zamanla imparatorluğa dönüşmüşlerdir. Geniş coğrafyaya hakim olduklarından dolayı Pers, Urartu, Asur, Grek, Roma gibi pek çok uygarlıkla etkileşimde bulunmuşlar ve bu uygarlıkların tarihi kaynaklarında yer almışlardır. Tarihçiler, İskitlerin Pers, Urartu, Asur gibi doğu uygarlıkları ile olan ilişkileri üzerine daha fazla çalışma yaparken batı uygarlıkları ile olan ilişkileri daha gizemli kalmıştır. İskitlerin M.Ö. VIII. yüzyılda Karadeniz'in kuzeyine göç etmeleri, batı uygarlığı ile etkileşimin başlangıcı olmuştur. Bu coğrafyada kolonizasyon faaliyetlerine başlayan Grekler ile komşu olmaları sebebiyle Grek kaynaklarında sık yer almışlardır. İskitlerin tarih sahnesine çıktıkları kabul edilen M.Ö. VIII. yüzyılın Grekler ile komşu oldukları döneme denk gelmesi tesadüf değildir.

Grek ve İskit halkının kesişme noktası, Karadeniz limanlarından Ural civarına kadar uzanmakta olan yoldur. İlk ilişkiler dostane ve ticari odaklı başlamış; Karadeniz steplerinin hayvansal ürünleri, kürkleri, sığır derisi, mersin balığı Yunan şehirlerini doldururken kumaş, elbise, şarap, Yunan seramikleri, gümüş, bronz süs eşyaları gibi medeni hayatın gereklilikleri olan bu eşyalar ise İskit şehirlerini süslemiştir. Ticari başlayan ilişkiler, kültürel etkileşimi de beraberinde getirmiştir. Grekler arasında İskit tarzı giyinme yaygınlaşmış, Atina'da İskit filozof Anacharsis önderliğinde İskit okçu birlikleri kurulmuş ve altın işleme sanatında oldukça başarılı İskit ustalar ve köleler, Helen atölyelerinde bulunmuştur. Böylece iki uygarlık arasında ortak bir sanat anlayışı gelişmeye başlamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arkadaşça, Grek, İlişkiler, İskitler, Karadeniz, Komşular

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ÖZET	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (IF REQUIRED)	viii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. SCYTHIANS	4
2.1. Scythians Appearance on the Stage of History	4
2.2. The Origin of the Scythians.....	5
2.3. Social Structure of the Scythians.....	7
2.4. Lifestyle and Traditions of the Scythians	10
2.5. Religion and Belief of the Scythians	14
2.6. Headings	16
3. DOMINANT FORCES IN THE NORTHERN BLACK SEA.....	20
4. GREEKS.....	24
4.1. Greek History in Brief	24
4.2. Greek Colonization Actions and Causes	27
4.3. Scythians in Greek Sources	30
5. SCYTHIAN- GREEK RELATIONS	34
5.1. Scythian-Greek Political Relations.....	35
5.2. Scythian-Greek Trade Relations.....	41
5.3. Scythian-Greek Cultural Relations	43
6. THE SCYTHIANS IN GREEK SAGAS AND MYTHOLOGY	45
6.1. Amazons	45
6.2. Adventures of The Argonauts.....	48
6.2.1. Diodorus Siculus Translation.....	48
7. STORIES OF SCYTHIANS AND GREEK PHILOSOPHERS	50

7.1. Lucian, Toxaris Or Friendship Translation	50
7.2. Lucian, The Scythian or the Consul Translation	59
7.3. Clement Of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Greeks Translation	60
8. THE SCYTHIANS FROM THE EYES OF GREEK WRITERS	62
8.1. Diodorus Siculus, The Library of History Translation.....	62
8.2. Strabo, Geography Translation.....	64
8.3. Hippocrates, Airs Waters Places Translation	68
8.4. Herodotus, The Persian Wars Translation.....	70
8.5. Procopius, History of the Wars Translation	76
PRIMARY REFERENCES	83
MODERN REFERENCES	84

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (IF REQUIRED)

Ibid	The work cited
B.C	Before Christ
p.	Page
Tr.	Translated by
Vol.	Volume



1. INTRODUCTION

The Scythian society had different lifestyles due to their domination of a wide geography from the Great Wall of China to the Danube. However, they left important traces in history with the common identity they created, influenced many societies they encountered and were influenced by many societies. Scythian society has been included in the historical sources of many civilizations such as China, Assyria, Persia and Urartians. In the sources written in Assyrian language, their name is given as Ashquzay, Asquzay; in the Babylonian inscriptions, it is given as Isquzay Isquzaca, Isquza country. As the Assyrians settled in the north of Mesopotamia, they had the opportunity to meet many tribes in Anatolia, Caucasus and Iran. One of these tribes was the Scythians. "Gimirrai" and "Asguzai" are mentioned in a document belonging to the reign of Esarhaddon (680-668 BC), one of the Assyrian emperors and conquerors of Egypt. Of these tribes mentioned in the cuneiform texts, it is accepted that the "Gimirrai" were Cimmerians and the "Asguzai" were Scythians.¹ It is seen that this name is called "Skuyhai" in Greek texts. The name "Skuyhai" given by the Greeks is known as the general name of all Scythians. In the VII - VI centuries BC, the Black Sea became a frequent destination for Greek travelers, philosophers and traders. Greek philosophers, who were searching for the meaning of life, became increasingly interested in the Scythians, who had a very different and simple lifestyle from their own, and the most extensive information about the Scythians was given to us by Greek writers and philosophers.

During the interaction process that lasted from the VIII century BC to the II century BC, they left important traces on each other and caused many transformations. For example, the prevalence of trade and seafaring in Greek society not only increased wealth but also caused problems to root such as corruption, greed, deceitfulness, indulgence in pleasure and luxury.

Scythian society began to trade with the Greeks and learn how to trade, and with increasing wealth, moral corruption also began.² With trade and maritime activities,

¹ İlhami Durmuş, Scythians (Sakas), Turkish Culture Research Institute Publications, Ankara, 1993, pp. 62-63.

² Strabo, Geography, Translated by Horace Lenard Jones, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, p. 199.

Scythian society became more ambitious, luxurious and comfortable. Especially in the cities of Olbia and Bospour, where the interaction was the most intense, it was possible to encounter Hellenized Scythians as well as Scythian-influenced Greeks more frequently.³

How the Greek and Scythian societies transformed each other in the process of intense interaction between them, and the effects of this process on the historical and cultural development of the two societies are analyzed in great detail.

The relations between the Scythians, who migrated to the north of the Black Sea as a result of Chinese pressure in the VIII century BC, and their neighbors, the Greeks, form the key point of our study. We will examine the processes of Greek-Scythian relations, which initially started within the framework of friendly and commercial relations, by utilizing the perspectives of Greek writers and Greek mythology and legends.

The process of interaction started with the migration of Scythians to the north of the Black Sea in the XVIII century BC and the Greeks' colonization of this region in the XVII century BC. The Greeks established their first colonies mostly in Crete, the Eastern Mediterranean and Greece during the Cretan civilization (2700-1450 BC). Later, the Cretan civilization was replaced by the Mycenaean civilization, which was built on top of it. The great wave of migration in Greece during the Mycenaean civilization in 1200 BC resulted in the establishment of Greek cities in different regions. The direction of this migration wave was towards the Black Sea, which was full of dangers and uncertainty. The Mycenaean relations with the Black Sea region, which started with the story of the discovery of the Golden Fleece, turned into a developed trade network with the Ionians. As trade relations between Greek and Scythian society intensified, both cultures took measures to protect their own identities. The Greeks used the word barbarian to describe those who did not belong to them, while the Scythians severely punished those who adopted an element of Hellenic culture, even if they were kings. However, in time, it was inevitable that the cultures came closer to each other. In our study, we will examine the development processes of Greek-Scythian relations by touching upon the views of Greek writers, Greek mythologies and

³ B. N. Grakov, *Scythians*, Translated by Ahsen Batur, Istanbul: Selenge Publications, 2020, p. 29.

legends such as the Argonauts and Amazons, and the stories of philosophers such as Anacharsis and Toxsaris who traveled between two societies.



2. SCYTHIANS

2.1. Scythians Appearance on the Stage of History

The Scythians, whose homeland was Central Asia, rode from the west of the Caspian Sea to the Danube River between the VIII century BC and the II century BC and expanded their territories.⁴ We have learned that one of the important reasons that forced the Scythians to migrate from the geography they lived in from the Chinese sources. As a result of the campaign organized by the Chinese Emperor Suan (827-782 B.C.), the Hiung-nus were forced to withdraw their borders to the west of China; with this, a wave of migration towards the west began, dislocating other tribes in the west. It was this migration wave that pushed the Scythians to the north of the Black Sea in the VIII century BC. The reasons for the migration were mentioned by Greek historians. Herodotus mentioned that when the Scythians, nomads of Asian origin, were worn out by the Massagets, they crossed the Aras (Araxes) River and moved towards the Cimmerian homeland. He mentioned that the Cimmerians were divided into two against this attack, and that the princes preferred to stay and defend their lands while the people preferred to leave their lands. However, all of the princes lost their lives as a result of their struggle with the Scythians and were buried on the banks of the Tyras (Dniester) River. The Scythians followed the fleeing Cimmerians through the Caucasus and put an end to the Median domination. The Scythians displaced the Cimmerians north of the Black Sea and followed the Cimmerians to Foreland Asia. The name of the Scythians, who interacted with many nations, is mentioned for the first time in the inscriptions of Esarhaddon of Assyria (669-633 BC) in Assyrian sources.

In Assyrian sources their name is given as Ashquzay, Asquzay; in Babylonian inscriptions as Isquzay, Isquzaca, Isquza country. Assyrians had the opportunity to meet many tribes in Anatolia, Caucasus and Iran. One of these tribes was the Scythians. "Gimirrai" and "Asguzai" are mentioned in a document belonging to the reign of Esarhaddon (680-668 BC), one of the Assyrian emperors and conquerors of Egypt. Among these tribes mentioned in cuneiform texts, it is accepted that the "Gimirrai" were Cimmerians and the "Asguzai"

⁴ İlhami Durmuş, Sakas, İstanbul: Kaynak Publications, 2007, p. 8.

were Scythians.⁵ In Greek sources this name is given as "Skuyhai".⁶ It is also mentioned in Persian sources that the Scythians were called as "Saka".⁷ During the Hellenistic (330-30 BC) and Roman (27 BC - 476 AD) periods, the word "Scythian" became a geographical term for all northeastern barbarians.⁸ As a natural consequence of their vast geographical spread, the Scythians were called by different names by nations with different traditions and languages. This raises the question of how one can be sure that all these names describe the same society. Ancient sources have been the most enlightening in this regard. Herodotus mentioned that the Persians called the Scythians "Saka". In addition, he stated that the name Scythian in Greek sources corresponds to the word Ashguzai in Assyrian sources, while the word Sai in Chinese sources corresponds to the Persian word Saka.

2.2. The Origin of the Scythians

The origin of the Scythians has been the subject of much debate among historians. The best summary of this situation is Minns' statement that "No ethnographical issue has been debated as much as the question of the Scythians' ancestry." Historians such as Zeus, Müllenhoff, Tomaschek, Fressel and Wilser argued that the Scythians were of Iranian origin. Their basis was the similarity of the Scythian language with Eastern Iranian languages and the similarity of ancient Iranian beliefs with the characteristic structure of Scythian beliefs. Among the 20th century historians, Albert Herrmann and Kretschmer argued that the main mass of the Scythians was composed of Iranians, that there was cultural affinity between Iran and Scythia, and that the beliefs and artistic structure were similar. Junge argued that the Scythians were descended from Indo-Europeans, that they were related to the Persians, and that they may have fused with Turkish communities in the Eurasian geography where migration movements were intense. I.E. Zabelin, one of the proponents of the Slavic thesis, was based on the similarity between the paintings on Scythian vases and Russian clothes.

⁵ İlhami Durmuş, Ibid., p. 62-63.

⁶ Solmaz M. Kaşıkay, "Scythian Intervention in the Near East and Azerbaijan", Elmi Eserler, C. 19, Baku, 2007, p. 5.

⁷ Ekrem Memiş, History of the Scythians, Konya, 1987, p. 3.

⁸ M. Taner Tarhan, "Religious Beliefs and Customs of Scythians", İUFL, İstanbul, 1969, p. 147.

The Slavic thesis is considered a weak thesis in the scientific world because of the lack of written and archaeological sources to support it.⁹

Niebuhr and Minns, who are among the historians who argue that they belonged to the Ural-Altaic race, race due to their Central Asian origin, their nomadic lifestyle and the similarity of their customs and traditions, and therefore they could be of the Tatar-Mongol-Turkic race. European historians used the term Scythians when referring to the Huns. For instance, Priskus, who was a Byzantine envoy to Attila the Hun in V. century, used the terms "Scythian customs" and "Scythian language" instead of "Hun customs" and "Hun language" in his writings, which supports the Ural-Altaic thesis. Cuneiform expert Mordtmann agreed with the Ural-Altaic thesis after analyzing cuneiform texts. Philologist Kuun's statement "The abundance of documents now clearly shows that the collective name of the Scythians includes different Turkic lineages." shows that he also defends the Ural-Altaic thesis. Minns defended the Ural-Altaic thesis in his study based on written and archaeological sources. The most important points of reference for the proponents of the Ural-Altaic thesis were the descriptions of the ancient writers Herodotus and Hippocrates. They pointed out that Scythian customs, lifestyles and morals were more similar to those of the Huns than to Iranian customs and considered the Scythians as the ancestors of the Huns. For example, Procopius mentioned that the area from the Caucasus to the Caspian gates was inhabited by Huns called Alans and Sabiri, and that the Huns who held the area up to the Don River were formerly called Cimmerians. This statement of Procopius supports the Ural-Altai thesis.

Ancient authors used the term Scythian in two different senses. In the first sense, it was used for all nomadic and semi-nomadic people with similar lifestyles due to the geographical conditions of the Eurasian steppes within a broad cultural scope. In the second sense, it is used to refer to a group of people with different lifestyles, known by several different names, spread along the Black Sea from the Lower Danube to the Lower Don River and from there to the forested Eastern Eurasian steppes. It does not describe a single ethnic group. Eurasia is a region of intense migration and nomadic societies. The people living here mixed with each other over time and shared a similar lifestyle. Therefore, it is possible that Scythians may have contained more than one society and race.

⁹İlhami Durmuş, Ibid., p. 9.

2.3. Social Structure of the Scythians

Scythian society had different lifestyles due to the different regions they lived in. The Greek writer Ephoros mentioned that the Sauromatian or Scythian communities did not have the same lifestyle, some did not eat any living creatures while others ate human flesh. We learned from the ancient writers that some of them lived in the mountains, some in the swamps formed by rivers, some in the lowlands, therefore they had different lifestyles.¹⁰ For instance, those living on islands rely on wild fruits, while those living in swamps rely on fish as their main source of food. Those living in the mountains lived on the milk and meat of their sheep, while those living in the lowlands practiced agriculture. In addition, hunting was practiced among the Scythians; those living in the swamps hunted boar and deer, while those living in the lowlands hunted wild donkeys and roe deer. Donkey breeding is very rare among Scythians due to their sensitivity to cold. At the same time, kolos, an animal between deer and ram, is among the animals they hunt.¹¹

Herodotus, in his *Historia*, mentions Scythian communities with different lifestyles, as well as neighboring communities that were confused with them due to their geographical proximity and the similarity of their lifestyles to the Scythians. For instance, Herodotus mentions that the Calappidae, known as the Scythian Greeks, were the first inhabitants of the northern harbor of Borysthenes in the middle of the Scythian coast, and that they were the community that interacts most with the Greeks.¹² He mentioned that beyond them was a tribe called Alazones, whose lifestyle was similar to that of the Scythians. They cultivate the land and grow corn, onions, garlic and lentils. The people living above Alazones are farmer Scythians who cultivate the land to sell it. To the east of the farmer Scythians, he mentioned that there were nomadic Scythians who did not cultivate or plow. He mentioned that nomadic Scythians lived fourteen days away from the Gerrus River, while the Royal Scythians lived across the Gerrus River. The territory of the Royal Scythians extended south to the country of Tour and east to the Cliffs Harbor on Lake Maeotian. Herodotus stated that the Royal Scythians regarded all other Scythians as their slaves. To the north of the Royal Scythians

¹⁰ Strabo, *Ibid.*, p.197.

¹¹ Strabo, *Ibid.*, p.199.

¹² Herodotus, *Ibid.*, p.257.

lived the Black Cloaks, who were not of Scythian lineage.¹³ The Black Cloaks get their name from the fact that they wear black. They follow Scythian customs. Above the Black Cloaks lies a swamp.¹⁴ Across the Tanais River, he mentioned that it no longer belonged to Scythia and that the Sauromatae people lived there. Above them live the Budini, and he mentioned that the land of the Budini is full of countless trees. The Budini have a multi-ethnic structure. There are Greek statues, altars and temples built in Greek style in their country. The Geloni and the Budini, the people who live here, have very different lifestyles. Geloni's are Greek and speak half Greek and half Scythian. The Greeks called the land of the Budini "Geloni", a land of dense trees and reeds, with many swampy lakes, otters and beavers, as well as black-faced creatures whose testicles are used by humans to cure uterine diseases.¹⁵ However, it was not accepted as an accurate statement because it also included nomadic Scythians. Unlike the Gelonis, who practiced agriculture and had gardens, the Budini had a migratory lifestyle.¹⁶ Although they existed in Budini as two different nations with different lifestyles, the cultural rapprochement between the Gelonites, who were of Greek origin, and the Budini, who were Scythians, is an undeniable fact. In the north of Budini there are the Thyssagetae people, and it is mentioned that in the land of the Thyssagetae people there are plenty of thick trees and every man raises horses and dogs.¹⁷ Above them were the Scythians who rebelled against the Royal Scythians and settled here. Herodotus described these Scythians as people who lived at the skirts of high mountains, had long beards, pointed noses, wore general Scythian clothes, spoke their own language, and were bald from birth. He mentioned that they sat and even lived under trees, and that the tree in which they lived was called Pontus. It was stated that these Scythians were not mistreated by anyone because they were considered sacred. Since they were respected among the neighbors, it was stated that they undertook the role of arbitrator in the conflicts that arose.¹⁸ Located at the end of the Scythian country's trade route to the northeast, the Issedones were a Central Asian tribe described by Herodotus as similar to the Scythians. According to the customs of the Issedones,

¹³ Herodotus Ibid., IV, p. 219.

¹⁴ Herodotus Ibid., IV, p. 221.

¹⁵ Herodotus Ibid., IV, p. 308-309.

¹⁶ Herodotus Ibid., IV, p. 308-309.

¹⁷ Herodotus Ibid., IV, p. 221.

¹⁸ Herodotus Ibid., IV, p. 223.

when a person's father dies, his relatives bring animals from their herds and slaughter them. The meat of the dead father is also slaughtered, added to other meat, cooked and eaten.¹⁹ The head was cleaned and preserved, and sacrifices were offered to the dead father every year. Strabo also mentioned the same custom. He even described that the best way to die was to mix the deceased's flesh with beef and eat it, and that those who died of disease were considered cursed. Beyond them are the Arimaspians, described as one-eyed, the Griffons, known as the golden guardians, and the Hyperboreans, whose land reaches the sea.²⁰ Apart from these tribes, the Arimaspians, who were usually at war with their neighbors, were expelled from Issedones. Then the Cimmerians were driven out of their country by the Scythians. The Neuris, on the other hand, had to leave their country because it was infested with snakes. There are rumors about the Neuris that they turn into wolves once a year. The Cannibals are known to be the most ferocious and lawless.²¹ Information about further north is only hearsay. Strabo, in his *Geographika*, explained the reasons for the lack of clear information about further north of the Euxine coast. According to Strabo, the Roxolanians (Scythians and Sarmatians) lived beyond the Dniaper.²² Beyond Lake Maeotian lived the eastern Scythians, also known as the Massagetians. Strabo described the Axine coast through the eyes of the poet Homer. Among Homer's information, the Mysi tribe associated with Asia occupies an important place. Homer refers to the Mysi people, who are likely to be Scythian and Sarmatian people, inhabitants of Vagon, as Hippemolgi, Galaktophagi and Abii.²³ According to Strabo, the reason why Homer did not mention the Scythians when speaking of the Axine coasts, but called these people Galaktophagi, Hippemolgi or Abii, was that ancient writers had heard that the Axine tribes had a custom of sacrificing foreigners, so they did not make sea voyages and were unaware of distant lands.²⁴

¹⁹ Herodotus *Ibid.*, IV, p. 221.

²⁰ Herodotus *Ibid.*, IV, p. 213.

²¹ Herodotus, *Ibid.*, IV, p. 215.

²² Strabo II, *Ibid.*, p. 441.

²³ Strabo VII, *Ibid.*, p. 188-189.

²⁴ Strabo VII, *Ibid.*, p. 188-189.

2.4. Lifestyle and Traditions of the Scythians

Although the Scythian society, which dominated a wide geography from the Great Wall of China to the Danube, had different lifestyles, they had common values and traditions that brought them closer to each other. We will examine the Scythian lifestyle in the light of the information provided by Greek writers.

Hippocrates mentioned that the flow of life was also fast in the Scythian geography, where the rivers flowed thickly, and that the Scythians lived in four-wheeled wagons, the larger ones with six wheels, covered with felt and pulled by two or three oxen.²⁵ He mentioned that women lived in wagons and men on horseback. It was emphasized that the Scythians had a lifestyle of moving to new grasslands with their flocks of sheep and goats following behind them when the pastures ran out.²⁶ In Scythians, who led a nomadic lifestyle, the washing process takes place as follows: Three poles are set up and covered with a straw sheet, then a pit is dug and hot stones are thrown into it, hemp, which grows in the Scythian geography and is indistinguishably similar to flax, is applied under the straw and a steam that cannot be seen in Greek steam baths emerges.²⁷ Herodotus mentioned that the Scythians did not bathe with water, but howled with joy in steam baths. Women applied ointment on the second day after the steam bath to make their skin shine. Their clothes consisted of boots, pants, kaftans and a unique headdress.²⁸ Herodotus mentioned that the main food sources were boiled meat, mare's milk and hippakē, a cheese made from mare's milk.

Homer described the Scythian communities, whom he called Hippemalgi and Gacheeselactophagi, as a community that drank mare's milk and made cheese from mare's milk, rode horses, knew nothing about trade and product storage, and mentioned that they lived in justice. Homer called them the proud Hippemalgians. He described the Scythians' way of life, which did not waste time with contracts, did not spend their time chasing money,

²⁵ Hippocrates, *Hippocrates Of Cos Airs Water Places IV*, (Translated by Poul Potter), Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, p. 124-125.

²⁶ Hippocrates, *Ibid.*, IV, p. 124-125.

²⁷ Herodotus IV, *Ibid.*, p. 273.

²⁸ Gülçin Çandarlıoğlu, *Pre-Islamic Turkish History and Culture*, Istanbul, Turkish World Research Foundation, 2013, p. 17.

and shared everything except swords and cups, as the most righteous and free way of living.²⁹

The Greek historian Ephoros mentioned that the Scythians' lack of the concept of property and greed for gain, and their lack of attachment to a particular place made them truly free.³⁰ In later periods, their trade, like their neighbors Greeks, led to a change in their lifestyle. The biggest change was experienced by the Royal Scythians. As they engaged in trade, the ambition to win increased and the desire to dominate over different nations began.

Choerilus, in his work *The Crossing Of The Pontoon Bridge*, referred to the Scythians as sheep breeders and wheat growers in Asia. From this, we understand that Scythians lived a sedentary life for a certain period despite their nomadic lifestyle. In addition, Choerilus' use of the expression "They were the colonizers of nomads"³¹ for the Scythians shows us that as they were engaged in trade, they established dominance over different nations and benefited from the resources of the nations they ruled.

Ephoros also mentioned the inventions of the Scythians that influenced other nations and especially described the Scythian philosopher Anacharsis, who went to the Greek lands, as one of the seven wise men of the world with high prudence. Ephoros mentions that Anacharsis was the inventor of the shovel, the two-winged hoe and the potter's wheel, underlining the Scythians' contributions to daily life and their creative and innovative aspects.³²

Strabo mentioned that the foundation of the Scythian family was based on monogamous marriage. However, he stated that the spouses could have sex with different people, on condition that it was not hidden, and that a Scythian man hung his horse sheath on the wagon of the woman he was going to be with.³³

Diodorus described Scythian women as warriors who, like men, fought fearlessly and were trained for battle.³⁴ Like other writers, Diodorus of Sicily concluded that the Amazons

²⁹ Strabo VII, Ibid, s. 188-189.

³⁰ Strabo VII, Ibid, s. 204-205.

³¹ Strabo VII, Ibid, s. 206-207.

³² Strabo VII, Ibid, p. 206-207.

³³ Strabo VII, Ibid, p. 206-207.

³⁴ Diodorus Siculus, *Library The History II*, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, p.30-31.

were Scythian women. He emphasized the power of the Amazons by referring to the Scythian queen Tomris, who led the Amazon army, defeating the powerful Persian army and crucifying their king Cyrus.³⁵

The information given by Hippocrates about the lifestyle of Scythian women is as follows: Women fought against the enemy on horseback and threw javelins in battles during their youth, and they could not marry until they had killed three enemies. From this, we can conclude that Scythian women were as active as men in wars.³⁶ According to Hippocrates, Scythian women's breasts were cauterized by their mothers when they were still infants with a bronze tool specially made for this purpose; thus, the breast was prevented from growing and all the power and volume was transferred to the right shoulder.³⁷ Hippocrates mentioned that Scythian women, who ran from voyage to voyage until they got married, transitioned to a more stationary life after marriage and did not participate in wars unless they had to. Hippocrates mentioned that Scythian women had a saggy and soft physique after marriage, that their uterus did not absorb the seeds due to their obesity and that they had infertility problems, and emphasized that this was one of the reasons why some of the Scythian men married Greek women.³⁸ According to the information given by Hippocrates, the lifestyle of Scythian women before marriage and after marriage is quite different. Hippocrates also has interesting findings about Scythian men. He mentioned that Scythian men suffered from infertility due to being on horseback all the time, and for this reason, Scythian men became feminized over time, behaved like women and spoke like women.³⁹ He mentioned that Scythian men accepted this situation because they thought that they were punished by God for the sins they committed. Hippocrates, on the other hand, attributed the cause of this condition to the swelling in their joints and hips due to their constant riding of horses, and these swellings caused wounds and limpness. He mentioned that the Scythians cut the veins behind their ears as a solution to their illnesses, and when the flowing blood began to stop, they fell asleep with the faintness that came over them, and when they woke up, their wounds were gone.⁴⁰ According to Hippocrates, this practice heals wounds but also causes infertility

³⁵ Diodorus Siculus, *Ibid*, p.30-31.

³⁶ Hippocrates, *Ibid.*, IV, p.122-123.

³⁷ Hippocrates, *Ibid.*, IV, p.122-123.

³⁸ Hippocrates, *Ibid.*, IV, s.130-131.

³⁹ Hippocrates, *Ibid.*, IV, s.122-123.

⁴⁰ Hippocrates, *Ibid.*, IV, s.122-123.

and destroys the seeds. When men could not have intercourse with women, they attributed this to sin and thought that they had lost their masculinity, and began to dress and behave like women. According to Hippocrates, this affliction was common among the upper class Scythians, and if it were of divine origin, it would be common among the poor. For, he stated that it was the upper class Scythians who sacrificed and offered gifts to the gods.⁴¹ Hippocrates drew a very different profile from the Scythian man described in many Greek sources. Because Scythian men were described as warriors who lived on horseback due to their lifestyle, were accustomed to difficult conditions and were prepared for attacks at any moment. The only god they worshipped was Ares, which emphasizes their warrior characteristics.

Strabo mentioned that the Scythians gained superiority over their opponents in war with their control over the horse and the way they rode. Castrating horses in order to manage them more easily is a tradition of Scythian people⁴² Scythian horses, although small, are extremely fast. Some of the horses found in Pazyryk graves are two or three years old, short Mongolian horses.⁴³ Every Pazyryk burial contains at least one horse of the Ferghana breed, known for its speed, despite its similarity to horses from the entire Scythian country. Ferghana horses were also a favorite of Chinese emperors.⁴⁴ In addition, the Scythians' use of saddles was effective in gaining superiority over the Greeks and Romans who did not use saddles.⁴⁵ The bows and arrows they used in battle were made of brass, while their headbands and belts were made of gold. This was because iron and silver were scarce in the homeland, while gold and brass were abundant.⁴⁶

Herodotus mentioned about Scythian war traditions that they took the heads of the enemy they killed in the war to the king and received loot at the same proportion. He mentioned that they tied the skull of the enemy to the bridle of their horse and they were

⁴¹ Hippocrates, *Ibid.*, IV, p. 131-132.

⁴² Strabo, *Ibid.*, VII, p. 248-249.

⁴³ V.O. Vitt, "Loshadi Pazirskikh Kurgaov", Sayı 16, 1952, p. 163.

⁴⁴ P. Yetts, "The Horse as a Factor in Early Chinese History" *ESA*, Issue XX, p. 21.

⁴⁵ Ekrem Memiş, *History of the Scythians*, Ankara: Altınpost Publications, 2012, p. 56.

Strabo, *Ibid.*, VII, p. 248-249.

⁴⁶

honored with this. He also stated that it was an important Scythian tradition that young girls could not marry without killing an enemy. Herodotus stated that Scythians used the skin of the enemy they killed as a cover for their arrows, since human skin was the brightest and thickest skin. He mentioned that it was a source of honor and pride for them to treat the guests with the skulls of the enemies they had killed.⁴⁷ Herodotus stated that the Scythians were described by Homer as the most fair and simple living society, but he also emphasized that they had a savage side.

During the war, troops from different parts of the Scythian country, together with their officers, attended the feast given by their king, and whoever killed an enemy in the presence of the king had the right to keep the skull of their enemy.⁴⁸ The main part of the Scythian army consisted of cavalry. Their control over the horse and use of saddles in battles gave them an advantage over western cavalry troops.⁴⁹ Iron stirrups were not found in Scythian graves, while Western tribes started to use them after the arrival of the Avars in the VI century A.D. Frankish cavalry units started to use them.⁵⁰ Since the Scythians had no place to defend except the graves of their ancestors, their tactics of warfare were hit and run, or guerrilla tactics, instead of square battles. One of the best examples of this war tactic is the Scythian-Persian wars. The Persian army, which was large and powerful, was helpless because they were unable to sight the Scythian army to fight against and because of the unpredictable Scythian arrows that could come from anywhere and at any time.

2.5. Religion and Belief of the Scythians

We will assess the beliefs that made the Scythians resistant to life in the light of the information provided by Herodotus. Scythian religious beliefs are similar to their neighbors, the Greeks. They worshiped Hestia, Zeus, Apollo, Aphrodite, Heracles and Ares, known as the Greek gods. The names of the Greek gods worshiped by the Scythians have Scythian equivalents. For example, Hestia is Tahiti in Scythian. Zeus Papaeus, Earth Api, Apollo Goetosyrus, Celestial Aphrodite, Argimpasha and Poseidon⁵¹. Although they worshiped all

⁴⁷ Herodotus Ibid., IV, p.263.

⁴⁸ Ekrem Memiş, Ibid, p. 55.

⁴⁹ Ekrem Memiş, Ibid, p. 56.

⁵⁰ George Vernadsky-Michael Karpovich, *Ancient Russia*, New Haven, 1943, p. 68-69.

⁵¹ Herodotus, Ibid, IV, p. 256-257.

of these gods, they built temples and statues only for Ares and offered sacrifices to him. The Scythians being warriors had a great influence in this matter. The temple they built for Ares is present in every region of their states.⁵² It consists of a triple stack of long rods with a four-sided surface joined at the top. Every year a new load is added to this sacred pile, and on top of the sacred pile is placed an iron machete with the image of Ares.

According to Herodotus, Scythians also practiced sacrificial rituals. In addition to animal sacrifices, one out of every hundred people captured in war was sacrificed to Ares. When sacrificing an animal, the animal was tied by its forelegs with a rope and let down; while the animal was falling down, they cried out to the god they offered sacrifice animal was falling down, they cried out to the god they offered sacrifice to and strangled the victim by throwing a loop around its neck; if there is a cauldron, they cooked the meat by lighting a fire in the cauldron; if not, they cooked it by stuffing it into the stomach of the animal.⁵³ The rituals for sacrificing enemies were different. A man's throat was cut on a vessel with wine poured over his head, and then the blood was carried onto the pile and poured onto the machete with the figure of Ares. They cut off the slain man's right hand and arm and threw them into the air. The Scythians did not raise pigs, nor did they offer pig sacrifices.⁵⁴

Prophecy and fortune-telling were quite common among Scythians. According to the Scythians, those who gave information about the future by laying sticks obtained from willow on the ground were prophets. However, false prophets, that is, those who could not prophesy correctly, were severely punished. A common example of this situation in Scythia was that whenever the Scythian king fell ill, the prophets were summoned; because in Scythians, the greatest oath is sworn on the king's heart, and if the person who swears the oath is dishonest, the king would get affected and fall ill. The prophets were therefore punished if they could not identify the person who had taken the oath.⁵⁵

Scythian burial rituals, especially when a king died, were as follows: The body of the dead king was covered with wax, the abdomen was cleaned and filled with parsley, anise seeds and swamp plants, and then the abdomen was sewn back together. All the tribes would

⁵² Herodotus, *Ibid*, IV, p. 258-259.

⁵³ Herodotus, *Ibid*, IV, p. 258-259.

⁵⁴ Herodotus, *Ibid*, IV, p. 260-261.

⁵⁵ Herodotus, *Ibid*, IV, p. 264-265.

take turns to take the king's body to the country of Gerrhi, where the tombs of the kings are located and the farthest city from the king's rule.⁵⁶ The tomb was dug in four corners, and after the dead was laid in the grave, spears were planted on both sides and lined with wood. But the king was not alone in the tomb; one of the king's handmaidens, his cook, his Haki, his aide, his messenger and his horses were buried with the king, as well as fruits and golden cups.⁵⁷ The tomb is a replica of the tent in which the deceased lived during their time of life.⁵⁸ Relatives of the deceased would shave their hair, tear their noses and pierce their left hands with an arrow to show that they were in sorrow. Based on the information given by Herodotus, the fact that the king was mummified and buried together with his belongings and the people who served him shows that there was a belief of afterlife. In addition, the mummification technique was effective in the development of medicine in Scythians just like in Egypt. When an ordinary Scythian died, he was carried by his relatives and close friends for forty days and then buried. After the funeral, it was customary to purify themselves by washing their heads and anointing themselves.

2.6. Headings

The accuracy of the information we have about the Scythian civilization depends on the knowledge that the geographers and ancient writers of that period (VIII BC-II century BC) had about them. Strobo, one of our most important sources on this subject, focused on the sea routes that held the pulse of the trade in order to understand the world of his time. According to the information provided by Strobo, the sea route used for trade starts from Alexandria, proceeds in the direction of the Nile River in a straight line from Rhodes, and ends at the Dnieper River after passing from the Ionian coast to the Troad and reaching to the Byzantine. This is as far as the geographers have been able to cover. Many merchants and travelers passed through this trade route.⁵⁹ The real question marks arise after the Dnieper, where the route ends. The area after the Dnieper is a complete mystery for sailors. There are question marks such as whether there is life after the Dnieper River, if so, how much area there is, which communities lived there, and what their lifestyles were like. Within

⁵⁶ Herodotus Ibid IV, p. 269-279.

⁵⁷ Tuncer Gülensoy, *Barbarian Turks*, Ankara: Akdağ Publications, 2011, p. 69.

⁵⁸ E. H. Minns, "The scythians and northern nomads", *CAH III*, Cambridge, 1970, p. 200.

⁵⁹ Strabo II, Ibid., p. 440-441.

the framework of the information we have obtained from Strabo's *Geographika*, the answers to these questions are as follows: Roxolanians (Scythians and Sarmatians) lived beyond the Dnieper. Living in a cold and harsh climate, the sun reaches the Scythians only during the summer solstices. Life in the Scythian homeland is very difficult as the snow and ice brought by the north winds cause even the lowlands to be covered with fog. Vegetation is stunted due to the harsh climate. Winters are long and summer's last few days.⁶⁰

Beyond Lake Maeotis lived the eastern Scythians, also known as Massagets. The nomadic people living between the Tanais River and the Caspian Sea were called Scythians by the Greeks, giving them a general name. The Scythians living east of the Caspian Sea are called Massagets. Strabo conveyed the Axine coasts to us through the eyes of the poet Homer. Among the information given by Homer, the Mysi tribe connected with Asia has an important place. It is seen that Homer refers to the Mysi people, who are likely to be Scythian and Sarmatian people, who are among the inhabitants of Vogon, as Hippemolgi, Galectophangi and Abii. Strabon explains that the fact that Homer does not mention the Scythians and calls them Galactophagi, Hippemalgi or Abii when he mentions the Axine coast, is because the ancient writers had heard that the Axine tribes had a custom of sacrificing foreigners, so they did not make sea voyages and were therefore unaware of the distant lands.⁶¹

According to Herodotus and many Greek writers, the Scythians, whose homeland was Asia, migrated from Asia as a result of the struggle between them and the Massagets, leaving behind the Volga River (Araks) and displacing the Cimmerians. Some Scythians settled on the western shores of the Azov Sea, called Pontia in Greek. Some Scythians followed the Cimmerians into Foreland Asia, towards the borders of Urartu, Assyria and Medes.

Herodotus, from whom we get the most comprehensive information about the Scythian geography of the V. century BC, described the Scythian geography in a square form. The south side is the Istros River (Danube), the east side is Lake Maeotis (Sea of Azov), the north side is Tanais (Don River), and the west side is Istros. He also mentioned that this geography has eight large rivers flowing through it, namely Istros (Danube), Tyras (Dniester), Hypanis (Bug), Borysthenes (Dnieper), Pantikapea, Hyphasis, Gerrusand Tanais (Don), which ships

⁶⁰ Strabo II, *Ibid.*, p. 442.

⁶¹ Strabo II, *Ibid.*, p. 196-197.

can swim easily. The largest river in the region, the largest of all rivers, the Istros, rises and flows through the Celtic country, through the Scythian country, and many of the rivers of Scythia are its branches. Another important river is the River Tyras, which comes from the north and originates in the lake that borders Scythia and Neuria. The third river is the Hypanis, which originates from a large lake around which white horses graze. The fourth river, the Borysthenes, is a more useful river than any other river except the Nile. It offers the best grasslands for animals and plenty of fish. Among them is the Acipenser, a large invertebrate fish that was important in Scythian trade. It offers people the sweetest and clearest water for drinking. There are plenty of salt shells at the mouth. The source of Borysthenes, who gave life to the land of the farmer Scythians, is unknown.⁶² The fifth river is the Hippolaus, the sixth is the Hypacuris and the seventh is the Gerrus River. The Gerrus River divides the country of the nomadic Scythians and the Royal Scythians. The eighth river flows between the Royal Scythians and the Sauromatae.⁶³ While Scythia is generally defined as the Ukrainian steppes between the Don and Danube Rivers, it is also associated with the Caucasus by Babylonian, Assyrian and Greek sources. The raids of the Scythians to this area, the fact that "Tabiti", the god of the indigenous Caucasian people, was the main goddess of the Scythians, and the existence of cultural and geographical proximity increase the scientific validity of this information. In addition, the artifacts found in the Azov kurgans in the VII-VI centuries and in the artifacts found in the early Scythian kurgans in Olbia Donbassa in Ukraine show that the Scythians established cultural networks between the lands they expanded.⁶⁴

The Greek writers such as Hippocrates, Herodotus and Posidonius present a narrowing of the borders of Scythia in the VI-VI centuries. Strobon, who reiterated Posidonius' estimates, presented a complex map at the end of the II century. The political environment of the period was effective in the outcome of this situation. The Scythian domination galloping across the Dnieper steppes in the II century was interrupted by Mitridat the Great, King of Pontus. The Scythian border narrowed after they were defeated by Mitridat's commander Diophante. In addition, the Scythian borders narrowed as the Roksolons, allies

⁶² Herodotus Ibid., IV, p. 252-253.

⁶³ Herodotus, Ibid., IV, p. 254-255.

⁶⁴ Herodotus, Ibid., IV, p. 256-257.

of the Scythians in their struggle with the Pontic king, occupied the lands around Azov in Ukraine and the Sarmatian tribes crossed the banks of the Don River.⁶⁵



⁶⁵ B.N. Grakov, *Scythians*, Translation. Ahsen Batur, Istanbul: Selenge Publications, 2020, p. 35.

3. DOMINANT FORCES IN THE NORTHERN BLACK SEA

In order to understand the lands where the Scythians lived, the relations between the empires, nomadic and colonial people living in Pontus and the changing balance of power must be well understood. From Procopius' perspective, this region starts from the Byzantine Empire and Chalcedon and extends to Lazkia, the land of the Laz (Lazi). Beyond Rhizaeum, there were also people independent of the Romans and the Laz. The Pahasis River, which runs right through the center of the Pontic crescent, lies between two continents; the left side of the river is Asia, while the right side is Europe. All the settlements of the Laz are located on the European side, while the Roman-dominated city of Petra is located on the Asian continent.⁶⁶ This geography, which witnessed the power struggles of the Roman, Persian and Lazkia empires, is also closely acquainted with the Scythians, free-spirited nomads who could not be dominated. Before discussing where the Scythians stood or how they played a role in this power struggle, we will touch upon the relationship between these three great empires.⁶⁷

The relationship between the Roman, Persian and Lazkia empires was quite unstable, as we can see from the examples given by Procopius. Relations between the Roman and Lazkia empires were friendly and trade-oriented, and messengers traveling to and from each other were given special treatment and escorted in boats. The ruler of the Abasi, who were the Laz citizens, castrated the most beautiful boys to sell them to the Roman court, and had their parents killed to prevent them from claiming their rights.⁶⁸ This practice was abandoned upon the request of the Roman Emperor Justinian. This situation must have disturbed Justinian, for he called "Do not cripple your young generation". Although the relations between the Roman Empire and the Lazakia Empire seemed to be so good, the Laz invited Persian King Kisra to conquer the city of Petra, which was dominated by the Romans, in alliance with the Persians. When the Persians arrived in the city, the sight they encountered was quite surprising. They found the city with its castles destroyed and looted. Because the

⁶⁶ Procopius, *History of The Wars*, Translated (by H. B. Dewing), Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, p. 61-62.

⁶⁷ Procopius, *Ibid.*, p. 64-65.

⁶⁸ Procopius, *Ibid.*, p. 78-79.

Roman soldiers, who had heard in advance that the Persians were coming, had sacked the city and sailed by boat towards Trapezus.

We will look at the role of the nomadic Scythians in shaping the balance of power around the Euxine Sea. Above the countries around the Euxine Sea is the Caucasus, a region of mountain ranges. It is mentioned that the area from the Caucasus to the Caspian gates was inhabited by Huns called Alans and Sabiri. Procopius wrote in his work, "The Huns who held the area up to the Don River were formerly called the Cimmerians." He wrote that the Cimmerians, whose Turkic origin is a matter of debate among historians today, were the ancestors of the Huns.⁶⁹ Among the influential powers in the north of the Black Sea, Procopius mentioned the Cimmerians, Scythians and the Amazons, which he stated to be composed of Scythian women. He also explained the issue of the Amazons, who are seen only in the Black Sea region, based on Strobos's views. According to Strobos, women have never been of male nature in any period and place, life conditions compelled them to show male courage. The Amazons established their camp on the Thermodon River in the city of Amisus (Samsun). Procopius told the story of the emergence of the Amazons as follows: The barbarian people set out with their women to invade Asia, leaving their women in the area around the Thermodon River; but when the men were destroyed by the people there, the women who were left alone had to fight against the dangers alone, and thus these women formed the Amazons. Procopius mentions that the Huns raided the territory of the Roman Empire many times, and after their retreat, Roman soldiers found their women.⁷⁰

Procopius thinks that the Amazons, like the Cimmerians and Scythians, were related to the Huns. The community formerly called the Cimmerians, when the ruler died, divided the rulership among his sons, thus creating two communities, the Utigurs and the Cutrigurs. They lived freely, cooperating among themselves without interfering with those on the other side of the lake. Beyond Lake Maeotis, on the shores of the strait, lived the Goths called Tetravitae. But the Goths, a gothic nation, are far from the Visigoths and the Huns. Butetraxitea was called Scythians in ancient times, because all the nations that held this area were called Scythians, only a few were called Saurametae and so on. Meanwhile, on the

⁶⁹ Procopius, *Ibid.*, p. 74-75.

⁷⁰ Procopius, *Ibid.*, p. 78-79.

other side of the lake, the Cimmerians, who had been living in peace, were disturbing the tranquility.⁷¹ According to the stories, the Cimmerian youths who were hunting and went after a deer that had fallen into the lake proved that the lake could be crossed when they returned to their country. This whetted the appetite of the Cimmerians⁷², for the other side of the lake, which resulted in the Goths, who had been subjected to Cimmerian attacks, abandoning their lands and migrating to Roman territory. Having settled in Roman territory, the Huns continued to raid Roman territory despite the Roman Emperors' gifts as a discouragement. Beyond the Cutrigur Huns, who had established homes along the Maeotic road and west of the Tanais River, were the Scythians. The Scythians held the entirety of Taurica. This territory is described as the site of the Temple of Artemis, ruled by the daughter of Hegomon. The Bosphorus, which was once under Roman rule in this geography, fell under Hun (Scythian) rule until the city of Cherson (located on the borders of Ukraine). Roman territory extended from where the Istros River flows into the Euxine Sea (Black Sea) to Byzantine territory.

While the Persian, Roman and Lazkian empires were influential in the Black Sea region, we see that the Scythians, whose voices were weak at first, later became loud enough to challenge the emperors. As we mentioned before, the fact that ancient writers occasionally used the names of Scythians or Cimmerians instead of Huns brought the connection between them to the surface, and the nomadic communities, which were the continuation of each other, expanded their sphere of dominance despite the empires and expanded their borders in the Black Sea to include Ukraine.⁷³ "In terms of its characteristics, this region is wetter, milder and more fertile than the eastern part of Eurasia, and exceptionally rich in rivers. The Idyll, Don, Dnieper, Bug, Dniester-Turla and their tributaries form very fertile valleys. These rivers also provide abundant fish and salt. The Scythians expanded their borders in this region because of the excellent suitability of this fertile black land, the chernozem, as it is called in Russian, for raising livestock."⁷⁴ The Scythians became neighbors of the Greeks in the north of the Black Sea when the Greeks started colonization activities in the V. and VI. century BC. "Scythia served as a granary for Greece. Agricultural products were transported

⁷¹ Procopius, *Ibid.*, p. 90-91.

⁷² Procopius, *Ibid.*, p. 84-85.

⁷³ Procopius, *Ibid.*, p. 84-85.

⁷⁴ Öner Tlan, *Turks in the North of the Black Sea and the Balkans*, Ankara: İksad Publications, 2023, p. 16.

by local nomadic lords to the Greek colonies on the Black Sea coast, where merchants acted as intermediaries. Salt, fish, honey, meat, milk, leather, furs and slaves were the main commodities sold to the Greeks. On the other hand, the goods purchased by the Scythians were jewelry, metalware and pottery. Greek colonial cities, each of which were port cities and important trade centers, played a very important role in this trade with Greece.⁷⁵ The most important among them were Tyras at the mouth of the Dniester River, Olbia at the mouth of the Bug River, Cherson, Theodosia and Pantikapaion on the Crimean coast, Tanais at the mouth of the Don River and Phanagoria on the Taman Peninsula."⁷⁶

The trade between the two nations, which started through the Greek colonial cities, also brought cultural affinity. The fact that the Greeks give Scythians a large place in their legends and myths proves this interaction. For example, according to a Greek legend told by Herodotus, a girl is born from the earth; this girl, whose upper part is a woman and lower part is a snake, becomes together with Zeus, the most powerful god of the Greeks and known for his womanizing. From this union, a boy named Scythes (Scythes) was born. The fact that the Scythians trace their lineage to the Greek god in the legend in question shows the interaction between them and the Scythians, and suggests that the Greeks considered the Scythians invincible due to their warrior characteristics. The colonization period is also the period when Greek sagas were created. In the Iliad, one of the oldest Greek sagas, the Scythians of Abia are referred to as "the truest of men". It is also told in this epic that the Scythian women warriors, the Amazons, took the side of the Trojans and fought against the Achaeans: "The Amazons came, like men"⁷⁷ not as many as the Achaeans, whose eyes darted around."⁷⁸ Many similar instances can be cited.

⁷⁵ Phillips, The Royal Hordes, p. 78.

⁷⁶ Phillips, The Royal Hordes, p. 78.

⁷⁷ Homeros, İlyada, III, p. 189-190.

⁷⁸ Kürşat Bardakçı, "İskitlerin Batı İle Olan İlişkileri", Uluslararası Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi, Cilt.4, p. 31.

4. GREEKS

4.1. Greek History in Brief

In order to better explain Scythian-Greek relations, it is also necessary to examine Greek history. The first Greek cities were founded during the Cretan civilisation (2700-1450 BC), mostly in Crete, the eastern Mediterranean and Greece. The Cretan civilisation was later replaced by the Mycenaean civilisation, which built upon it. The main political unit of Greek society, like the Turks, was the tribe. Due to the geographical conditions of Greece, the Greek tribes lived in ignorance of each other. "However, in the emergence of the concept called nation in the future, that is, in the formation of political order and statehood, the most effective unit was the tribe".⁷⁹ Particularly the beginning of maritime transport brought about commercial and cultural fusion among the Greek tribes and aroused the idea of unity. The most effective factor in the formation of unity was language, even though there were differences in dialects, it was always the language that bound them together⁸⁰. Before defining their national identity, the Greeks defined themselves as who they were not and called the non-self "Barboros". They then called their racial unity "Hellenic".

Three main features were recognised among the Greeks (although not all of them belonged to one of them): the Dorians, who lived mainly in the Peloponnese; the Ionians, who lived in Athens and Euboea; and the Aeolians, who lived in Bithynia and Thessaly. The Greeks have stories about the "Dorian invasion" of the Peloponnese. This proves that the Dorians arrived in the Peloponnese later than the other Greeks living there. When some Greeks crossed the Aegean into Asia Minor in the X and IX centuries, these three elements developed self-awareness and settled in areas corresponding to their places on the mainland, the Aeolians in the north, the Ionians in the center and the Dorians in the south.

Within a city the inhabitants were divided into Phyle, or "tribes", and this became more and more established over time, as membership was patrilineal. There are three in Dorian

⁷⁹ Ahmet Gözlü, "Eski Yunan Karanlık Çağında, Sosyal Gruplar ve Siyasal Yapı", MCBU Social Sciences Journal, Volume 16, Issue 3, p. 239.

⁸⁰ Arif Müfid Mansel, Aegean and Greek History, Ankara: Turkish Historical Society Publications, 2014, p.106.

cities, four among the Ionians and six in Athens. We also see smaller units such as Phratry, "brotherhood(s)".⁸¹

In Greek tribes, the family is formed when a man takes a woman, whom he buys or kidnaps, and his children from her under his sovereignty. With the union of families, "genos", in other words, lineages are formed. With the union of lineages, namely tribes, "phile" is formed. The purpose of the union is to protect the clan against blood feuds and to create a fraternal unity. Philes and sometimes genos were influential in Greek society. Every free man who holds a gun is responsible for the administration of the tribes. They meet at certain times to discuss political and economic issues concerning the tribe. Although the heads of the tribe have status, they choose a single leader in time of war. The king has the status of a civil servant. The king's duty is to solve problems that are not discussed in tribal meetings, to deal with administrative affairs and to resolve disputes that are consulted.⁸²

The culture that prevailed in Greece before this order brought to Greece by the Dorians was the Achaean culture that dominated continental Greece and the Aegean Islands between the XIV-XII century BC. The Achaeans, who had magnificent palaces surrounded by strong walls, had an advanced culture. However, this advanced culture did not realize the danger that was about to come to their doorstep until the XIII century BC, when the fusion between the Illyrian and Thracian people in the Balkan peninsula eliminated the Dorians and drove them to the north of Greece.⁸³ This event was the beginning of the great invasion of the Dorians in Greece and the Dorians displaced the Achaeans. The Achaeans, who were originally a race formed by the mixture of Indogermans from central Europe and the tribes coming from Anatolia via the islands, had a much superior civilization than the Dorians with the castles and great castles they built. However, the Dorians defeated the Achaeans everywhere and occupied the entire Peloponnese with the advantage of their warrior skills and the iron weapons they used. A large part of the Achaeans, who were skilful sailors and good merchants, refused to fall under Dorian rule and migrated to the coasts of Anatolia, where they had already begun colonization activities. With the arrival of the Dorians,

⁸¹ P. J. Rhodes, *A Brief History of Ancient Greece*, Istanbul: İletişim Publications, 2019, p. 33.

⁸² Arif Müfid Mansel, *Aegean and Greek History*, Ankara: Turkish Historical Society Publications, 2014, p. 106.

⁸³ Barış Gür, "Hititler, Mikenler ve Batı Anadolu'daki Kültür Etkileşimleri", *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, C. I, no. 2, 2012, p. 13.

nomadic culture began to dominate in Greece. In the tribalism system, the occupied lands and spoils were considered the property of the whole tribe and only the right of use was given to individuals. It is seen that this lifestyle, which is dominated by collective ownership, is similar to the Scythian lifestyle. The tribalism system belonging to the nomadic culture, having a common property concept proves this circumstance.⁸⁴ In particular, the similarity of the Scythian society of Spartan, which is accepted to be composed of Dorian tribes by the majority of Western historians, has attracted attention. Especially based on the similarities between the tribal systems, the rituals of the transition of young people to maturity and the myths of Scythian-Dorian origin, it has been suggested that they may be descended from the same lineage. As a result of the invasion of the Dorians, Greece entered a period called the Dark Age, which lasted for about 400 years. This period, in which there are few archaeological findings, small houses and simple pottery, is also a mystery for historians.⁸⁵ After the tribal system of nomadic culture, Greece experienced political development such as the division of the people into classes and the development of aristocracy, the establishment of polis city-states and the deposition of kings by aristocrats.⁸⁶

The dark age that began in Greece with the Dorian invasion was left behind with the beginning of colonization activities in the VII century BC, and Greek society revived with the development of trade ties with the Mediterranean world in the IX century BC. This period of flourishing trade and population growth has been called the Greek Renaissance by modern historians. The Greeks, who started to get acquainted with the Mediterranean and eastern societies and entered into a process of colonization, formed political units called polis, which means city-state.⁸⁷

The emergence of polis city-states started with the migration of the Achaeans towards Anatolia. It was very difficult for the Achaeans, who wanted to establish order in a new geography, to apply the tribal organization, which was the Greek order, in Anatolia. The Achaeans, who were already accustomed to the city order, settled in the cities left over from the Hittite civilization and turned these cities into independent administrations with their

⁸⁴ Muzaffer Demir, İskit- Saparta Bağlantıları Üzerine Değerlendirmeler, *Archivum Anatolicum*, sayı 14/2, 2020, p. 182.

⁸⁵ Takeshi Amemiya, *Economy and Economics of Ancient Greece*, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, London & New York, 2007, p. 2.

⁸⁶ Arif Müfid Mansel, *Ibid*, p. 109.

⁸⁷ Oğuz Tekin, *Eski Yunan Tarihi*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001, p. 43.

own borders as well as political, social and economic structure and named these cities Polis. The reason why the name Polis is not Greek is because these cities were born in Anatolia. In Polis city-states, the powers of the king decreased while the powers of the aristocracy gradually increased. Tribal meetings were replaced by public assemblies gathered in the city square.⁸⁸ While there were great political, economic and cultural developments in Greek society, competition and wars between them also increased. Since the tribes could not share resources such as animals and slaves, the state of peace between them lasted very short.⁸⁹

4.2. Greek Colonization Actions and Causes

The development of trade in the Greeks progressed in parallel with the development of maritime transportation. Especially the fact that the Anatolian coasts have indentations where ships can easily dock, in other words safe harbors, are among the important factors in the rapid progress of the Greeks in trade. However, the strong winds of the Aegean Sea were not suitable for sailing ships and for this reason they used rowing ships. In particular, their use of Cyprus, Crete and Rhodes as bases and their willingness to sail far away with ships helped them gain momentum in maritime and trade. In the IX century BC, Greek sailors darkened their eyes and started to sail overseas. They reached the Black Sea via Marmara and the Phoenician coast via Rhodes, where they engaged in trade and piracy, learned about eastern goods, designed similar ones and marketed them in the interior. The development of maritime transportation and trade among the Greeks brought along colonization activities.

The first Greek cities were founded during the Cretan civilization and during the Mycenaean period, the direction of this wave of migration was directed towards the Black Sea, which was full of dangers and obscurity. The need for land, expressed as Stenohoria, their interest in trade, the increase in the population on the Anatolian coasts and Persian pressure were the reasons why they took the risk to head towards the Black Sea. The Persian invasion of Anatolia in the VIth century further increased the attractiveness of the Black Sea and created a wave of migration towards the Black Sea. In the V century BC, the Ionians tried to fight against the Persian domination in Anatolia and started a revolt; but when they failed to achieve results, they turned their attention to the Black Sea and accelerated their

⁸⁸ Arif Müfid Mansel, Ibid, p. 110-111.

⁸⁹ Arif Müfid Mansel, Ibid., p. 112-113.

colonization activities.⁹⁰ The Greeks called the colonies they established apoikia. Apoikia means a home away from home in a foreign land or a settlement created by another community in its own image on a foreign land. The most fundamental question about the Greek colonization of the Black Sea is the time when it started. The challenge in answering this question is the lack of archaeological evidence due to both the changes in the coastline with the rise and fall of the Black Sea waters and the flooding of some settlements.⁹¹

The legend of the Golden Fleece of the Mycenaeans has an important place in the beginning of the first Greek activities around the Black Sea region. The legend of the Golden Fleece gives important clues about the earliest Greek settlement around the Black Sea. Russian researcher V. D. Blavatskii confirmed the Argonaut legend by interpreting the connections between the Aegean and the Black Sea, various objects, and confirmed the use of a route on the western and northern coasts of the Black Sea.⁹² According to the legend of the golden fleece, the Greeks started their relations with the Black Sea region long before the Mycenaean civilization and these relations turned into a developed trade network with the Ions. Especially the Greeks' need for raw materials and markets, the cheaper cost of employing slaves instead of workers in their workshops, and the Cimmerian pressure in Anatolia increased the importance of the Black Sea. It has been a matter of curiosity how the Greek colonists were welcomed by the local people and how they established relations with the local people. Especially in the first colonies, trade was their only source of livelihood until they established their agricultural and craft infrastructure, which also accelerated the process of interaction with the natives. The presence of non-commercial objects, thought to be mostly souvenirs, in both Scythian tumulus and Thracian tumulus in the VII century BC proves that the Greeks made agreements with the tribal leaders. The fact that the tribal leaders and the locals also received profit shares made the colonization activities of the Greeks easier.⁹³

The Black Sea was challenging waters for the Greeks who colonized the Marmara and Mediterranean Seas. One of the most important reasons for this was that the locals had

⁹⁰ Arif Müfid Mansel, *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁹¹ Arif Müfid Mansel, *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁹² Arif Müfid Mansel, *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁹³ Tsetskhladze, Gocha R, *Ibid.*, p. 9.

traditions such as sacrificing foreigners. For example, the sacrifice ceremony mentioned by Herodotus clarifies the situation. "When they take prisoners in war, they sacrifice one out of every hundred of them, but they do not perform the ceremony for animals. They sprinkle wine on the head, cut off the head on a pallet, carry the pallet to the top of the woodpile and pour the blood on the machete. This is what happens above, while below, near the sacred hill, the following ceremony takes place: They cut off the right arms of the sacrificed men, together with their hands, by the shoulders, throw them towards the sky, and after sacrificing the others, they leave. The arm remains where it fell, and the body remains where it fell at another point."⁹⁴

"The Black Sea was considered to be a difficult sea to cross due to its strong currents, constant fogs, sudden storms, high waves and lack of harbors and islands to take shelter on, and for a variety of reasons, it was a strong discouragement for the first sailors who wanted to sail in the Black Sea."⁹⁵ However, there were also reasons that made the Black Sea coast attractive for Greek colonization. The Thracians and Mycenaeans living on the Marmara coast did not have the power to resist the Greeks. The fact that the Cimmerians and Scythians, who existed in the northern and eastern parts of the Black Sea, did not attach importance to the coasts and were not developed in shipping offered the Greeks the opportunity to expand.⁹⁶ The fish-rich straits of the Black Sea, especially the Acipenser, the rich forests in the east and south, the rich wheat fields of Crimea, the grape and olive vineyards of the Marmara coast, the slaves and animal flowing from the interior of Russia gave the Ionian colonists the strength to cope with the storms of the Black Sea. While the colonies they established in the Black Sea made Greece rich, especially the Crimean colonies fed Greece with their wheat. With the establishment of Greek colonies, Scythian wheat exports increased. As a result, Scythian-Greek relations started more as commercial and friendly and it was the Scythians who gave the Greeks a place to settle. Common trading and living areas such as Olbia and Pantikapea were established. In the VIth century, Greek colonization caused a serious change in Scythian politics; Scythians decreased their interest in Asia Minor, with which they had strong ties, and turned their attention more towards the

⁹⁴ Herodotus, Ibid IV, p. 62.

⁹⁵ Arslan Murat, "Pontos'tan Karadeniz'e: Bir Adlandırmanın Ardındaki Önyargılar, Varsayımlar ve Gerçekler", OLBA, XIV, 2006, p. 75-91.

⁹⁶ Arif Müfid Mansel, Ibid, p. 181.

Greeks. Especially the Scythian-Greek kingdom of Bosphorus shows that the two civilizations had similar political, economic and cultural goals.⁹⁷ It was also a kingdom that tried to blend the Greek-barbarian culture within itself and succeeded in doing so.⁹⁸

4.3. Scythians in Greek Sources

Although the relationship between the Greek and Scythian people began as a trade-oriented and friendly one, both cultures aimed to preserve their own identities. This is reflected in the fact that the Greeks defined themselves as Hellenes while defining those who were not their own as barbarians. Whether the Greeks used the word barbarian to belittle or to describe those who were not their own has been a matter of debate. Boletsi argues that the main criterion for the concept of barbarian in the Greeks between the VIII century BC and the V century BC was "language"; in other words, he emphasizes that the word barbarian was used to describe those who did not speak Greek.⁹⁹ When the Greeks encountered different nations during the colonization process, their national consciousness developed and they felt the need to define both their own identity and that of the others. They also drew hard lines with each other in order to protect their own culture. One of the best examples of this is the Scythian king Skyles, whose mother was a Hellene, was disliked and eventually killed by the Scythian soldiers for adopting the Greek way of life.¹⁰⁰

Historians of the XIX century, who constructed European identity on the basis of ancient Greek identity, stated that Hellenic culture developed in harmony with the culture of the indigenous people while preserving its originality; the indigenous people created a new culture by blending Greek culture with their own culture.¹⁰¹ Strong commercial ties were instrumental in the formation of common living spaces. For example, the Greek colonies founded by the metropolis of Miletus in the VII century B.C. became strong political and economic structures in time. In line with common interests, the Greeks and Scythians formed cities such as Pantikapaion and Olbia, the capital of the Bosphorus Kingdom in the north.

⁹⁷ Vinogradov Y. A., “Cimmerian Bosphorus: Main Phases of Pre-Roman History”, England: Publishers of British Archaeological Reports, Oxford, 2007, p. 146.

⁹⁸ Betül Akkaya, Antik Çağda Hermonassa Limanı Siyasi ve Ekonomik Gelişimi, Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi, 2018, p. 24.

⁹⁹ Boletsi M., Barbarism and its discontents. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2013, p. 61-62.

¹⁰⁰ Herodotos, Historia IV, p. 76.

¹⁰¹ Fatih Mehmet Berk, “Greklerin Ötesi: İskitler”, Selçuk Türkiyat, Cilt 54, p. 27.

These cities supplied olive oil and wine from Greece and the Aegean basin, while their products such as slaves, cattle, honey, beeswax, canned goods and fish were exported to the Hellenic mainland and the Aegean basin.¹⁰² Scythians played a key role especially in the slave trade. Herodotus, who is thought to have visited the vicinity of Olbia in the V century BC, mentioned that the Scythians used slaves mostly for milking mares and blinded them to prevent the theft of the upper part of the milk, which was the valuable part. Thousands of slaves were obtained as a result of raids organized against tribes living in more primitive conditions, especially in the inland regions and forest steppes, and many slaves were sold to places such as Khios Island in the Aegean world.¹⁰³ Hellenic craftsmen employed slaves in their workshops, aiming to make it cheaper than hiring workers. In Hellenic workshops, Scythian slaves or Scythian craftsmen who worked there voluntarily took part especially in the processing of precious metals. Scythian artisans started crafting precious metals long before the Hellenes and produced highly successful products. In Central Asia, the homeland of the Scythians, there are significant amounts of gold mines, especially in Kazakhstan, the Ural-Altai and God Mountains rivers. The Scythian craftsmanship in the processing of gold and silver was demonstrated by the Scythian swords, daggers, armor, arrowheads, bronze and iron horse harnesses, gold ornaments, gold-plated arrow pouches made of electron and silver called 'gorytoi', electron and silver table accessories, work tools, dress details, ornaments and jewelry (breastplates, rings, necklaces, bracelets and earrings) recovered from 300 kurgans found in the northern steppes of the Black Sea region; prove that the Tuva region was the place where early metalsmithing began.¹⁰⁴ This craft, which came from Central Asia, reached the Hellenes from the Black Sea steppes. In addition to these crafts, archery was one of the skills that spread from Scythia to the Aegean world.¹⁰⁵ Anacharsis of Olbian, known as the Scythian philosopher, was invited to Athens during the reign of Solon. Anacharsis was both a student in Athens to understand Greek culture and a teacher to introduce Scythian culture.¹⁰⁶ This was not the only purpose for which Anacharsis was

¹⁰² Muzaffer Demir, "M.Ö. VI. Yüzyılda İskit –Atina İlişkilerinin Başlangıcı Üzerine Değerlendirmeler", Genel Türk Tarihi Araştırma Dergisi, Cilt 3, Sayı 6, 2021, p. 164.

¹⁰³ Herodotus a.g.e IV, p. 76.

¹⁰⁴ K. Koçak, "Bozkır Türk Kültüründe Altının Ortaya Çıkışı ve İşlenip Yayılması", Cappadocia Journal of History and Social Sciences, sayı 9, 2017, p. 276.

¹⁰⁵ A. Alekseev, "Some Problems in the Study of the Chronology of the Ancient Nomadic Cultures in Eurasia", Journal on the Methods and Applications of Absolute Chronology, Geochronometria, 2002, p. 21.

¹⁰⁶ M. Demir, "Lucianus'un Anakarsis adlı Eserinin İçerik Bakımından Tanıtımı ve Yorumu", Uluslararası Samsatlı Lucianus Sempozyumu Bildiriler Kitabı, Edt. M. Çevik, Adyaman Üniversitesi, 2008, p. 36.

invited. He was presumably commissioned to organize and train a special Scythian archer unit for the protection of Athenian institutions in the face of the threat of civil conflict in Athens. Thus, we can understand the reason for the proliferation of archer figures in Scythian costumes and armed with Scythian weapons on Attic red and black figure vases from 570 BC onwards.¹⁰⁷ Scythian archers and their costumes must have seemed authentic to the Hellenic people, as reflected in their artworks.

Lucian included the story of Anacharsis in his works. Anacharsis is introduced not only as a thinker and military instructor, but also as the inventor of the blacksmith's bellows and the potter's wheel. He is understood to have taught what he knew about health and archery training. The influence of the Scythian culture spearheaded by Anacharsis was felt more and more in Athens over time.

Legendary and mythological elements, which are an important part of Greek culture, also benefited from the Scythian-Greek interaction. For example, the legend of the Argonauts, which reflects the merchant and piracy elements of Mycenaean culture, is one of them. The Argonauts were mentioned by Sophocles. The legend, starting with Jason, the leader of the Argonauts, who took their name from the person who built their ships, turning his helm to Colchis full of dangers with the Argonaut crew with a sense of unknown curiosity, tells the adventures of the Argonauts and their struggle against the people of Colchis, who are especially known for sacrificing foreigners to Ares.¹⁰⁸ Scythians are frequently mentioned in the saga of Homer and the Iliad, and the voyage information given in the Odyssey covers the Black Sea as well as the Italian coast.

In the VII and VI centuries, one of the people who provided information about the distant lands of the Black Sea was the bard Alkman, originally from Lesbos, who met the Scythian ruler Achilleus on the island of Achilles. In addition to Alkman, the bard Aristeas, known for his verses describing how the one-eyed monster stole the gold of the Ural Altai, wrote about the last expedition of the Scythians that drove the Cimmerians out of their lands and gave information about the customs and tastes of the people living in the region. Another

¹⁰⁷ M, Demir, Ibid., p. 169.

¹⁰⁸ N. Grakov, İskitler, Çev. Ahsen Batur, İstanbul: Selenge Yayınları, 2020, p. 17.

important source of information, Hecataios of Miletus, in his work "Description of the Earth" mentioned Scythians as well as the North Caucasian tribes where the name Scythians was unknown. The important Attic tragedy masters Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides gave a wide coverage to Scythia and Scythians in their works. In his tragedy Prometheus in Chains, Aeschylus mentioned that the Scythians lived around Azov and used the Caucasus as a campaign route.

Herodotus of Halicarnassus, one of the most important writers about the Scythians, provided extensive information about Scythian culture, geography, traditions and the wars with the Persians. Hippocrates, in his work "Air, Water and Places", provided information about the Scythians' appearance, the lands they lived in and their way of life. Strobon gave extensive information about Scythian geography and culture in his work Geographika. Lycius, Isocrates, Exin and Demosthenes, important writers of Attica, also included commercial relations, which were the most decisive factor in Scythian-Greek relations, and talked about the Scythian exports of Bospor at the end of the Vth century and the beginning of the IVth century, and the adventures of Attic ceramics and goods to Scythia through Greek colonial cities.¹⁰⁹

At the end of the IVth century, the activities of Alexander, who was one of the dominant powers in the north of the Black Sea, were mentioned by many Greek writers, especially Strobon and Arrien, and the role of Scythians in the struggle between Alexander and the Persians was mentioned. While the information we have about Scythians decreased due to the decline in the interest of Greek writers in the II century, the wars with Mitridat in the late II and early I century revived the interest in Scythians. In particular, the Scythian king Skylurus' struggle against Mitridat's commander Diophante is mentioned. While the writers of the second century mostly focus on the Sarmatians instead of the Scythians, the information about the Scythians given by the writers of the first century includes different versions of the information given by Herodotus.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ B. N. Grakov, Ibid, p. 18.

¹¹⁰ B. N. Grakov, Ibid, p. 29.

5. SCYTHIAN- GREEK RELATIONS

The interest in antiquity began especially among Russian scholars and archaeologists in the XIX century. Russian archaeologists shed light on the Scythian-Greek relationship and cultural interactions through their excavations in Greek colonial cities. Among the findings of Russian academics and archaeologists are many inscriptions about Scythians found in the Bosporan Kingdom, and the first coins of Scythians minted in the Greek colonial cities of Idria and Olbia. Among the decisive elements in Scythian-Greek relations was the Scythian wheat that fed the Greeks, and this wheat played an active role in the Peloponnesian War, that is, in the sibling rivalry.¹¹¹ Fishing, which is considered as another element of the trade exclusivity in the Black Sea, is also among these aspects.¹¹² Fishing and fish trade is one of the most important reasons for favoring the Black Sea. One of the main occupations of the Greeks who established colonies in this geography was fishing. Another occupation was the trade of timber used as raw material in shipbuilding, furniture, fuel and many other fields. While animal products, furs, cowhide, sturgeon imported from the Black Sea filled the Greek cities; the fact that these items, which are the necessities of civilized life such as fabrics, clothes, wine, Greek ceramics, silver and bronze ornaments, equipped the Scythian cities is among the important findings.

While Olbia was the city that played the leading role in the Scythian-Greek trade, it is seen that the Bosporan Kingdom surpassed Olbia by designing jewelry in the animal style suitable for the Scythian taste and marketing them to the Scythians by land.¹¹³ The Bosporan Kingdom was formed from the common culture of the Greek and Scythian people. Especially in the Royal Scythians, who became more ambitious, luxurious and comfortable with trade, hellenization began. In the V. century, only people like King Skylurus were interested in the Greek alphabet, while in the II. century, we see that the inscriptions written to Scythian kings in the capital Neapolis were in Greek. It is also observed that Greek gods, mythologies and tragedies became widespread and respected among the Scythians. The fact that the harems of the Scythian kings in the V. century consisted of Hellenic women, that

¹¹¹ B.N. Grakov, Ibid, p. 26.

¹¹² Osman Emir, Prehistorik Dönemden Roma Dönemine Kadar Trabzon ve Çevresi, Trabzon, Serander Yayınları, 2011, p. 90.

¹¹³ N. Grakov, Ibid, p. 29.

there were a considerable number of Greek women among the women buried with the king in the Neopolis king tombs, and that there were Hellenized Scythians as well as Scythian influenced Greeks in the cities of Olbia and Boshpar, where the interaction was the most intense, show the extent of the interaction.¹¹⁴

Although the Greeks and Scythians had cultural rapprochement and friendly relations, the fact that the city of Olbia was surrounded by walls shows that there were also conflicts. The Scythians' policy of capturing cities that were important for wheat exports and aiming to establish cities where Greek and Tawrikan sailors were located, especially with the development of trade in Scythia from the late III century onwards, brought relations to a different dimension. The Greeks found the way to cope with the Scythians in war through Scythianization and started to use Scythian arrows, bows and quivers.

5.1. Scythian-Greek Political Relations

We shall examine a different dimension of Scythian-Greek relations: wars, treaties and alliances. First, we must examine the development of Scythian-Greek relations during the Persian expedition to Scythia (513 BC). One of the aims of Darius' Scythian expedition was to expand his sphere of dominance. Darius also wanted to secure his northern border by eliminating the Scythians who might pose a threat to him and to avenge the Medes whom the Scythians had destroyed.¹¹⁵ His main aim was to test the Greeks with hunger and famine by cutting them off from Scythia, which fed them with its wheat. Darius tasked his troops with building a navy and a bridge across the Thracian strait that would allow the army to cross. The Persian fleet met the army at the mouth of the Danube as Darius crossed the Bosphorus into Thrace on a bridge built by the Greek engineer Mandrokles of Samos.¹¹⁶ Darius entrusted the Ionians to guard the bridge to secure the return of the army, and ordered them to destroy it if they could not do so.¹¹⁷ Against the Persian army, which started to attack from land and sea, the Scythians, thinking that it would not be wise to meet a large army like the Persian army in the square, first sent a message to their neighbors that a large navy was

¹¹⁴ Grakov, *Ibid.*, p. 29.

Strabo IV, *Ibid.*, p. 198.

¹¹⁵ Herodotus, *Ibid.*, IV, p. 199.

¹¹⁶ George Vernadsky, *Ibid.*, p. 69.

¹¹⁷ Tamara Talbot Rice, *The Scythians*, London, 1958, p. 46.

approaching, and then called on the kings of their own nation, "If we do not unite, we will not be strong against the Persians who subjugate our neighbors." While Geloni, Budini and Sauromatae responded positively to this call, the people of Gathrsi responded to the Scythians' call for unity by saying, "The Persians want to take revenge on you; it is none of our business."¹¹⁸

The Scythians decided to retreat slowly, destroying the water in the wells and the grass in the soil, relying primarily on their own strength.¹¹⁹ As they retreated towards the Tanais River, they aimed to follow a route through the territories of the countries that refused to form an alliance, in order to force them to fight. If all went well, they intended to return home to greet their not-so-well-intentioned guests.¹²⁰

Let us also look at the Persian-Scythian war through the eyes of Herodotus. While the Scythians were sending their women, children and herds to the north, the Scythian pioneers, who were on the trail of their enemy, found the Persians three days away from Ister. The Scythian pioneers, fleeing from the enemy and taking them on a difficult journey to the Tanais River, first dragged the Persian army into the dry and barren sauromatic lands, passed through the country of Budini, leaving no water or food behind, and then retreated towards the countries of Nerular and Agathrsi, who did not ally with them, forcing them to fight and wearing down the Persian army as they intended.¹²¹ Darius said to the Scythian king Idanthysus, "Sire, these are strange matters. Why are you running away? You can choose which of two things to do: If you consider yourself strong enough to withstand my power, then do not wander any further, stand and fight; if you know you are weaker, then stop running back and forth and make a deal with your master to offer him gifts of land and water." The Scythian king Idanthysus replied. "This is my situation, Persian. What I am doing is nothing new or anything other than a peaceful practice. But as to the reason why I do not fight you directly, I will tell you that we Scythians have no cities and no cultivated lands, we do not feel the urge to meet you sooner, as we are not fearing that in battle one may be captured or the other wasted. But if nothing else comes to you but to fight your way, we have the graves of our ancestors. Come, find them and try to destroy them, then you will

¹¹⁸ Herodotus, *Ibid.*, IV, p. 318.

¹¹⁹ Ekrem Memiş, *Eski Çağda Türkler*, Çizgi Kitabevi Yayını, Konya, 2009, p. 78.

¹²⁰ Herodotus, *Ibid.*, IV, p. 320.

¹²¹ Herodotus, *Ibid.*, IV, p. 325.

know whether we will fight you for the graves or not. Until then, we will not join the war unless we think well. For my masters, I take them to be my ancestor Zeus and Nerali Hestia, queen of the Scythians, and no one else."¹²² The Scythian king's statement that he has no master but the gods is evidence of their unrestrained free spirit. The fact that he calls the Greek god Zeus his ancestor is evidence of his interactions with the Greeks.

Let us turn to the role of the Greeks in the Scythian-Persian wars. They were tasked with guarding the Istros bridge, which would allow the Persians to return. For this reason, part of the Scythian contingent decided to make a deal with the Ionians waiting for the Istros bridge, while the other part decided to stop dragging the Persians after them and attack the Persian army looking for food. The Persian horse had little chance against the Scythian horse. For the Scythian horse, there is no difference between a night attack and a day attack, they can attack without pause. But the Persians found the weak point of the Scythian horse. Donkeys and mules are not found in Scythian geography because they are not resistant to the cold. The Persians brought donkeys against the Scythian horses, and the Scythian horses, hearing the sound of donkeys for the first time, were scared and turned back when they were about to attack.¹²³ However, this did not change the course of the war, the Persian army was worn out and decided to return back. Their way back was the Istros Bridge protected by the Ionians. The Scythians reached this bridge before the Persians and said, "Ionians, the days are numbered and you are wrong to stay here. It was fear that prevented you from leaving. Now break the bridge with all speed and go on your way in freedom and happiness, thanking the gods and the Scythians. As for him who was once your master, we will leave him be. He will never again lead his army against any nation." This proposal of the Scythians made a great impression among the Greeks. They convened a council, but different opinions arose among them.¹²⁴ These disagreements took place mainly between Miltiades of Athens, the general and despot of Hellespont, and Histiaeus of Miletus. Miltiades of Athens argued that the Scythian proposal should be accepted and Ionia should be freed, while Histiaeus argued that if Darius' support ended, the people would choose democracy and despotisms would end; therefore, Persian rule should continue and the bridge should not be destroyed.¹²⁵ The

¹²² Herodotus, *Ibid.*, IV, p. 327.

¹²³ Herodotus, *Ibid.*, IV, p. 327.

¹²⁴ Herodotus, *Ibid.*, IV, p. 335.

¹²⁵ Herodotus, *Ibid.*, IV, p. 337.

majority of the council, Daphnis of Abydos, Hippoclus of Lampsacus, Herophatus of Parium, Metrodorus of Proconessus, all voted in favor of Histieus. Following Histieus' advice, they demolished only the part of the Isthmus bridge that was only an arrow shot away from the Scythian shore. They said to the Scythians, "You showed us the right way, we did what you wanted and destroyed the bridge, now you take revenge on the Persians." The Scythians, who trusted the Ionians once again, returned to look for the enemy and found the enemy where they did not expect. Because Histiaeus, upon the call of Darius, rebuilt the destroyed bridge and the Persians crossed over. The Scythians mocked the Ionians by saying that if they were free, they were the most cowardly people, and if they were slaves, there was no slave who would love his master more.¹²⁶

We shall evaluate the Persian campaign in terms of Scythian-Greek relations. The Persians received support from the Greeks in Anatolia during the Scythian campaign they undertook to subjugate the Greeks north of the Black Sea. This shows us that the Greeks were not united within themselves, and even the Greeks (Ionians) on the Anatolian side had differences of opinion among themselves. The Scythians criticized the Greeks for going back on their word and obeying the Persians at the expense of their own independence. The Ionian change of heart facilitated the Persian retreat and brought the Persians back from the brink of disaster.¹²⁷

In the III century BC, the Scythians had lost their former power. Alexander the Great, who participated in the struggle for dominance in the Black Sea and whose ideal was to unite east and west, was confronted by the Persian king Darius. While the biggest struggle was between the Persian King Darius and Alexander, Scythians and Greeks played a key role in this struggle with the alliances they formed. Let's talk about the details of the Cilician War (333 BC), the Persian-Alexander struggle. The outcome of the Cilician War was determined by the wrong choice of the Persians. Despite having a strong and crowded army, the Persians chose a narrow strait instead of a pitched battle, which put them in a difficult position against Alexander. This gave Alexander a great advantage and brought defeat to the Persians. At the Battle of Cilicia, many Persians, including Darius' mother and wife, were captured by Alexander. Alexander treated the captives very well and entertained them like guests. While

¹²⁶ Herodotus, *Ibid.*, IV, p. 337.

¹²⁷ George Vernadsky, *Ibid*, p. 70.

Darius was preparing for war by having long spears and swords made, he also sought peace with Alexander considering the great defeat he had suffered and even thanked him for treating the captives, including his mother and wife, well.¹²⁸ Darius called for friendship and offered Alexander lands west of the Euphrates, thirty talents of silver and one of his daughters to marry and become his son-in-law.¹²⁹ But Alexander rejected the Persian king's proposal and replied to the ambassadors as follows: "If there were two suns, the world could not maintain its order and plan. As long as two kings share the rulership, the inhabited world cannot remain calm and free from war."¹³⁰ Darius was not indifferent to the open call to war. He built chariots with scythes that frightened the opponent. In addition, the Tigris River being a natural defense area due to its high water volume and heavy currents played an important role in Darius' war strategy. The Macedonian soldiers' countermeasures against these strategies were to frighten the horses by striking their swords against their shields against the scythe-wielding Persian chariots, which caused chaos, and to make a bridge of flesh by holding on to each other in the Tigris River and thus crossing the river. Alexander neutralized Darius' strategy with practical moves. The most important trump card of the Persians in this war was the nomadic Scythians. A thousand Scythian horsemen entered the Macedonian camps, captured weapons and rescued prisoners, including Darius' mother. But Darius' mother never left her seat, never believed that their fate would change.¹³¹ He is also resentful of his son for putting him in this situation. As a result of this success of the Scythians, Alexander's response to the Persians with his fleet and elite horse guards was not delayed. The battle started by Alexander's fleet near Arbela resulted in the victory of the Macedonians. The victory of the Macedonians had a great repercussion among the Greek city-states. For most Greeks, Macedonian rule in this geography was a chain on their freedom. If they could not break it now, it would become more difficult to break it in time. At this very moment, the Greek revolt in Thrace became a spark for them. This revolt against Alexander was supported by the northern part of Greece, but not by the Athenians, who were favored by Alexander.

¹²⁸ Diodorus Siculus XVII, Ibid., p. 290.

¹²⁹ Diodorus Siculus XVII, Ibid, p. 273.

¹³⁰ Diodorus Siculus XVII, Ibid, p. 274.

¹³¹ Diodorus Siculus XVII, Ibid, p. 273.

The balance in the struggle for dominance in the north of the Black Sea is changing. While there was a Persian-Scythian struggle in the V century BC, the Persians received significant support from the Scythians against the Macedonians in the Cilician war in the III century BC. The Greeks saw the Macedonian victory in this war as a great threat to their independence and started a revolt. But again, there was no complete unity among the Greeks, and the Athenians did not support the revolt against Alexander.¹³² The Scythians followed a clear policy against the dominant powers such as Persia and Macedonians and did not compromise their independence. On the other hand, the fact that the Greeks were city-states made them culturally and commercially strong, but politically they were under the influence of the dominant powers and could not pursue a clear policy against them.

The political and military weakening of the Scythians in the north of the Black Sea in the III century. The Scythians, who were not interested in the coastal areas of the Black Sea, started to expand their area of dominance when they started to trade under the influence of the Greeks.¹³³ The Kingdom of Bosphoros, a combined Scythian-Greek kingdom in the IV century BC, expanded its borders from the eastern Crimea to include all the colonies and local towns on the Taman peninsula and south of the Hypanis River during the reign of the Spartacian dynasty, which is thought to have been a Scythian and Thracian dynasty. The Bosphoros Kingdom, which included the cities on both sides of the Kerch Strait, became a unified state.¹³⁴ During the reign of the Spartacus dynasty, thought to be Scythian-Thracian nobility, Bosphorus, whose capital was Pantikapaion, turned into a powerful Greco-Scythian state.¹³⁵ In the III century BC, as the Scythians became stronger in trade, they began to interfere more frequently in the internal affairs of the Bosphorus Kingdom and aimed to dominate the Greek colonies. In the second century BC, Scythian pressure increased in Chersonesus as it did in Crimea. As a result, the city of Chersonesus asked for help from King Mithridates of Pontus.

Strobon also mentioned that the Scythians struggled to maintain their existence in the Black Sea against King Mithridates of Pontus in the second century BC. In the light of the

¹³² Diodorus Siculus XVII, Ibid, p. 273.

¹³³ Kürşat Bardakçı, Ibid., p. 32.

¹³⁴ BUTYAGIN, Alexander M. "The History of the Northern Black Sea Region", Greeks on the Black Sea: Ancient Art from the Hermitage, (ed.) Anna A. Trofimova, Getty Publications, Los Angeles, 2007, p. 9.

¹³⁵ KOVALEV, S., DIAKOV, İlkçağ Tarihi, C. I, (Çev. Özdemir İnce), Yordam Yayınları, İstanbul, 2017, p. 403.

information provided by Strabon, the Scythian communities followed a policy of balance in this process and formed an alliance with the Roxolana, a Sarmatian tribe living between the Don and Dnieper rivers, against the king of Pontus and the Greek colonies. In the confrontation between the Greeks and Scythians, the city of Chersonesus, which has fertile lands, especially the city of Chersonesus, where grain cultivation is carried out, is effective because the Greeks meet their grain and salt fish needs from this city. In the struggles with the Greeks, the son of Scilurus, who was famous for his warriorism, was at the head of the Scythians.¹³⁶ Strabo commented that if lightly armed nomadic people faced a well-organized phalanx, defeat for the nomadic people was inevitable. As a war strategy, the Scythians had the city of Chersonesus walled and slaves erected and established bases in Chabum, Palacium and Neopolis in case of an attack by Mithridates' generals. In this war, we see that the Scythians adapted to the war tactics brought by the settled life. However, despite all these precautions of the Scythians, Mithridates, the king of Pontus, managed to capture the city by filling the military garrison he established on the promontory of the gulf extending to the city with his generals and approaching the city within walking distance.¹³⁷ The city of Chersonesus repaid the Pontic king with wheat, money and soldiers.¹³⁸ The Scythian-Greek struggle in the Black Sea region strengthened the hand of Mithridates, the King of Pontus, and his sphere of influence in the Black Sea increased.

5.2. Scythian-Greek Trade Relations

Scythian and Greek relations began when they met in the Dnieper River valley as a result of Greek colonization movements.¹³⁹ The relations between these two people, whose paths crossed in the north of the Black Sea, started commercially. However, according to many Greek authors, the Greek colonization of the Black Sea began much earlier than previously thought. The story of the Argonauts, who set out under the leadership of Jason in the second century BC in search of the golden fleece and landed on the northern shores of

¹³⁶ Strabon XI, Ibid., p. 244.

¹³⁷ Strabon, Ibid XI, p. 247.

¹³⁸ S. Y. VNUKOV, "The North-Western Crimea: an Historical-Archaeological Essay", North Pontic Archaeology: Recent Discoveries and Studies, (ed.) Gocha R. Tsetskhladze, Brill, Leiden 2001, p. 168.

¹³⁹ E. Vakouftsi, The perception of the Scythians in Greek historiography (5th-3rd cent. BC), images of the other (A Dissertation thesis submitted with a view to obtaining the degree of Master of Arts (MA) in Black Sea Cultural Studies), International Hellenic University, 2013, p.7.

Pontus Euxinos, is cited as evidence for this. According to the legend, Iolkos took the Kingdom of Thessaly from his brother Aison and sent his nephew Jason with the best sailors of Greece to Colchis to find the golden fleece so that he would not pose a threat. Since the name of the person who built the ship was Argon, they were called Argonauts. After many adventures, the Argonauts reached the shores of the Black Sea, whose people had a tradition of sacrificing foreigners who came to the shore. But the King of Colchis, who did not want to give them the golden fleece, subjected them to deadly tests. Despite this, the Argonauts managed to take the golden fleece and return to their country.¹⁴⁰ Although this story is known as a legend, it has historical authenticity. The Pahasis River in Colchis carries gold silt. To collect this gold, the Colchians used an uncombed sheepskin, hence the name of the story of the golden fleece.¹⁴¹

There are also archaeological records that support the association of the northwestern part of the Black Sea with Mycenaean culture at the time of the golden fleece story, which tells of the Greeks' introduction to steppe society. For example, silver and stone ceremonial weapons found by chance after the First World War in the vicinity of the Bessarabian burial of Dneprovsk, a silver hairpin with gold inlay, a silver Mycenaean dagger with gold inlay, and a silver Mycenaean dagger with gold inlay, which show the connection with Mycenaean Greece, are not conclusive evidence, but are largely evidence of the Mycenaean culture's trade relations with Scythia.¹⁴² With the legend of Argon, the Mycenaean culture discovered that they could bring products such as wheat, salted fish, nuts, timber for shipbuilding, olives, wine, minerals, etc. to Greece while bringing the pottery of the Mediterranean to Colchis. Even if it was not fully realized at the time of the Mycenaeans, the Ionians later developed the trade network through their colonies. Among the products imported to Scythia by the Greeks before colonization were pots and pans and wine vessels. The poet Anacreontic mentioned that the Scythians loved wine and entertained loudly; he even reported that the Greeks would say "Pull a Scythian " when they wanted dry wine, meaning pour dry wine. During the colonization period, amphorae used for importing wine were frequently encountered.¹⁴³ After the Greek colonies were established, the importance of cities such as

¹⁴⁰ Diodorus Siculus IV, Ibid, p. 470.

¹⁴¹ Özhan Öztürk, Pontus: Antikçağ'dan Günümüze Karadeniz'in Etnik ve Siyasi Tarihi, Ankara: Nika Kitap, 2011, p. 63.

¹⁴² Özhan Öztürk, Ibid, p. 64.

¹⁴³ N. Grakov, Ibid, p. 113.

Olbia, Pantikapea and Bospor increased. Wine was imported from the islands of Olbia and Kios, and Ionian mirrors, glass, amber beads, beautiful earrings and olive oil were among the imported products of the Scythians. Scythians, on the other hand, exported wheat, fish, wax, leather, cattle and plenty of slaves. Herodotus reported that the Scythians captured hundreds of slaves in battle.¹⁴⁴

5.3. Scythian-Greek Cultural Relations

Greek and Scythian society, while trading in colonial cities such as Olbia, also lived together and created a common culture in the Bosphorus Kingdom, which they ruled together. Initially, both cultures took measures to protect their identities. The Greeks called those who were not their own barbarians, and as they got to know different communities, they wanted to distinguish themselves from other societies by calling themselves Hellenes.¹⁴⁵ Herodotus emphasizes that the Scythians were against everything adopted from outside, especially from Hellenic culture. The most important example of this situation is what happened to Anacharsis and Scyles.¹⁴⁶ Scyles knew Greek culture well and could read and write Greek. His tragedy was that he was raised in Greek culture by his Greek mother. Scyles, who became king after the death of his father Ariapithes, is a Scythian king, but he feels that he belongs to Greek culture. He has to hide his closeness to Greek culture from the Scythian people. Therefore, he leaves his army in the suburbs of the city of the Sorysthenians, and after the city gates are closed, he acts as a Greek citizen behind the walls. Wearing Greek clothes, Scyles worshiped the gods with his rituals and then left the city again as a Scythian king. Scyles, who repeated this often, was denounced to the Scythians by a Greek citizen who could not stomach the Scythians' mockery of the Greeks during a ritual in Borysthenes, saying, "Your god has possessed you and driven you to madness." The denouncer said to the Scythians, "That god has also captured your king; if you don't believe it, come and see." He hid the Scythians in a tower and showed them their king. When Scyles returned, this

¹⁴⁴ Özhan Öztürk, *Ibid*, p. 66.

¹⁴⁵ J. M Hall, *Hellenecity: between ethnicity and culture*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002, p. 111.

¹⁴⁶ Herodotus, *Ibid.*, VII, p. 275.

information had already spread to the whole army, and the Scythians revolted against Scyles and replaced him with his brother.¹⁴⁷

Another instance is as follows: Anacharsis, who has traveled to many parts of the world and spread his wisdom in many places, enters Kyzikos on his way back from the Greek lands and witnesses the magnificent ritual they perform for the feast of their mother goddess. He wanted to perform the same ritual when he returned to his country, so he performed the ritual of celebrating the goddess' feast in the Scythian forest. A Scythian who saw him informed King Saulius, who killed him with an arrow. Anacharsis pays with his life for celebrating the Greek festival. As can be seen, although the two cultures resist adopting each other's culture, their rapprochement has become inevitable over time.¹⁴⁸ We attempt to explain this interaction by including the legend of the Argonauts, a Greek legend and mythology based on historical facts, the Amazons, and the stories of the traveling philosophers Anacharsis and Toxaris, who were also bridges between the two societies, and Lucian's work, which contains stories between Toxaris of Scythia and his Greek friend Mnesippus, comparing the two societies in terms of their friendship relations, which also contains fiction with a high share of reality.

¹⁴⁷ Herodot, *Ibid.*, VII, p. 281.

¹⁴⁸ Herodot VII, *Ibid.*, p. 275.

6. THE SCYTHIANS IN GREEK SAGAS AND MYTHOLOGY

6.1. Amazons

The Greeks created many sagas and myths at the beginning of their colonization activities. In the sagas and myths they created, they also gave a wide place to the Scythians, with whom they interacted frequently in this process. Among these legends, the Amazons, known as Scythian women warriors, and the Trojan War, in which they confronted the Achaeans, have an important place.

First of all, let's talk about the history of the Amazons. Procopius explained the issue of the Amazons based on Strabo's views. Strabo mentioned that women were not in the nature of men in any period and geography, and that the conditions of life compelled them to show male courage. He stated that the Amazon camps were established on the Thermodon River in the city of Amisus (Samsun).¹⁴⁹ Procopius tells the story of the emergence of the Amazons as follows: A barbarian people who set out with their women to invade Asia left their women in the area around the Thermodon River and went to Asia; but the men were destroyed by the people there. Left all alone, the women had to fight against the dangers alone and formed the Amazons. Procopius mentions that the Huns raided the territory of the Roman Empire many times and after their retreat, Roman soldiers found their women.¹⁵⁰

Herodotus' information about the Amazons is quite different from Strabo's. Strabo states that the Scythians left their women in Thermedos when they went on an Asian expedition, that the women who were left alone during this process learned to fight like men to protect themselves over time, and that the Amazons were Scythian women; Herodotus, on the other hand, states that the Scythians expelled the Cimmerians from their homeland, followed them to Asia and ruled Asia for many years after ending the Median domination there, that the women who were left alone during this period married slaves, and that when the Scythians returned home, they fought the children of these slaves with whips, not with bows and arrows, to remind them that they were slaves.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Strabon XI, Ibid., p. 230.

¹⁵⁰ Procopius VIII, Ibid., p. 77.

¹⁵¹ Strabon XI, Ibid., p. 230.

Herodotus also states that the Greeks carried as many Amazons as they could on ships after the Thermedonian expedition, and that the Amazons attacked the crew on the ship, killed many of them, escaped and then raided the Scythian country with the horses they captured from Scythia. The Scythians were astonished by this enemy, whose language and clothes they knew neither, and realized that they were women only from the deceased Amazons at the end of the war.¹⁵² The Scythians then changed their tactics and sent young Scythian men of their own age to an area close to the Amazon camps and told them to imitate the Amazonian way of life and get closer to them. When the Amazons realized that these young Scythian men camped nearby were harmless, they became close to them; but they could not convince them to take them to Scythia. The Amazons said, "We cannot live like your women. We do not know handicrafts, we ride horses and throw javelin. You take your inheritance from your parents and let us settle together across the Tanais River." and the Scythian youth accepted this offer.¹⁵³ Herodotus did not refer to Amazons as Scythian women, but as women who married and established kinship with Scythians. In another statement, he referred to the women of Souromatea, who settled east of the Tanais River after traveling three days from the Tanais River, as Amazons. He stated that the Amazons continued their way of life, riding horses and throwing javelin. The reason why Herodotus described the Amazons as Sourmatea, unlike other authors, may also be due to the fact that many authors describe the Souromatea as Scythians.

Diodorus, on the other hand, described Scythian women as warriors who fought fearlessly like men and were trained for war. Like other authors, Diodorus of Sicily concluded that the Amazons were Scythian women. He emphasized the power of the Amazons by referring to the Scythian queen Tomris, who led the Amazon army, defeated the powerful Persian army and crucified their king Cyrus.¹⁵⁴ According to the information given by Diodorus, the Amazons made their dominance felt in a large part of Asia and Europe, and in the country located on the Thermodon River, they lived in one of the periods when female domination reached the highest degree. They increased their wealth with the people they dominated. Tomris gave herself the title of daughter of Ares. This is not only an

¹⁵² Herodot IV., Ibid., p. 310.

¹⁵³ Herodot IV, Ibid., p. 312.

¹⁵⁴ Diodorus Siculus II, Ibid., p. 31.

indication of her pride in herself, but also reveals her faith interaction with the Greeks.¹⁵⁵ According to Diadoros, during this period of female dominance, men were humiliated and used as slaves, and boys' limbs were mutilated so that they would not get ahead of women in battles. Girls' right breasts were burned so that they would not be prevented from shooting arrows. Queen Tomris founded a city called Themyscira and built a famous palace here.¹⁵⁶ It can be concluded from this that the Amazons adapted to the settled order, albeit partially. Thanks to her intelligence and warrior personality, Queen Tomris managed to expand her borders as far as the Danube River. The Amazons are known for their success in warfare as well as for their kind management approach towards the people they dominated.

According to Greek mythology, it was Heracles, the son of Zeus, who prepared the end of the Amazon army. Heracles' expedition against the Amazons was intended to make them forget their name and existence and led to the end of the Amazon army. In the end, only a small number of Amazons who survived in the Thermodon region were left with the fire of revenge. The event that fueled the fire of revenge was the King of Athens making the Amazon Hippolyte his slave.¹⁵⁷ Unable to accept this situation, the Amazons united with their ancestors, the Scythians, and advanced through Thrace and then crossed into Europe and reached Attica. The Amazon queen Antiope, who was one of the causes of the war and married to the Greek king, also took part in the war on the side of her husband Theseus. The war ended with the superiority of the Athenians. The Amazons settled in the Scythian country together with the Scythians. The Greek-Amazon struggle continues in the Trojan War (V century BC). The Amazon queen Penthesileia, who survived the Heracles campaign, accidentally killed her brother during the hunt. Unwilling to live with the guilt of this, Penthesileia chose to die in battle for a holy cause, and she allied herself with the Trojans against the Greeks who were trying to destroy them. She slaughtered many Greeks. After gaining the upper hand in the war, she died at the hands of Achilles. Afterwards, the number of Amazons gradually decreased and their heroism became the subject of stories, even though they were seen as fiction by people.¹⁵⁸ As a result, we see that the Amazons, who

¹⁵⁵ Diodorus Siculus II, *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁵⁶ Diodorus Siculus II, *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁵⁷ Diodorus Siculus II, *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁵⁸ Diodorus Siculus II, *Ibid.*, p. 37.

were composed of Scythian women, were in a struggle with the Greeks and at the end of these fights, the Amazons were erased from history.

6.2. Adventures of The Argonauts

6.2.1. Diodorus Siculus Translation

Diadorus wrote about the adventures of the Argonauts (460-450 BC), who were an example of the interaction between the Greek and Scythian people. The story of the Argonauts begins with Jason, the nephew of the Thessalian king Pelias. Jason is a very intelligent and brave person. Peliason sees his nephew as a danger to his kingdom. That is why he wants to drive him away. To this end, he encourages him to sail to Colchis. Colchis is known to be inhabited by wild and barbaric people, and the locals are known for sacrificing foreigners who come ashore. But Jason, who is very eager to sail to this region, thinks that it is not impossible to succeed. He immediately started working on this and built a unique ship. Then he selected people in Greece who were willing to join the expedition. Among these people was Heracles. Heracles is also the general of the ship. Since the name of the master who built the ship was Argo, the ship was named Argo, and the people who participated in this expedition were called Argonates.

The Argonauts had many adventures. But the part that interests us is the part that is more related to the Scythians. When the Argonauts set foot in a country in Thrace, whose king was Phineus, they found two young men locked in a tomb vault as punishment. These two young men are the sons of Phineus and Cleopatra. But why are the king's sons in this state? It all starts when Phineus falls in love with and marries Idaea, the daughter of the Scythian king Dardanus. Phineus did not even see his sons because of Idaea's love, and Phineus believed Idaea's words that his sons had been violent against him in order to avenge her. The young men, punished in this way by their father, saw Heracles and his friends and begged for help. Heracles and his friends won the battle against Phineus and handed over the rule of the country to these two young men. The sons of Phineus, who took over the country, wanted to punish the Scythian princess, their stepmother, by torturing her. However, after Heracles convinced them, they gave up and sent the Scythian princess to Scythia to her father. However, Scythian justice did not forgive the princess whom the Greeks had forgiven, and the Scythian princess was sentenced to death by her father.

The Argonauts' next stop is Tauric Chersonese (an ancient Greek colony in the southwest of Crimea). But the Argonauts are unaware that the locals are killing the newcomers. The king of Tauric Chersonese is Perses. Perses' daughter, Hecate, surpasses her father in courage. Hecate has a structure that does not recognize law and justice. Hecate, who is especially fond of hunting, turns her arrows from animal to human if she is unlucky. He is also the inventor of deadly poisons. Hecate is the inventor of Aconite poison. She tried the first poison on her father to ascend to the throne. After taking over the country, she built a temple of Artemis and made it a tradition to sacrifice foreigners who went there. Circe, one of Hecate's daughters, also devoted herself to designing drugs. Using what she had learned from her mother and what nature had given her, she discovered many drugs. Circe was married to the king of the Sarmatians, known as Scythians, and because she was fond of power and might, she poisoned her husband and treated her subjects cruelly in order to seize control. In the mythology of the Greeks, we see that the Scythians were related to the Scythians, and in this sense, like the relations between the Chinese and the Huns, the stories of trying to take over the government of the country from time to time through these kinship relations have found a wide place.

7. STORIES OF SCYTHIANS AND GREEK PHILOSOPHERS

7.1. Lucian, Toxaris Or Friendship Translation

This work, written by Lucian, is based on the dialogues between Toxaris of Scythia and his Greek friend Mnesippus, which turned into a debate, and the stories they told to each other. While the stories told by Toxaris and Mnesippus have a high degree of authenticity, Lucian's fictionalizations are also present.

The issue that drives Toxaris and Mnesippus to argue is the following: Is friendship more important in Scythian society or in Greek society? The issue that ignites the debate is the story of Pylades and Orestes, the subject of a Greek tragedy. According to mythology, Orestes is the son of Agamemnon, who led the Trojan War. His mother Klytemnestra, in league with her lover Aegisthus, killed his father Agamemnon. Orestes seeks to avenge his father's death and finds support in Pylades, a friend since childhood. Although Pylades seems to be a background character in the tragedy, he is the one who mentors Orestes to kill his mother and his mother's lover. With Pylades' help, Orestes returns to Argos and kills his mother Klytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus. The Scythian Toxaris and the Greek Mnesippus interpreted this tragedy according to their own cultures.

Toxaris of Scythia first mentioned that the memories of Orestes and Pylades were a source of light for the Scythian people that led to friendship, in contrast to the destruction that the memories of Orestes and Pylades aroused in the souls of the Greek people, and that the Scythian people took them as role models in their friendship relations and respected them, and his Greek friend Menippus asked him the following question: "Toxaris, do you sacrifice Orestes and Pylades because you consider them gods?" Toxaris replied, "We do not consider them gods, we want to honor them because we respect them." He also said that they wanted to remember people of high achievement and honor and that they wanted their friendship and loyalty to take root in their society. Menippus said, "But once they were an enemy who entered the land of your ancestors, they were captured and arrested by your ancestors, and when they were going to sacrifice to Artemis, they fled with Artemis. They mocked the Scythian society by kidnapping your gods. And you honor them after their deaths." Toxaris replied: "Actually, you are explaining why we honor them, the fact that they sailed from their country Argo to Calais is proof that they were brave men. It also shows

that they dealt with everything very boldly and kidnapped Artemis to punish the king who they thought had wronged them." When Menippus replied, "Then will you also deify the Phoenicians who sail to Pontus or Lake Maeotis, or the fishermen and peddlers who sail along the coasts?" Toxaris replied, "We barbarians appreciate good people more than you Greeks. We can see this from the fact that Orestes does not even have a grave among you." He emphasized that Scythians always honored goodness, whether it was their own or not, that they allocated a temple to Pylades and offered sacrifices, and that people who did noble deeds were appreciated instead of bearing grudges, even if they had no friends. He also stated that their ancestors recorded the struggle of Orestes and Pylades for each other on the bronze tablets they established in Oresteia, made the law that was a lesson for them and taught these tablets to their children. In addition to the tablets, the story of Pylades and Orestes is also reflected in Scythian paintings. The ship that Orestes and his friends sailed on crashed into the rocks and broke apart, the arrest of Orestes and Pylades, their preparation for sacrifice, their struggle for each other, the Scythians' attempts to capture the ship, some of them being wounded and some of them swimming backwards were depicted on the opposite wall.

Toxaris also mentioned the importance Scythians attach to comradeship. He mentioned that the Scythians called Orestes and Pylades "Korakoi", which in Scythian means the guiding spirits of friendship. Menippus replied, "I can see from your changing my mind in the opposite direction that the Scythians were not only good at shooting arrows and fighting, but also skilled in the use of language and painting." He also said, "I knew the Scythian people as uncivilized, knowing anger better than friendship, lacking the tradition of humor, and I was quite surprised to hear that you eat the flesh of your dead fathers." "Now, if the importance we give to our ancestors in our culture and how we respect them were relevant to our topic, I would tell you about it, but since our topic is friendship, I will not deviate from the subject." said Toxaris. In addition, Toxaris stated that although Greeks have tragedies, plays and poems written on friendship, even if they are moved and shed tears, they are not so successful in practice and retreat in times of danger.

Toxaris and Menippus decide to stop talking about old friendships and focus on the friendships of their own time. Accordingly, Toxaris on the Scythian side and Menippus on the Greek side will tell five stories each, and the side that tells the best story of friendship will be the winner. Before they start telling their stories, they swear that they will not tell

lies or fictions to each other. First, Menippus swears on behalf of Zeus and Phillips that he will tell the truth.

Menippus' first story is the friendship between Agathakles of Samos and Deinias, son of Lyson of Ephesus. Agathocles of Samos does not belong to the upper class in the government of Samos. Deinias, by contrast, comes from a very wealthy family. Most of his friends, with the exception of his childhood friend Agathakles, approach him to take advantage of his wealth. Agathokles spent some time with them and realized how far from friendship they were. He told this opinion to Deinias. But Deinias, who did not pay attention to what his friend said, started not to invite Agathakles to the places they were going to and became more and more distant from his friend. The crew who flattered Deinias made him believe that Charicleia, the wife of Demonax, one of the Ephesian elite, was in love with him, and they sent flowers and fruits to her house and prepared an environment for forbidden love. It took no time for Deinias, immature and seduced by the feeling of being admired, to fall into this trap. Charicleia, with her grace and intelligence, is equipped to easily subjugate a lover. Many misfortunes befell Deinias, who was tamed by the attention shown by Charicleia, who played the game of love to countless young men and destroyed many properties. After losing all his wealth in Charicleia's path, when Charicleia tells him that she has been kept at home by her husband to get rid of him and that they can no longer see each other, Deinias seeks remedy with his old friend Agathakles and tells him that his business is going badly and that he has lost his beloved to a Cretan rival. Agathakles tolerates his friend who distances himself from him because he warned him and sells everything he inherited in Samos and gives the money to his friend. Charicleia, who is aware of the existence of the money, arranges a meeting with Deinias and both takes his money and has him caught by her husband. Deinias kills both him and her husband who attacked her. Deinias is then punished by being exiled to Gyaras. Agathocles does not leave his friend alone, he goes into exile with him and stays there even after his friend's death so as not to leave him alone.

The second story of Menippus takes place on a ship sailing from Italy to Athens, as witnessed by the captain Simylus. The ship is carrying a group of passengers, including Euthydikos and Daman. While Euthydikos is strong and vigorous, Damon is pale and tired due to the illness he has overcome. While the ship is sailing in the Adriatic, a big storm breaks out, followed by a hurricane and all other misfortunes. This harsh weather does not do Damon any good and he leans against the boat and starts vomiting. But he can't hold on

and falls overboard. Euthydiaus, who hears his cries for help as he tries to keep himself on the boat to avoid drowning, jumps into the sea to help his friend. In the darkness and in the middle of the sea, they are saved by holding on to the pieces of wood thrown by the other passengers on the ship and hugging each other. Menippus: "Is there a more important sign of friendship than sharing the death of a friend?" and then he begins to tell his next story.

In this story, Menippus tells of the friendship between Eudamidas of Carinth and his wealthy friends Aretaeus and Charixenus of Sicyon. The story begins with the will of Eudamidas after his death. In his will, Eudamidas asked his friends to support his mother in her old age and to marry his daughter Charixenus with the largest dowry they could afford. If something happened to one of his friends, he wanted the other to take responsibility. To everyone who did not know that he had two rich friends, this will seem very funny. The lucky friends Aretaeus and Charixenus set out to fulfill the will. But Charixenus died five days after his friend's death. His other friend, Aretaeus, upholds his friend's will and supports his mother. He brings his daughter as a bride on the same day as his own daughter, with the same dowry. Toxaris tells this story as "Aretaeus acted very nobly. But Eudamidas, who trusted his friends, deserves the highest praise."

The fourth story of Menippus is the story of the friendship of Zenothemis of Massilia. Zenothemis is a very handsome, cultured and wealthy gentleman. Zenothemis' wife, in contrast, is deformed and her beauty is rather shadowy. When Zenothemis is asked why he married such a woman, the real story is revealed. Zenothemis had married the daughter of his friend Menecrates, a distinguished man like himself. Menecrates was punished for presenting an unconstitutional proposal to the assembly and lost all his wealth and honor. But his only concern is the condition of his daughter. He is devastated thinking that his daughter has no proper dowry and that no one will marry her because of her appearance. Witnessing this situation, Zenusthemis marries his friend's daughter and cherishes her. In this story, Menippus emphasizes that friendship is much more important to the Greeks than fame, glory, beauty and wealth. Ardandan said, "This must have been incomprehensible to the Scythians, who were used to choosing the most beautiful of concubines."

The protagonists of the last story of Menippus are Demetrius and Antiphilus, childhood friends who accompany each other to Egypt for military training. Antiphilus is studying medicine, while Demetrius is attending philosophy school. Antiphilus is eager to see the pyramids and the statues of Memnon. Especially the stories about the pyramids

leaving no shadow and Memnon shouting against the sun attract his curiosity even more. Unable to risk the sun and fatigue, he leaves Demetrius behind and sets off for the Nile. But there he encountered troubles that would require the support of strong friends. His Syrian slave Syrus, in league with temple robbers, broke into the temple of the god and stole gold and silver figurines, hiding them in Antiphilus' house under his bed. Antiphilus, who was in class at the time, was imprisoned along with Syrus. Unable to prove his innocence, Antiphilus is tortured and ill-treated by the guards and other prisoners for his supposed disrespect to God, and when he tries to defend himself, Demetrius, whose behavior is seen as brazen, is very worried when he learns of all this and immediately goes to his friend. But Antiphilus is unrecognizable. When Demetrius cannot recognize his friend by looking at the prisoners, he finds him by shouting his name and never leaves his friend again. He works during the day to take care of his friend, and at night he sleeps at the door of the prison so that he will not be alone. But when the guards refused to allow him to do so, he was thrown inside. He begins to live behind bars with his friend. While other prisoners escape from the prison with their plans, these two friends choose to stay. Impressed by their behavior, the court officials released them. But Antiphilus and Demetrius refuse to accept this and demand that they be proven innocent. In the end, they are both proven innocent and rewarded by the court. Demetrius leaves the reward to his friend and sets off for India. Because now he knows that his friend is safe and can live his life in peace.

Toxaris emphasized that the Greek friendship described in the story was worthy of praise and said, "If you had not accused me of boasting in words, I would have mentioned Demetrius' oratory skills in defense of Antiphilus." Menippus then said, "I have told you five stories about the importance the Greeks attach to friendship. I wonder how you can top them." and reminded Toxaris of Toxaris' saying, "Scythians would rather lose their right hand than lose one on one. Then it was Toxaris' turn to tell stories.

Before starting his stories, Toxaris emphasized that the Greek understanding of friendship and the Scythian understanding of friendship are very different, saying: "Your friendships start because of military training or because you are comrades, neighbors. We, on the other hand, follow the one we see as strong and successful." He also stated that friendship in Scythians started with a serious and formal oath ceremony, and that they swore by pouring their blood into a glass and drinking each other's blood. Mentioning that they made only three agreements in this way, he said that they likened men who had many friends

to women like their lovers. He also said that the indication of strong friendships among the Scythians was not to marry the deformed daughter of a friend, or to give ten talents for the dowry of a friend's daughter, or to put oneself in jail when it was clear that one would be released, and emphasized that these were praiseworthy for the Greeks who knew how to speak eloquently. In addition, Toxaris said that there was nothing in these stories that required courage. He commented that since the Greek way of life was characterized by tranquility, friendships were not tested much, and just as we cannot say whether a captain who has not encountered a storm is good or not, this is also the case for the friendship of the Greeks. However, he said that since the Greeks were adept at boasting about themselves, it was normal for them to boast about their friendship. He pointed out that the Scythians had a way of life that required being prepared to fight and be prepared for attacks at all times, either because they invaded other lands or were invaded, and that the Scythians risked death to protect their friends.

Toxaris swore to Menippus by the wind and the glaive (sword) that he would tell Menippus what was true in his stories. Menippus then said, "I am glad you did not swear by the gods", implying that he was not very confident. Toxaris replied, "Do you think the wind and the glaive are not gods? Is there anything more important in this life than birth and death? The wind symbolizes life and the glaive symbolizes death."

The first story of Toxaris is the tale of Dondamis and Amizoces, whom he befriended by oath three days before the Sauromatian attack on Scythia. The Scythians were utterly routed by the sudden Sauromatian raid, and all the Scythian soldiers died, except for one who swam across the Tanais River. The Sourmatae soldiers attacked the Scythian wagons and looted the tents and wagons. They captured all the inhabitants and brutalized the women and concubines. At that time, Amizoces, while being dragged into captivity, called out to his friend Dondameis to help him, and Dondameis, hearing this, swam towards the arrows of the Sauromatians and called the enemy zirin (one who calls zirin cannot be killed, he gives a ransom to the enemy in return) and said to the Sauromatians "You have seized my property; therefore I cannot pay a ransom. But you can take me prisoner and use me for whatever you want, in exchange for releasing my friend." They said, "You don't have to offer your whole body, just a part of it for ransom." Donmanis' eyes were gouged out as ransom, and then they took his friend Amizoces and leaned on him and went back to their country. But Amizoces could not bear to see his friend deprived of daylight, so he gouged out his eyes with his own

hands. The two friends were seen as a symbol of friendship and cherished by the Scythian people. The friendship between the Scythians frightened their enemies. Toxaris, referring to Menippus, stated that he was telling the plain truth without any fiction, and that if this story were a Greek story, there would be a lot of imagery.

The second story told by Toxaris is that of Belitta, who jumped in front of a lion for her friend. Her friend Basthes was on his horse when the lion threw him off and grabbed him by the throat. In order to save his friend, Belitta provoked the lion to pay attention to him and took his friend from the lion's mouth, half dead. The lion then attacked Belitta and was about to kill her when he managed to thrust his sword into her, but she died as a result of the blows.

The third story of Toxaris is the story of the friendship of Macentes, Lonchates and Arsacomes. Arsacomas went on a tax collection mission to the Bosphorus Kingdom, which paid taxes to the Scythians. At a banquet organized by the Bosphorus king Leucanor, he fell in love with the king's daughter Mazaea. This banquet was mostly attended by the girl's suitors. Traditionally, the girl's suitors would order a glass of wine to the table, first announce that they were suitors for the girl, and then begin to tell about their wealth and treasures. All the suitors were either a king or the son of a king. Our hero, Arsacomas, ordered a glass of wine and asked the king to give his daughter to him for marriage. The king looked at him in surprise because he knew that Arsacomas was a poor Scythian. When the king asked him how many cattle and wagons he had, according to the wealth of the Scythian people, Arsacomes replied that he had two noble friends, a treasure more valuable than any of these, and everyone thought he was drunk and laughed and made fun of him. Insulted, Arsacomes returned to his country and told his friends what had happened: "They value herds more than brave men. They don't know that our friendship is more lasting than the Scythian rule in their country; they mocked not only me, but also you." Arsacomes became very angry when they not only refused to give him the girl he loved, but also mocked him in public. His friends say that if that is the case, we will solve the situation and start to plan. Lonchates laid out the plan and the division of labor. According to this plan, Macentes will kidnap the girl; Arsacomes will gather an army by sitting on the fleece; and Lonchates will bring the king's head. While Lonchates set out to bring the king's head, Arsacomes sat on the fleece. According to a Scythian tradition, a Scythian who has been wronged by an outsider sacrifices a bull. He slaughters the meat, cooks it, sits on the skin and holds his hands behind his back

by the wrists. While the bull's meat is served to the guests, the Scythian who wants to help him puts his right foot on the hide and promises to help him as much as he can. He can give one horseman or ten foot soldiers, or he can help by offering himself personally. Arsacomes also took the post and gathered five thousand horsemen and twenty thousand foot soldiers. Meanwhile, Lonchates arrived at the Bosphorus kingdom and announced that he wanted to meet the king and that he was a Scythian envoy. When he appeared before the king, he announced that Arsacomas was sitting on the post and gathering an army to take revenge on him. He said that he would bring him Arsacomas' head if he gave him his second daughter Barcates as a wife. The king, faced with the danger of the army gathered by the post, accepts Lonchates' offer. When it came time to take the oath, Lonchates told the king, "There are soldiers here, let us be alone and in the presence of Ares." When they were alone, he took the king's head and hid it behind his cloak, creating an air as if he was going to take something and return. The people of the palace could not follow him out of surprise. Meanwhile, the other friend of Macentes went to bring Mazaea to Arsacomas to persuade Deimachus, the man she had married, to become king of the Bosphorus. He told him that the Bosphorus king was dead and that he should take the throne, otherwise the king's illegitimate brother would take the throne, and that he did not like the Alans and was friends with the Scythians. Macentes convinced Adymachus and told him to take his wife Mazaea with him to open the gates of the Bosphorus kingdom and that he could take care of her during the journey. Adymachus accepted these suggestions and set off. Macentes kept his promise by bringing Mazaea, with whom he had set out under the pretext of escort, to Scythia and handing her over to Arsacames. Adymachus, realizing this trick, formed an alliance with the Bosphorus kingdom and the Alans and attacked the Scythians. Although the Scythians lost power in the first encounter, they won the struggle with the army they gathered.

When Menippus said that he found these stories too fairy-tale-like, Toxaris said, "I told it in its simplest form so that you would not be distracted, but you like to embellish the truth." and began to tell his next story. This time Toxaris told the story that had happened to him. Toxaris was curious about Greek culture, so he set out on a journey. He and his friend decided to settle in Amestrise, a port city on the Black Sea coast. After finding a lodging house near the port, they unloaded their belongings from the ship and went shopping. Upon their return, they realized that all their belongings had been stolen. As foreigners, they didn't want to sue their neighbors and face a backlash, so they were left penniless. Toxaris thought

of stabbing himself with his sword rather than starve and be inconvenienced, but his friend Sisinnus managed to convince him not to do so. Sisinnus supported himself and Toxaris by carrying lumber from the harbor. One day, while walking in the bazaar, he saw young and handsome men signing up for duels, so he went home and said to Toxaris, "We have suffered so much misery, let's go and see an entertaining Greek show." He took her and went to the theater. In the theater they saw wild animals in chains, and then young and strong gladiators appeared on the stage. The messenger said, "Does anyone want to fight these men? He will get ten thousand drachmas in return." Then Sisinnus jumped on the stage and brought the money to Toxaris, saying, "If I die, bury me and go to Scythia; if I stay, we will take what we need and return together." He put on the armor given to him and started to fight, received the first wound and was seriously wounded the second time. Seeing this, Toxaris went to him and encouraged him and finally won the battle. The two friends took the road to Scythia together, and Sisinnus' limp became the memory of this struggle.

The final story of Toxaris is that of Abauchas and his friend Gyndanes, who move to the city of the Borystenites with his wife and two children. While protecting Abauchas and his family from robbers, Gyndanes is weakened by a wound he received in a brawl. Abauchas did not forget his friend's sacrifice and took him with him when he left, settling in a new city and establishing a new order together. But a fire broke out in the house they were living in upstairs and downstairs. After waking his wife, Abauchas went to rescue his friend, leaving his children with his wife and letting his half-burnt child fall out of his arms, even though his children told him, "Save us, father." When another friend scolded him for abandoning his wife and children for his friend, he replied: "Why? I may have other children, and it is uncertain whether they will be of any use to me; but I shall not long find another friend like Gyndanes, who gives me abundant proof of his devotion."

As their story comes to an end, Toxaris and Menippus need an Arbitrator to compare the value of friendship between the two people. Menippus said, "If I lose, my tongue goes, if you lose, your hand goes." But then Menippus said, "Since we praise friendship, why don't we make a treaty where friendship will win, neither tongue nor hand will go," and they decided to strengthen friendship without the need for a sword. Toxaris said to Menippus, "From now on, you are mine in Helles, and I am yours if you come to Scythia."

In these works, Lucian compares the perspectives of the two people on friendship through the stories told by Toxaris the Scythian and Menippus the Greek. The different

lifestyles of Greeks and Scythians made their expectations from friendship different. While the Greeks, who had a more comfortable lifestyle, showed their friendship with material and moral support to the extent they could afford, the Scythians, who were always open to war and attacks, showed their friendship by risking death for each other. In general, we see that the societies that are compared with each other are societies that experience intense cultural interaction with geographical proximity. Today's Turkish-Greek relations can be given as an example.

7.2. Lucian, The Scythian or the Consul Translation

Anacharsis is a Scythian philosopher who loves and is curious about the Greek way of life. Following his curiosity, he sets off for the Greek country. Don't be misled by his travels to learn about different cultures, because he is not a Scythian nobleman. He is in the eight-foot group, which means "owner of two oxen and a cart" in Scythian, who bravely pursues his curiosity. From this information, we understand that Scythian society had a classification system based on economic power. The biggest chance for Anacharsis, who was not in the upper class, was his encounter with Toxaris, a Scythian noble. The Toxaris described here is not the same Toxaris who tells stories of friendship in Lucian's other work. Toxaris came to Athens before Anacharsis and never returned to Scythia. Toxaris, who came from a noble family in Scythia, was known as a foreign physician in Greece. The Greeks also referred to him as the son of Asclepius (god of health). The granting of immortality to humans by Zamolxis, a Scythian belief, would have been adopted by the Greeks over time; the Greeks granted immortality to Toxaris. So what made the Greeks attribute immortality to Toxaris, a Scythian nobleman, in other words, deify him? At the time of the great plague, when the Greek people were in the grip of the plague, Toxaris told them that they could be saved from the plague if they sprinkled a lot of wine in the alleyways. The Athenians followed his advice and sprinkled wine in the alleys, and thus they were saved from the plague. It was thought that the wine might have dispersed the harmful vapors or that it was a characteristic of the medical man Toxaris. After Toxaris died, it became a Greek tradition to sacrifice a white horse at his grave. Toxaris' tomb was found where he gave the instructions that saved the Greeks from the plague. That he was buried there is evident from the inscription the Greeks wrote for him and from the Scythian carving used on the pillars. The carved figure holds a bow in his left hand and a book in his right. This provides clues that he was a Scythian sage.

Anacharsis' greatest luck was that Toxaris was alive when he arrived in Athens. Anacharsis felt very foreign when he arrived in Athens. His clothes were considered funny, and the fact that no one spoke the same language as him only deepened his sense of alienation. While he was thinking of going back immediately after seeing Athens, he met Toxaris in the city of Ceramicus, dressed in Greek clothes with a Greek-style shave. Although he was a Scythian nobleman, Anacharsis did not recognize him until he spoke Scythian. When he heard him speaking Scythian, he asked "Are you Toxaris, the one who stayed in Athens?" and when he received the answer yes, he was very happy and started to tell him his problem. He told him that he was curious about Greek culture and had come to learn it, but that he would have returned immediately if he had not met him because he was so unfamiliar with it, and asked for help to teach him Greek culture in the name of his gods Zamolxis and Acinoces. Toxaris replied, "If you want to learn Greek customs, culture and laws, you should get to know Solon, who was the most influential person in the governance of their cities and the formation of their laws, and whom the Greeks respected very much. If you get to know him, it will be as if you know all of Greece, all doors will open to you, and he will have the opportunity to help a foreigner." Anacharsis got in touch with Solon and got to know Greek culture closely.

In both works, Lucian talked about the interaction between Greek and Scythian philosophers and their influence on each other's societies. He changed the Greek perception of the Scythians as a nomadic and warlike people who did not understand friendship, science and art. The fact that the two societies were influenced by each other's legends, tragedies and philosophers, and even offered sacrifices to each other's philosophers or heroes after their deaths, shows the traces they left on each other in many aspects of culture, belief and tradition.

7.3. Clement Of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Greeks Translation

Clement of Alexandria, a Christian thinker from Alexandria, criticized the idolatry prevalent among the Greeks. He described as atheists those who did not recognize the Creator and worshiped the body parts of a child torn apart by the titans or a grieving woman. He considered it irrational for the Greeks to recognize as gods persons or objects that existed only in name and not in reality. Alexandria referred to the Scythian king, who had resisted the beliefs prevalent among the Greeks, as "may all blessings be upon him". The Scythian

king killed with an arrow any of his subjects who participated in the Greek rite of the mother of the gods, which was practiced in Cyzicus by beating drums and hanging images of the goddess from her neck. This attitude of the Scythian king within the framework of the understanding that the enemy of my enemy is my friend was praised by Alexandra.

Describing Greek gods such as Zeus, Ares, Athena, Cyrbos as an army of mortal and imperfect men, Alexandria stated that he proved that the Greek gods were men whose lands they lived in, the arts they practiced and even their graves were known. As evidence for this claim, he cited the lines of poets. "Ares, you plague of men, blood criminal, storm of cities" Ares was a Spartan according to Epicharmus and a Thracian according to Sophocles. Alexandria gave the example of Heracles, son of Zeus, as an example of Greek gods acting immorally, and criticized the Greeks for believing in gods who committed adultery and had immoral behaviors, and for making their children take them as role models.

Regarding Scythian religious beliefs, Alexandria mentioned that they tried to stay away from Greek influence, but he also mentioned that they could not stay far away from this influence. He mentioned that Scythians sacrificed donkeys to their gods, and in general, it was common for the people living in the northern regions to sacrifice donkeys to their gods. He mentioned that they sacrificed by stabbing a sword into the ground just like sacrificing to Ares. He also stated that although they did not have human-shaped gods like the Greeks, the worship of fire, which is common in Asia, was also a common belief among the Scythians, and that it would not take much time for them to worship statues like the Greeks.

8. THE SCYTHIANS FROM THE EYES OF GREEK WRITERS

8.1. Diodorus Siculus, The Library of History Translation

In his work, Siculus mentions the spread of the Scythians, the Greeks' colonization of the Black Sea and the Scythians' inclusion in Greek mythology. According to the information given by Siculus, the Scythians, who were located on the border of India, were initially seen as an unknown community with little territory. Later, their territory expanded in proportion to their courage. While they initially lived along the Aras River, their first talented kings extended their borders to the Caucasus. Across the ocean, they gained territory in the steppes as far as Lake Mariout, and continued to advance as far as the Danube. The Scythians became neighbors with the Greeks north of the Black Sea when the Greeks started colonization activities in the V. and VI. century BC, and intense interaction between the two people began. Myths about the Scythians prove this interaction. For example, according to the Greek myth, a girl is born from the soil among them; this girl, whose upper part is a woman and lower part is a snake, becomes together with Zeus, the most powerful and flirtatious god of the Greeks. From this union, a boy named Scythes (Scythes) was born. In the myth, the fact that the Scythians trace their lineage to the Greek god shows the interaction between them and the Scythians, and suggests that the Greeks considered the Scythians invincible due to their warrior characteristics.

Palus, Napes and their descendants, descendants of the Scythians (Scythes), known for their courage, expanded the borders of their country from Thrace to the Nile River and transformed it into an empire by binding many people to themselves. The Scythians also influenced the lifestyles of the people in the lands they conquered by displacing them. While the Assyrians began their colonization activities, it was unpredictable at the time that the displaced Sauromatae would turn into a great danger for the Scythians.

In the III century BC, when the Scythians lost their former power, Diodorus of Sicily describes the campaigns of Alexander the Great, who participated in the struggle for dominance in the Black Sea, whose ideal was to unite east and west, and the role played by the Scythians in the alliances formed against Alexander. In this geography, the greatest power against Alexander was the Persian king Darius. While the biggest struggle was between the Persian King Darius and Alexander, Scythians and Greeks played a key role in

the alliances formed. The Cilician War in 331 BC can be given as an example of this situation.

The outcome of the Cilician War between Alexander and the Persians was determined by the wrong choice of the Persians. The choice that put the Persians in a difficult situation against Alexander was that they chose the narrow strait instead of a square battle despite having a strong and crowded army. While this gave Alexander a great advantage, it brought defeat to the Persians. At the Battle of Cilicia, many Persians, including Darius' mother and wife, were captured by Alexander. Alexander treated the captives very well and entertained them like guests. While Darius was preparing for war by having long spears and swords made, Darius, considering the great defeat he had suffered, sought peace with Alexander and even thanked him for his kind treatment of the captives, including his mother and wife. Darius appealed to Alexander for friendship and offered him lands west of the Euphrates, thirty talents of silver and one of his daughters as his son-in-law. But Alexander rejected the Persian king's offer and replied to the envoys as follows. "If there were two suns, the world could not maintain its order and plan. As long as two kings share rule, the settled world cannot remain calm and free from war."

Darius was not apathetic to the open call for war. The scythe-wielding chariots that frightened the opponent and the Tigris River's natural defense area due to its high water volume and current played a decisive role in Darius' war strategy. In response to this strategy, Macedonian soldiers deflected the Persian chariots with scythes, which frightened the horses and caused chaos by striking their swords against the shields. They crossed the Tigris River by holding on to each other and building a bridge of flesh. Thus Alexander neutralized Darius' strategy with practical moves. The most important trump card of the Persians in this war was the nomadic Scythians. A thousand Scythian horsemen entered the Macedonian camps, captured weapons and rescued prisoners, including Darius' mother. But Darius' mother never left her seat, never believed that their fate would change. She also resented her son for putting her in this situation. Alexander responded to this success of the Scythians with his fleet and elite horse guards. The battle started by Alexander's fleet near Arbela resulted in a Macedonian victory. The victory of the Macedonians had a great repercussion among the Greek city-states. For most Greeks, Macedonian rule in this geography was a chain on their freedom. If they could not break it now, it would become more difficult to break it in time. At this very moment, the Greek revolt in Thrace was an opportunity for

them. While the northern part of Greece supported this rebellion against Alexander, the Athenians, who were favored by Alexander, did not.

Having accepted the Persian influence in the Black Sea, the Greeks and Scythians sided with the Persians against Alexander. Scythians took an active role in this alliance and attacked the Macedonian camp. The Greeks, on the other hand, took action when the course of the war turned in favor of Alexander. Because they saw Alexander's rule as a threat to their freedom. Although they rebelled against Alexander, they could not achieve unity among themselves in this regard.

8.2. Strabo, Geography Translation

The Greek geographer and historian Strabo, in his work *Geography*, gave extensive information about the places and lifestyles of nomadic people. He mentioned the nomadic people living north of the Black Sea and how the Scythians affected the world of that period..

In order to understand the world of his time, Strabo focused on the sea routes that kept the pulse of the trade world. According to the information given by Strabo, the sea route used for trade starts from Alexandria, proceeds in the direction of the Nile River in a straight line from Rhodes, and ends at the Dnieper River after passing from the Ionian coast to the Biga Peninsula and reaching Byzantium. This is as far as geographers have mastered. Many merchants and travelers passed through this trade route. The real question marks arise after the Dnieper, where the route ends. After the Dnieper is a complete mystery for sailors. There are question marks such as whether there is life after the Dnieper River, if so, in how much area, which communities live here, and what their lifestyles are like. Within the framework of the information we have obtained from Strabo's *Geography*, the answers to these questions are as follows. Roxolanians (Scythians and Sarmatians) live beyond the Dnieper. Beyond Lake Mariout, the eastern Scythians, also known as Massagets, lived. To clarify a little more, the nomadic people living between the Tanais River and the Caspian Sea were called Scythians by the Greeks, but the Scythians living east of the Caspian Sea are called Massagets.

Strabo described the Axine coast through the eyes of the poet Homer. Among the information given by Homer, the Mysi tribe associated with Asia occupies an important

place. It is seen that Homer refers to the Mysi people, who are likely to be Scythian and Sarmatian people from the inhabitants of Vogon, as Hippemolgi, Galactophangi and Abii.

Strabo attributed the fact that Homer did not mention the Scythians when speaking of the Axine coast, but called these people Galactophagi, Hippemalgi or Abii, to the fact that the ancient writers did not make sea voyages because they had heard that the Axine tribes had a custom of sacrificing foreigners and were therefore ignorant of distant lands. He first mentioned that Poseidonis described the Mysians, presumably a Scythian tribe, as pious and the fairest people in the world, who abstained from the meat of herds and used them only for milk and cheese. Homer described the Scythians, whom he called the Hippemalgi and Galactophagi, as a fairer people because they drank mare's milk, made cheese from mare's milk, rode horses, knew nothing about trade and product storage, and called them the proud Hippemalgi. He described their way of life as the most just and free, as they did not waste time with contracts, did not waste their time chasing money, and shared everything except swords and glasses. He emphasized that trade and seafaring, which were widespread in Greek societies, caused diseases such as corruption, greed, deceitfulness, indulgence in pleasure and comfort to take root in the society,

Strabo emphasized that with the spread of seafaring among the Scythians, moral decadence increased along with wealth and gave an example from Plato. Plato, while describing the understanding of the ideal state, emphasized that seafaring, which brings evils with it, should definitely be avoided. Since increasing wealth with trade brought greed and ambition, Strabo described the Scythians, who initially had a lifestyle far from such concepts, as just people.

Apart from Homer, Strabo also included the historian Ephorus' views on the Scythians. Ephorus criticized the fact that some Greek historians emphasized the wildness of the Scythians and explained the reason for this as the belief that things that were wonderful or terrible would attract more attention. Ephorus mentioned that not all Sauromatian or Scythian communities had the same way of life, with some eating no living creatures and others eating human flesh. Strabo mentioned that it would be a more objective approach if the Scythians, who are mentioned as the most just people, were mentioned not only for their savagery but also for their other characteristics. He exemplified the social order of the Scythians by mentioning that they were also the subject of Homer's poems. In Homer's poem, "The fair and proud Galactagogue and Abii communities are being watched by Zeus.

Hearing this, King Phineus is carried by storm winds to the land of Galactagogue, the land of Vogons." Strabo stated that Ephoros attributed the fact that Zeus' eyes were on the Scythians and that the north winds dragged King Phineus to the Scythian land to reasons such as the lack of the concept of property and the ambition to earn money among the Scythians, and the freedom that comes from not being tied to a certain land.

Strabo referred to Choerilus' *The Crossing Of The Pontoon Bridge*. In this work, Scythians are mentioned as sheep breeders and wheat growers in Asia. From this, we understand that Scythians lived sedentary for a certain period despite their nomadic lifestyle. In addition, Choerilus' use of the expression "They were the colonizers of nomads" for the Scythians shows us that the Scythians established dominance over different nations and benefited from the resources of the nations they dominated.

Strabo mentioned Scythian philosophers and their contributions to science. He also took the views of Ephesus as a source when referring to Scythian communities living in different geographies and having different cultures. Ephesus described the Scythian philosopher Anarchorsis, who traveled to the Greek realm, as one of the seven wise men in the world with high common sense. Ephesus underlines the Scythians' contributions to daily life and their creative and innovative aspects by mentioning that Anarchorsis was the inventor of the shovel, the two-winged hoe and the potter's wheel.

The information given by Strabo about the Scythians' lifestyle shows that he agrees with Ephesus. Strabo mentions that Scythian communities had different lifestyles. He mentions that some of them lived in the mountains, some in the marshes formed by the rivers, and some in the plains, and he also tells us about their changing lives accordingly. For example, those who lived on islands lived on wild fruits, those who lived in swamps lived on fish, those who lived in the mountains lived on the milk and meat of sheep, and those who lived in the plains also practiced agriculture. He also mentioned that among the Scythians who hunted, those living in the swamps hunted pigs and deer, while those living in the plains hunted wild donkeys and roe deer. In addition, donkey breeding is very rare among the Scythians due to their sensitivity to the cold. At the same time, kolos, an animal between a deer and a ram unique to the geography, is also among the animals they hunt.

According to the information given by Strabo on family life, we learn that the Scythian family was based on monogamous marriage, but the spouses could be together with different

people provided that it was not hidden. In order not to be hidden, a Scythian man hangs his horse sheath on the wagon of the woman he will be with. In addition, for them, a good death was to be chopped and eaten with beef in old age. Those who die of disease are considered heathen and are eaten only by wild animals.

Strabo also mentioned the societies that the Scythians fought or interacted with according to the geography they lived in. He mentioned that the part of the Scythians east of the Caspian Sea, called Massagetae, was mostly confronted with the Persians, while the Scythians in the west were mostly in interaction or struggle with Greek colonies, Macedonians, Pontic kings. He gave the struggle between the Eastern Scythians and the Persians as an example. The Eastern Scythians, i.e. the Massagets, took the most fertile lands of Bactriana (located within the borders of Afghanistan) and Armenia and expanded their territory up to Cappadocia, and during the entertainment they organized to enjoy the victory and spoils, they were caught by surprise by the Persians and suffered a heavy defeat. To immortalize his victory, the Persian King Cyrus dedicated this day to the goddess of his ancestors. The festival of Sacaea was organized every year on the day of the victory, where men dressed in Scythian military uniforms and drank and had fun with the women. The Persians also built their own temples in the Scythian lands they conquered. We see that states have used this method since ancient times to put their own signatures on the places they conquered and to show their sovereignty.

Strabo also included the period when the Scythians struggled to maintain their existence in the Black Sea against King Mithridates of Pontus in the II century BC. According to the information given by Strabo, Scythian communities formed an alliance with the Roxolanis, a Sarmatian tribe living between the Don and Dnieper Rivers, against the king of Pontus and the Greek colonies. The confrontation between the Greeks and the Scythians was influenced by the city of Chersonesus, which had fertile lands, especially where grain cultivation was carried out. Greeks supplied their grain and salt fish needs from this city. The Scythians were led by the son of Scilurus, who was famous for his warrior skills. But Strabo commented that defeat was inevitable when lightly armed nomadic people faced a well-organized phalanx. The Scythians had the city of Chersonesus walled and towers erected, and established bases in Chabum, Palacium and Neopolis in case of an attack by Mithridates' generals. We see that the Scythians adapted very well to the war tactics brought by the settled life. In the face of all these measures, Mithridates, the king of Pontus,

established a military garrison on the promontory of the gulf extending to the city and filled it with his generals. He then approached the city within walking distance and succeeded in capturing the city.

8.3. Hippocrates, *Airs Waters Places* Translation

Hippocrates emphasized that geographical conditions separated the people of Asia from the people of Europe, and that climate in particular affected their character. He mentioned that the Asian people, who have a uniform climate, have a softer structure and their warlike characteristics are less developed than the European people, and he stated that the reason for this is that the motivator that mobilizes people from stagnation is change, while the Asian climate is uniform. Other reasons are that the Asian people were ruled mostly by kings, that is, despots, and that the aim of their soldiers was to glorify their masters, in return for which death and danger awaited them. They also mentioned that the best warriors in Europe were free warriors and that they risked danger for themselves.

While Hippocrates talks about Asia in this way, he also mentions the Scythian people living around Lake Maeotis Europe. After mentioning that the other name of the Scythians was Sauromatae, he talked about the lifestyle of Scythian women. He stated that women fought against the enemy on horseback and threw javelin in battles during their youth, and that they could not get married without killing three enemies. From this we can conclude that Scythian women were as active as men in wars. Hippocrates mentioned that when Scythian women were still babies, their breasts were cauterized by their mothers with a bronze tool specially made for this purpose, thus preventing the breast from growing and ensuring that all the power and volume was transferred to the right shoulder. He mentioned that Scythian women, who ran from expedition to expedition until they got married, transitioned to a more static life after marriage and did not participate in wars unless they had to.

Hippocrates mentioned that life was fast in the Scythian geography where the rivers flowed thickly. He mentioned that they lived in four-wheeled wagons, the larger ones with six wheels, covered with felt, pulled by two or three hornless oxen, more precisely, women lived in wagons and men lived on horses. He emphasized that they had a way of life with herds of sheep and goats following behind them, and when the pastures ran out, they

followed the trail to new pastures. He mentioned that they fed on boiled meat and mare's milk, and that they were especially known for their hippakē cheese made from mare's milk. Living in a cold and harsh climate, the sun reached the Scythians only during the summer solstices. The snow and ice brought by the north winds caused even the plains to be covered with fog, making life in the Scythian homeland quite difficult. Vegetation is stunted due to the harsh climate. Winters are long and summer lasts for a few days. Hippocrates mentioned that the non-variability of the seasons was reflected in the physical characteristics of the Scythians, and that they resembled each other in appearance due to the uniformity of the seasons. He emphasized that the uniform climate caused the Scythians to be physically weak. For this reason, their bodies were rough and fleshy, their joints were almost non-existent, and their intestines were quite moist. He mentioned that their arms were not suitable for drawing bows and their shoulders were not suitable for throwing javelins because they had a moist and soft body. This interpretation of Hippocrates contrasts with the information given by other Greek writers. Contrary to what Hippocrates states, other sources emphasize their warrior characteristics, mention that the bow and arrow were their most basic weapons and that the javelin was one of the most important combat techniques.

Hippocrates mentioned that Scythian women had a flabby and soft physique, that their uterus did not absorb the seeds due to their obesity and that they had infertility problems. He stated that this was one of the reasons why some Scythian men married Greek women. Hippocrates also stated that Scythian men had infertility problems due to the fact that they were always on horseback, and for this reason, Scythian men became feminized over time, behaved like women and spoke like women, and that they themselves explained the reason for this situation as divine. He mentioned that Scythian men thought that they were punished by God for the sins they committed and accepted this situation. Hippocrates, on the other hand, attributed the ailments of Scythian men to their constant horse riding. For this reason, he stated that the swelling in their joints and hips caused wounds and lameness. He mentioned that the Scythians cut the veins behind their ears as a solution to this, and when the blood started to stop flowing, they fell asleep with the faintness that came over them, and when they woke up, their wounds were gone. According to Hippocrates, this practice, although it heals wounds, causes infertility and destroys the seeds. For this reason, when men could not have intercourse with women, they attributed it to sin and began to dress and behave like women because they thought they had lost their masculinity. But according to

Hippocrates, this affliction was common among the upper class Scythians; if it were of divine origin, it would be common among the poor. Because it is the upper class that sacrifices and offers gifts to the gods.

Hippocrates also included the war tactics of the Scythians. He mentioned that the Scythians gained superiority over the enemy in war with their command of the horse and their riding style. He stated that castrating horses in order to manage them more easily was an important tradition. He mentioned that Scythian horses were extremely fast despite being small, and that the bows and arrows they used in war were made of brass, while hair bands and belts were made of gold. He explained the reason for this with the scarcity of iron and silver in the country and the abundance of gold and rice.

8.4. Herodotus, The Persian Wars Translation

Herodotus, in his account of the Scythian-Persian wars, attributed the Persians' growing appetite for Asia to the abundance of human resources in Asia and their desire to end the Scythians' twenty-eight-year domination of Asia, as well as to avenge their kinsmen the Medes. When the Scythian men returned to their homeland after twenty-eight years of domination in Asia, the scene they encountered was quite surprising. According to the information given by Herodotus, Scythian women, who had been without a husband for twenty-eight years, married their slaves. Scythian men had to fight with their slaves when they returned, and in order to remind them that they were slaves, they put down their spears and arrows and took whips in their hands and dealt with them in this way. Herodotus emphasized the concept of slavery in Scythians and gave another interesting information. He stated that the Scythians blinded their slaves because they needed slaves not to cultivate the land, but to milk the mare's milk and shake it in a wooden container, and since the part of the milk that remained on top was valuable, they were blinded so that the slaves would not see this part and steal it.

Another issue Herodotus touches upon is the origin of the Scythians. In the light of the information given by Herodotus, the story of the Greeks living in Pontus about the origin of the Scythians is as follows: Heracles comes to the Scythian country. Since it was very cold here, he put on a lion skin and fell asleep. When he wakes up, he realizes that the mares tied to the chariot have escaped and starts looking for them. He comes to a country called

woodland. In the cave he enters, the creature, half girl and half snake, manages to keep Heracles by telling him that he will give him his mares only if he is with her. Heracles has three sons with her. As Heracles was leaving with his mares, the creature, who was half girl and half snake, asked him, "What should I do when the children grow up, should they stay here or should I send them to you?" Heracles said, "Whoever bends this bow and wears the sash, let him stay in this country. Whoever fails in this task, send him out of the country." He also gives him the golden bow and belt. His sons Agathyrus and Gelonus fail to fulfill the task and have to leave the country. Scythes, the youngest, succeeds and settles in the land. In short, the founder of Scythians was Scythes, the son of Heracles. We see that the Greeks frequently included myths that trace the Scythian lineage to their own gods.

Herodotus mentions the story of the migration of the Scythians, nomads of Asian origin, from Central Asia. According to Herodotus, when the Scythians were worn down by the Massagets, they crossed the Araxes (Aras) River and advanced towards the Cimmerian homeland. In the face of this attack, the Cimmerians were divided into two; while the people advocated leaving their lands, the princes preferred to stay and defend their lands. However, all of them lost their lives in the fight against the Scythians and were buried on the banks of the Tyras (Dniester) River. The Scythians pursued the fleeing Cimmerians and ended the Median domination through the Caucasus.

Herodotus also included communities that were confused with Scythian communities due to the similarities in their lifestyles. The people of Aristeas are an ancient Central Asian people at the end of the Scythian trade route to the north-east, likened by Herodotus to the Scythians. Beyond them are the Arimaspians, described as one-eyed; beyond them are the Griffins, known as the guardians of gold, and the Hyperboreans, whose lands reach the sea. Apart from these people, the Arimpasians, who were usually at war with their neighbors, were expelled from Issedones. Then the Cimmerians were expelled from their country by the Scythians. He mentioned that the information about the further north is hearsay.

According to the information given by Herodotus, the Calappidae, known as Scythian Greeks, were the first inhabitants north of the harbor of Borysthenes in the middle of the Scythian coast. Beyond them there is a tribe called Alazones. The lifestyle of these tribes is similar to that of the Scythians. They cultivate the land; they grow corn, onions, garlic, lentils. Those who live above Alazones are farmer Scythians who cultivate the land to sell more. To the east of the farmer Scythians are nomadic Scythians who do not cultivate or

plough. Fourteen days away from the Gerrus River live the nomadic Scythians, while across the Gerrus River live the Royal Scythians. The territory of the Royal Scythians extended south to the country of Tour and east to the harbor of Cliffs on Lake Maeotian. Herodotus mentioned that the Royal Scythians regarded all other Scythians as their slaves. North of the Royal Scythians lived the Black Cloaks, who were not of Scythian descent. Above that, too, is a swamp. Across the Tanais River no longer belongs to Scythia, the Sauromatae people live there. Above them live the Budini, and their country is full of countless trees. To the north of Budini are the Thyssagetae, a people where there are plenty of thick trees and every man has a horse and a dog. Above them are the Scythians who rebelled against the Royal Scythians and settled here. Herodotus described these Scythians as living at the foot of high mountains, having long beards, snub noses, wearing general Scythian clothes, speaking their own language, and being bald from birth. He mentioned that they lived under trees and even lived in trees, and the tree they lived in was called pontic. It was stated that these Scythians were known to be holy and therefore they were not wronged by anyone. Since they were respected among the neighbors, it was stated that they undertook the duty of arbitration in the conflicts.

In Scythian society, when a person's father dies, his relatives bring animals from their herds and slaughter them. At the same time, the meat of the dead father is slaughtered and added to the other meat, cooked and eaten. The head is also cleaned and preserved and there is a tradition that they offer annual sacrifices. Strabo also mentioned the same custom. According to them, the best way to die was to mix the meat with beef and eat it. Those who die of disease are considered cursed. Their meat is not offered to those who come with the meat of cattle, but eaten by wild animals.

Herodotus mentioned how cold the Scythian lands were and mentioned that severe winter conditions prevailed for eight months of the year, while the remaining four months were still cold but a little more normal. He stated that donkeys and mules were not raised in the Scythian land because they could not withstand the cold, and that the oxen were hornless due to the extreme cold, and that the horns did not grow due to the cold.

He mentioned that it was not possible to find intelligent people like Scythians in Pontic societies. In his struggles with Darius, he mentioned their very clever war tactics. He said of the Scythians, "No one can catch them and no one can escape from them." He explained the

reason for this as follows: "Why would it be possible to reach them unless they have settled cities and walls?"

Herodotus describes how the Scythians utilized the flow of the rivers flowing through their country for their own purposes. The Istros River, the largest river in this geography, the largest of all rivers, traverses the whole of Europe, rises in the Celtic country, and flows through Scythia. Many of the rivers of Scythia are its tributaries. Another important river is the river Tyras, which comes from the north, borders Scythia and Neuria, and starts from the lake. The third river is the Hypanis, which originates from a large lake around which white horses graze. The fourth river, the Borysthenes, is a river so useful that no other river can compare with it except the Nile. It offers the best pastures for animals and abundant fish. Among them is the sturgeon, a large invertebrate fish that was important in Scythian trade. It offers people the sweetest, clearest water for drinking. There are plenty of salt shells at the mouth. The origin of Borysthenes, who revitalized the land of the farmer Scythians, is unknown. The fifth river is the Hippolaus, the sixth is the Hypacuris, and the seventh is the Gerrus River. The Gerrus River separates the countries of the nomadic Scythians and the Royal Scythians. The eighth river flows between the Royal Scythians and the Sauromatae.

Herodotus' lantern that enlightened history also illuminated Scythian traditions and beliefs. He drew attention to the similarities of Scythian religious beliefs with their neighbors, the Greeks. He stated that most of the gods such as Hestia, Zeus, Appolon, Aphrodite, Heracles and Ares, who made the Greeks resistant to life, had Scythian equivalents. Hestia is Tahti in Scythian: Zeus Papaeus; World Api, Apollo Goetosyrus, Celestial Aphrodite Argimpaşa. He mentioned that although the Scythians worshiped all of these gods, they only built temples and statues for Ares and offered sacrifices to him. He stated that the Scythians being warriors had a great effect on this. The temple they built for Ares is present in every region of the governments. It consists of a triple stack of long sticks with a four-sided surface joined at the top. Every year a load is added to this sacred pile, and on top of the sacred pile is placed an iron scimitar with the image of Ares.

Herodotus mentioned the sacrificial rituals of the Scythians, and mentioned that animal sacrifices were made, as well as one out of every hundred people they captured in war was sacrificed to Ares. While sacrificing an animal, the animal is tied by its front legs and the rope is let down, while the victim is falling down, they pray to the god they sacrificed and then strangle the victim by throwing a noose around its neck, they cook the meat by lighting

a fire in the cauldron if there is a cauldron, if not, they cook it by placing it in the stomach of the animal. The rituals of sacrificing enemies are different. They pour wine over the head of the men and cut their throats on a vessel, then carry the blood on a pile of sticks and pour it on a machete in the form of Ares, cut off the right hand and arm of the murdered man and throw it into the air. He also mentioned that the Scythians did not raise pigs and did not offer them as sacrifices.

Referring to the Scythian war traditions, Herodotus mentioned that the Scythian soldiers took the heads of the enemies they killed in the war to the king and took booty at this rate. He mentioned that they tied the skull of the enemy to the bridle of their horse and they were honored with this. He mentioned that they used the skins of their victims as a cover for their arrows since human skin was the brightest and thickest skin. He mentioned that blood feuds among the Scythians were fought one on one in front of the king and that the defeated side used the skull of the victim as a trophy. He stated that it was seen as a source of honor and pride for the Scythians to treat their guests with the skulls of the enemies they had killed. In this section, Herodotus emphasized the warrior and savage aspects of Scythians.

There is also a divergence between ancient and modern writers about the lifestyle and values of the Scythians. As we will discuss below, it is seen that the positive views on Scythians, which started with Homer in the middle of the VIII century BC, also included some texts pointing to the contrary from the middle of the V century BC through the IV century BC. In this context, some modern writers believe that Herodotus' descriptions of the Scythians portray them as "the most barbarous of barbarians". They interpreted that Herodotus described the Scythians in accordance with the concept of barbarian in order to show Greek superiority, in other words, the superiority of Hellenic civilization. If they had used the term barbarian to describe nations that were not their own, there would have been no mention in the earlier stories that they regarded the Scythians as a savage people who did not understand friendship. Authors such as Strabo and Ephoros stated that they did not find it objective to emphasize the savage aspects of the Scythians, and that the Scythians had a just and egalitarian lifestyle, their philosophers and their contributions to humanity should also be mentioned.

Herodotus mentioned that prophecy and fortune-telling were quite common among the Scythians, and that they obtained information about the future by laying the sticks obtained

from willow on the ground, and according to the Scythians, they were prophets. However, he stated that false prophets, i.e. those who could not prophesy correctly, were severely punished and gave a common example of this in Scythians. Whenever the Scythian king falls ill, the oracles are called; because the greatest oath in Scythians is taken on the king's heart. If the soothsayers could not identify the person who made the oath, they were accused of false prophecy and punished.

Herodotus gave the following information about the burial customs of the Scythians: There are rituals especially when a king dies. According to these rituals, the body of the deceased king is covered with wax, the abdomen is cleaned and filled with parsley, anise seeds and marsh plants. The abdomen is then sewn back together and the king's body is carried to the wagon. The wagon is carried by all the tribes in turn to the country of Gerri, the farthest city of the king's rule, where the tombs of the kings are located. The grave is dug in four corners. After the dead is laid in the grave, spears are planted on both sides and covered with wood. But the king is not alone in the tomb either. The king is buried together with one of his concubines, his cook, his sous chef, his attendant, his messenger, his horses, fruits and golden cups. The relatives of the deceased shave their hair, tear their noses and pierce their left hands with arrows to show that they are in mourning. Based on the information given by Herodotus, it can be said that the Scythians had a belief in the afterlife, especially when the deceased was mummified and buried together with his belongings and the people who served him. In addition, the mummification technique was instrumental in the development of medicine in Scythia, just like in Egypt. When an ordinary Scythian dies, he is carried by his relatives and close friends for forty days and then buried. After the funeral, it was customary to anoint themselves and wash their heads. Herodotus described the stages of the washing process in Scythians as follows: Three poles are erected and covered with a straw cover, then a pit is dug and hot stones are thrown into it. Hemp, which grows in the Scythian geography and is indistinguishably similar to flax, is applied under the mat and a steam that cannot be seen in Greek steam baths emerges. Herodotus stated that the Scythians did not bathe with water, but howled with joy in such steam baths. Women applied the ointment on the second day after the steam bath to make their skin shine.

Herodotus provided information about the Scythians' neighbors. He first mentioned that the Tauri had a tradition of sacrificing the Greeks they captured in sea raids to the virgin goddess Iphigenia, Agamemnon's daughter; that the Agathyrsi were known as calm people

who wore gold; that the Neuris had to leave their country because of snakes, and that according to the rumor spread by the Greeks and Scythians, they turned into wolves once a year. Cannibals are known to be the most savage and lawless. He mentioned that the Black Cloaks got their name from the fact that they wore black and practiced Scythian customs. He mentioned that the Budini had a multinational structure, that there were Greek statues and altars in their country, and temples built in Greek style. Herodotus also mentioned that the Geloni and Budini people living in Budini had very different lifestyles, and that the Geloni spoke half Greek and half Scythian.

8.5. Procopius, History of the Wars Translation

Procopius first provided extensive information about the Black Sea geography and its people. As described by Procopius, this geography starts from Byzantium and Chalcedon and extends to Lazkia, the land of the Colchians (Laz). Beyond Rhizaeum, there were also people independent of the Romans and the Laz. The Pahasis River, which runs right through the center of the Pontic crescent, lies between two continents, Asia on the left and Europe on the right. While all the settlements of the Laz are located on the European side, the city of Petra, which was dominated by the Romans, is located on the Asian continent. This geography, which witnessed the power struggles of the Roman, Persian and Lazkian empires, is also closely acquainted with the nomadic Scythians.

Procopius gives examples of the volatile relations between the Roman, Persian and Latakia empires. He mentioned that since commercial agreements were made between the Roman and Latakia empires, the messengers coming and going to and from each other were specially escorted by boats, and even the most beautiful male children of the ruler of the Abasgi, who were Laz subjects, were castrated in order to sell them to the Roman palace, and their families were killed so that they would not seek their rights. He also stated that this practice was abandoned upon the request of the Roman Emperor Justinian. This situation must have disturbed Justinianus, for he called "Do not cripple your young people". Herodotus mentions that even though the relations between the Roman Empire and the Latakia Empire seemed so good, the Laz invited the Persian king Kisra to conquer the city of Petra, which was dominated by the Romans in alliance with the Persians, and that when the Persians came to the city, the view they encountered was the destroyed and looted castles

of the city. Because the Roman soldiers, who had heard in advance that the Persians were coming, sacked the city and sailed to Trapezus by boat.

Procopius mentioned that above the countries around the Euxine Sea there was the Caucasus, which consisted of mountain ranges, and that the area from the Caucasus to the Caspian gates was inhabited by Huns called Alans and Sabiri. He mentioned that the Huns, who held the area up to the Don River, were formerly called the Cimmerians. Whether the Cimmerians were of Turkic origin or not is a matter of debate among historians today. Procopius stated in his work that the Huns were formerly called Cimmerians and that the Huns were of the same lineage as the Cimmerians.

Procopius also mentioned the Huns as the influential forces in the north of the Black Sea, the Cimmerians, who he stated were of the same lineage as the Huns, the Scythians and the Amazons, who were composed of Scythian women. He also explained the issue of Amazons, which is only seen in the Black Sea region, based on Strabo's views. According to Strabo, women have never been in the nature of men in any period and geography, and the conditions of life compelled them to show male courage. He stated that the Amazons established their camps on the Thermodon River in the city of Amisus (Samsun).

Procopius tells the story of the emergence of the Amazons as follows: A barbarian people set out with their women to invade Asia, leaving their women in the area around the Thermodon River, but the men were destroyed by the people there. Left alone, the women had to fight against the dangers alone and formed the Amazons. Procopius mentions that the Huns raided the Roman Empire many times and after their retreat, Roman soldiers found their women. The information provided by Procopius leads us to the conclusion that the Amazons, Cimmerians and Scythians were most likely of Hun origin. According to the information given by Procopius, the community formerly called the Cimmerians divided the administration among their sons when the ruler died, and two communities emerged, the Utigurs and the Cutrigurs. They lived freely in cooperation with each other, without interfering with those on the other side of the lake.

Beyond Lake Maeotian, on the banks of the strait, lived the Goths called Tetravitae.

But Goths, Gothic nations like the Visigoths, were far away from the Huns. These Tetraxitea were called Scythians in ancient times, because all the nations that held this area were called Scythians. Only a few were called by names like Saurametae. Meanwhile, on

the other side of the lake, the Cimmerians, who lived in peace, had a disturbing development. According to the story, Cimmerian youths, who were hunting and went after a deer that had fallen into the lake, returned home and demonstrated that the lake could be crossed, whetting the Cimmerians' appetite for the other side of the lake. This situation resulted in the Goths, who were exposed to Cimmerian attacks, leaving their places and migrating to Roman lands. The Huns who settled in these lands continued to raid Roman territory despite the Roman Emperors' gifts as a deterrent. Beyond the Cutrigur Huns, who established homes along the Maeotian Road and west of the Tanais River, were the Scythians. The Scythians held the whole of Taurica. This territory is identified as the site of the Temple of Artemis, ruled by Hegomon's daughter. This geography was once under the rule of the Huns (Scythians) from the Roman city of Bosphorus to Chersonesine (located on the borders of Ukraine). It is stated that these lands extended from where the Istros River flows into the Euxine Sea (Black Sea) to the Byzantine lands.

CONCLUSION

With the migration of the Scythians to the north of the Black Sea in the VIII century BC and the Greeks' colonization activities in this geography, an intense interaction process started between the Scythian - Greek people. The fact that we learn the most extensive information about the Scythians from Greek writers has been effective in accepting this date as the date of the Scythians' emergence on the stage of history.

There is also a divergence between ancient and modern writers about the Scythians' lifestyle and values. Beginning with Homer from the mid-VIII century BC and onwards, the positive view of the Scythians as the fairest of men shifted to the opposite from the mid-V century BC and throughout the IV century BC. Modern writers, such as Herodotus, believe that the depictions of the Scythians by Greek writers portray them as "the most barbaric of barbarians". The reason for this situation may be that the Scythian society, which started to trade and learn trade with the Greeks, became more ambitious, fond of luxury and comfort with trade and maritime activities, and social deterioration began, and there are also interpretations such as the fact that some of the Greek writers such as Herodotus described the Scythians in accordance with the barbarian concept in order to show Greek superiority, in other words, the superiority of Hellenic civilization. Although there are also opinions that the term barbarian was used to describe nations that were not their own, the statements in Lucian's stories suggest that they saw the Scythians as a wild people who did not understand friendship and also support the use of the term barbarian as a negative quality. However, authors such as Strabo and Ephorus mentioned that they did not find it objective to emphasize the savage aspects of the Scythians. Ephorus explained that some Greek historians described the Scythians as savages because of their belief that something wonderful or terrible would attract more attention. Ephorus mentioned that not all Sauromatian or Scythian communities had the same way of life, with some eating no living creatures and others eating human flesh. Strabo mentioned that it would be a more accurate approach to mention not only the savage aspects of the Scythians, who are mentioned as the most just people, but also their other characteristics.

He exemplified the social order of the Scythians by mentioning that they were also the subject of Homer's poems. In Homer's poem, "The fair and proud Galactagogue and Abii communities are being watched by Zeus. Hearing this, King Phinous is carried by storm

winds to the land of Galactagogue, the land of Vogons." Strabo stated that Ephoros attributed the fact that Zeus' eyes were on the Scythians and that the north winds dragged King Phineus to the Scythian land to reasons such as the lack of the concept of property and the ambition to earn money among the Scythians, and the freedom that comes from not being tied to a certain land.

Strabo mentioned Scythian philosophers and their contributions to science. He also took the views of Ephesus as a source when referring to Scythian communities living in different geographies and having different cultures. Ephesus described the Scythian philosopher Anarchorsis, who traveled to the Greek realm, as one of the seven wise men in the world with high common sense. Ephesus underlines the Scythians' contributions to daily life and their creative and innovative aspects by mentioning that Anarchorsis was the inventor of the shovel, the two-winged hoe and the potter's wheel.

Strabo referred to Choerilus' *The Crossing Of The Pontoon Bridge*. In this work, Scythians are mentioned as sheep breeders and wheat growers in Asia. From this, we understand that Scythians lived sedentary for a certain period despite their nomadic lifestyle. In addition, Choerilus' use of the expression "They were the colonizers of nomads" for the Scythians shows us that the Scythians established dominance over different nations and benefited from the resources of the nations they dominated.

In his work *On Airs, Waters, and Places* by Hippocrates, he especially mentioned the effects of Scythian geography on the lives of Scythians. He mentioned that the non-variability of the seasons was reflected in the physical characteristics of the Scythians, and that they resembled each other in appearance due to the uniformity of the season. He emphasized that the uniform climate caused the Scythians to be physically weak. For this reason, he mentioned that their bodies were rough and fleshy, their joints were almost non-existent, and their intestines were quite moist. He mentioned that their arms were not suitable for drawing bows and shoulders were not suitable for throwing javelin due to their moist and soft body. This interpretation of Hippocrates contrasts with the information given by other Greek writers. Contrary to what Hippocrates states, other sources emphasize their warrior characteristics, mention that the bow and arrow were their most basic weapons and that the javelin was among the most important combat techniques.

According to the information we have obtained from Greek sources, the relations of the Greeks with the Scythians continued in a friendly and trade-oriented manner until the III century BC. After the establishment of Greek colonies in the VII century BC, the importance of cities such as Olbia, Pantikapea and Bosporos increased. Wine was imported from the islands of Olbia and Kios, and Ionian-style mirrors, glass, amber beads, beautiful earrings, and olive oil were among the imported products of the Scythians. Scythians exported wheat, fish, beeswax, leather, cattle and plenty of slaves. Herodotus reported that the Scythians captured hundreds of slaves during the war.¹⁵⁹

Scythian-Greek relations, which started with a trade-oriented focus, also brought cultural rapprochement. The Bosporus Kingdom, a Scythian-Greek kingdom, shows that the two civilizations had similar economic and cultural goals.¹⁶⁰ At the same time, it was able to blend Greek-barbarian culture within itself. Scythian dress became widespread among the Greeks, Scythian archer units were established especially in Athens under the leadership of the Scythian philosopher Anacharsis, Scythian craftsmen and Scythian slaves, who were very successful in the art of goldworking, began to work in Hellenic workshops; thus, a common understanding of art began to develop between the two civilizations.

Many examples are given to show that Greek gods, mythologies and tragedies were widespread and respected among the Scythians, and that the Greeks frequently dealt with Scythians in their legends and tragedies. The legends of the Amazons and Argonauts, which are the main elements of Greek mythology, are among them and are also included in our study in detail. However, although Greek and Scythian relations were friendly, the fact that the city of Olbia was surrounded by walls proves that there were also conflicts. The Greeks found the way to deal with the Scythians in war through Scythianization; they took the Scythian bow, arrow and quiver, and they understood that they had to deal with Scythian horsemen and marksmen, especially when the Scythians captured cities that were important for wheat exports from the end of the III century BC and established cities were Greek and Thracian sailors were located.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ B .N. Grakov, Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁶⁰ Vinogradov Y. A., “Cimmerian Bosporus: Main Phases of Pre-Roman History”, England: Publishers of British Archaeological Reports, Oxford,2007, p. 146.

¹⁶¹ Grakov, Ibid., p. 30.

The III century BC is the period when the Greco-Scythian political relations deteriorated. The Scythians, who were not interested in trade at the beginning and were not interested in the coastal lengths of the Black Sea, started to expand their area of dominance when they started to trade under the influence of the Greeks. At the beginning of the IV century BC, the Bosphorus kingdom, a combined Scythian-Greek kingdom, expanded its borders to include all of the colonies and local towns on the Taman Peninsula east of Crimea and south of the Hypanis River during the reign of the Spartakos dynasty, a Scythian and Thracian dynasty. The Bosphorus kingdom is of great importance as a place where the Scythian-Greek people intertwined politically and commercially. In the III century BC, the Scythians began to interfere more frequently in the internal affairs of the Bosphorus Kingdom, aiming to dominate the Greek colonies.¹⁶² In this process, the Greeks, who could not cope with the Scythians militarily and politically, asked for help from King Mithridates of Pontus. The struggle between Scythians and Greeks strengthened the hand of Pontus King Mithridates and he became the dominant power in the Black Sea.¹⁶³

¹⁶² Kürşat Bardakçı, *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁶³ S. Y. VNUKOV, *Ibid.*, p. 168.

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