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The Origin of the Scythians and the Identity of the Scythians and the Alans in John Tzetzes' Work

İskitlerin Kökeni ve John Tzetzes'in Eserinde İskitlerin ve Alanların Kimliği

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Much has been said about the origin of the Scythians, but no academician or researcher has ever been able to provide evidence to reveal the identity of the Scythians. Today, the prevailing view about the origin of the Scythians is the view that they are of Indo-European origin. And this argument is supported by Western academics. No written sources say that the Scythians were of Indo-European origin or spoke an Indo-European language. The only thing that makes those a community of Indo-European origin is the arbitrary explanations of the personal names belonging to their language in Indo-European languages and the kinship relationship established between the Ossetians and Alans. No consistent explanation of the words of the Scythian language in Indo-European languages has been provided to date. However, very recently, in the light of written sources, more than one piece of evidence has been presented to shed light on the origins of the Scythians. This article aims to reveal the true identity of the Scythians and Alans in the work of the 12th-century Byzantine writer John Tzetzes in the light of these new evidences.

Key Words: Scythians, Turks, Ogurs, Magyars, Chinese, Alans, Ossetians.

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A. The Origin of the Scythians

On the other hand, not one but more than one evidence has recently been presented in the scientific world regarding the origin of the Scythians, albeit for the first time.

A new claim about the homeland of the Ogurs and Oguric communities was put forward years ago. According to this claim, the Ogurs lived in what is today's Kazakstan from the very beginning and the ethnonym Ogur represented the main branch of all Oghuric communities (Şengül, 2023: 115).

White represents the west, the north is associated with the colour black and the south is related to the colour red in Turkic colour system. According to this claim, those, who left the main Ogur branch in Kazakstan migrated northward, were called the Black Ogurs, those, who migrate westward, were designated as the White Ogurs and those, who migrate southward, was named after Onogurs.

According to the same argument, the Sabirs were the Black Ogurs and they migrated to the north after leaving the main branch in the Kazakh steppe and the **Syebi/Syebe** community, which appears on the eastern side of the Ural Mountains and is mentioned in the geography book of Ptolemy, are the Black Ogurs, who will be named after Suvar and Sabir and the group named **Massaei**, another tribe whose name is mentioned in the same geography book together with the Syebis/Syebes, were the Hungarians (2013: 129).



Map I. The homeland of the Ogurs and Oguric Communities According to Şengül (2023a)

As will be seen now, such a claim put forward years ago reveals the identity and the origin of the Scythians certainly.

According to the new evidences and results which are presented in an academic work released last month, the first homeland of the Scythians, who came to Eastern Europe in the centuries before Christ, in Central Asia was the Tasmola archaeological culture area in today's Kazakstan. Those Scythians, who came to Eastern Europe, had nothing to do with Sai-wang community mentioned by the Chinese sources. Although the Tasmola archaeological culture disappeared over time, the Scythian community, which created this culture, inhabited Kazakhstan until 552 AD, that is, until the first Turkish state, which carries the name Turk, emerged (Şengül, 2023: 74-141)

Now lets look at what are presented in this new academic book shortly.



Map II. Tasmola Culture (Şengül, 2023a: 96)

The biggest reason that the origins of the Scythians has not been revealed until now is the fact that the naming Ocean, which occurs in the works of ancient Greek writers, really points to Lake Baikal has not been recognised. Identification of the naming 'Ωκεανός with Lake Baikal has been shown (Şengül, 2013:107).

In Greek mythology, 'Ωκεανός (Ōceanós) Okean is a river that encompasses the entire universe and at the same time is the god of rivers in Greek mythology. The English word ocean comes from here. The word first passed from Greek to Latin as *oceanus* and then to French as *occean* and spread from this language to other languages. The most important thing about this naming of water is the fact

that the origin of the word is unknown (Klein, 1966: 1072). Beekes accepts that attempts to link the word to an Indo-European origin have failed, acknowledging that it is not of Indo-European origin, and establishes it as *Ūkan* in its original form (2010: 1677). This word is identical with Turkic *ögen/ögän* meaning „river, creek and stream”.

The words Πόντος [Pontus] and Θάλασσα [Thalassa], which mean „sea” in old Greek, including Ὠκεανός are Turkic borrowings of Scythian origin (Şengül, 2023b:283-284). Thagi, the first component of Scythian Θαγίμασάδας [Thagimasada] meaning god of sea and rivers, has been preserved as Tagı „river and stream” in Karachay-Malkar dialect of Turkic (2023b:283). The presence of this Scythian word of Turkic origin in Eastern Europe in antiquity allows us to suggest that source for the namings related to sea in old Greek must be of Scythian stock.

Herodot relates a story about adventures of Hercules in connection with the origins of the Scythians and says: „... *the Ocean, they say, beginning from the sunrise, flows round the whole earth, but they do not prove it in fact; that Hercules thence came to the country now called Scythia.*” (1904: 215).

Namely, according to Herodotus, the homeland of the Scythians was somewhere near Ocean, that is to say, Lake Baikal.

Thanks to Chinese sources, we know very well that people living next to Lake Baikal (Ocean) were the Ting-lings. That’s why, identification of the Scythians with the Ting-lings emerges willy-billy.

We also find the naming Ocean in the work of Diodoros of Sicily, who lived four hundred years after the Father of History. Diodorus says exactly:

„...In the later period, according to the legend transmitted by the Scythians, there was a virgin born among them, descended from the earth, whose upper part up to the waist was female and the lower part was a snake. With her, Zeus bore a son named Skythes. This son became more famous than any of his predecessors and gave the Scythian people his name. Now among the descendants of this king were two brothers who stood out for their heroism: one Palus and the other Napes. And these two engaged in notorious activities and divided the kingdoms among themselves. For this reason, one part of the people was called Palis because of their name, and the other Napae. However, after a while, the descendants of these kings, with their extraordinary bravery and commanding abilities, subjugated a large part of the area up to Thrace beyond the Tanais River, turned to the other side with their armies, and spread their power as far as the Nile in Egypt. After enslaving many

peoples located between Thrace and Egypt, they expanded the Scythian empire on one side to the **Ocean** in the east and to the **Caspian Sea** and Lake Maeotis in the west..." (1967: 27, 29)

Here, we would like to draw your attention to a detail in Diodoros' statements, which corresponds to a hint presented by Herodotos about the homeland of the Scythians in Central Asia.

Diodoros gives the easternmost border of the Scythian empire as the **Ocean** and states that it starts from there and extends to the Caspian Sea. We have stated above that the naming of the Ocean in the Greek imagination is Lake Baikal. Diodorus' accounts allow us to suggest that the homeland of the Scythians in Central Asia is an area stretching from Lake Baikal to the Caspian Sea. Diodorus also presents another hint about the country of the Scythians and relates. „... At first, then, they dwelt on the Araxes river..." (1967: 27).

The Araxes River mentioned by Diodorus has been revealed as Syrdarya (Şengül, 2023: 108-109). The land on the Syrdarya river is today's Kazakstan.



Map III. The Araxes River and the Country of the Scythians (Sakalar) who dwell on the Araxes River According to Diodorus (Şengül, 2023a: 110)

The accounts mentioned by Strabo, who is contemporary with Diodorus, about the homeland of the Scythians confirm the explanations of Diodorus.

Strabo says that the land of the Scythians and the Sogdiana are situated opposite India and the Scythians and the Sogdiani are separated from one another by the Iaxartes River (1961: 269). Such information shows that the

homeland of the Scythians are in eastern part of Iaxartes (Syrdarya). Strabo obviously places the land of the Scythians in what is today Kazakstan.

We find data that fits perfectly with Diodorus's information on the Scythian homeland in Asia in a historical Chinese source called Weilüeh, written by Yü Huan three centuries after Diodorus.

Before moving on to the data presented by the source named Weilüeh, let's take a brief look at what happened in the east during the time of Diodoros.

In the year 49 BC, the Hun chanyu Chih-Chih first captured the Wusun state, then turned to the north, attacked and subjugated the Hu-chieh (Wu-chieh) community, and marched west with his army, defeating Chien-Kun [the Kyrgyz], and then returned to the north and dominated the Ting-lings (Taskina, 1973: 37).

Before examining the attack route followed by Chih-Chih below, we need to mention a source that will help us in terms of our subject. It is the information given by a Chinese ambassador named Chang Kien about the peoples who inhabit the geography of Central Asia and their homelands.

The Chinese ambassador named Chang Kien, who was caught in 138 BC, while trying to sneak through the country of the Huns in order to get in touch with the peoples living in the geographies north of the Huns due to a secret mission of the Chinese administration, and who returned to his country after being held captive for 10 years among the Huns, after escaping from the Huns, went back to his country after going through various troubles. He continued to serve the Chinese ruler faithfully and, as a spokesman for the Chinese state, made several journeys to seek alliances with other nomadic communities to form alliances against the Huns. The information he collected during his travels allows us to understand where the homelands of the communities that inhabited the Central Asian geography at that time were.

Cng Kien says that Wu-sun's country may be 2000 *li* northeast of Ta-yüan, [that is, Fergana], while Kang-chu is located in the northwest of Ta-yüan, perhaps 2000 *li* distant (Hirth, 1917: 96; Tsyang, 2002: 201).



Map IV. Central Asia (Kang-çü=Kangju and Yüeçi = Ta-Yuezhi) according to Chang Kien (Şengül, 2023a: 116)

Chang Kien's statements tell us that Kangju (Kang-çü) and Wusun countries are on opposite sides of each other in the west-east direction. 2000 *li* northeast of Fergana really coincides with the area between Lake Balkash and the Tien Shan mountains.

Until now nobody has noticed the fact that Chinese place the land of the Kangjus (Kang-çü) in the geography where the land of the Massagetaes mentioned by the Greek writers is. Kangju (kang-çü) was really the naming the Chinese used for the Massagetaes (Şengül 2023: 114).

After attacking the Wu-suns Chi-chih captured the country of Wu-chieh. It is said that Wu-chieh land is around Tarbagatai (Mori, 1957: 82-109). We are totally agreed with this.

Maenchen interprets the information that Chien-kun country remained in the west of the Wu-chiechs as „northwest” and places the country of Chien-kun, the Chinese spelling of the Kyrgyz tribe, in the Upper Yenissei area and north and south of the Sayan Mountains and that Chien-kuns' land is likely to reach the other side of the Ob River and the country where the Ting-Lings live is the Krasnoyarsk field (Maenchen-Helfen, 1939: 80).

Such an interpretation of Maenchen about the land of Chien-kuns seems to be convincing but it seems that the Chien-kun country was, with a great possibility, around the Western Sayan Mountains and the Altai Mountains. It seems that the Kyrgyz people were living around the Altai Mountains from the very beginning (Şengül 2013: 107).

Above we saw that the lands of the Scythians extended from Lake Baikal to the Caspian Sea thanks to the accounts of Diodorus. As will be seen now, Chinese source called Weilüeh confirm Diodorus' accounts.

For when this Chinese source speaks of the Ting-lings, he divides their homeland into three parts (**Hu-te**, **Chien-kun** and **Ting-ling**), and places the kingdom called **Hu-te** on its westernmost side, and places the homeland of this kingdom in the northeast of the **Kang-chü** kingdom and northwest of the **Wu-suns** and north of the **Ts'ong-ling** (Taşağıl, 2013: 13; Chavannes, 1905: 560-561). What is meant with Ts'ong-ling is Pamir Mountains.



Map. V. The Country of Hu-te According to Chinese source Weilüeh (Yu Huan) (3rd Century AD) (Şengül, 2023a: 118)

The geography of the Hu-te state, which is located in the northwest of the Wusun country, which occupies the location between Lake Balkhash and the Tian Shan, and in the northeast of the Kangju kingdom in the west and in the north of Ts'ong-ling in the south will only be one and the same with the area that corresponds to what is today Kazakstan and where the previous Tasmola archaeological culture spread. Let's keep this deduction about the land of Hu-te community in mind for now.

Since the Chien-kun (Kyrgyz) kingdom is in the middle, their homeland should be around the Western Sayan Mountains and Altai Mountains.

Yü Huan clearly places the Ting-ling kingdom in a geography stretching in the southwest-northeast direction. Hu-te occupied the Kazakh Steppe in the far southwest, and if there was the Chien-kun kingdom in the middle, the easternmost tip of the Ting-lings, which represents the main Ting-ling community, would only occupy an area extending from the Altai Mountains as far as Lake Baikal.



Map VI. The Countries of Ting-ling Tribes According to Weilüeh (Şengül, 2023a: 119)

Weilüeh was written between the years of 235 and 268 AD.

Yü Huan's accounts are also confirmed by a medieval map called *Tabula Peutingeriana* of which creator is not known. This map was first drawn in the first Century AD but it seems to have taken its final form in 3rd Century AD. As to why.

There is the name *Alamannia* on this map. Alamannia was a Germanic tribal confederation and kingdom and it was first time mentioned by Roman historian Cassius Dio in the year of 213 AD. (Dio, 1955: 309, 311, 315; Drinkwater, 2007: 43). In addition to this, on the same map, it is shown that Sarmatian communities reside in Ukraine.

It is well-known fact that the Goths came to Ukraine after second half of 3rd century AD. If this map were drawn just after the second half of third century the Goths should have resided in Ukraine. It means that this map took its final form in an interval of time between the years of 213 and 250 AD.



Map VII. Alamannia Community in Tabula Peutingeriana (Şengül, 2023a:)

On this map, the name of the city called Alexandra is given and there is such a saying just below: „Hic Alexander Responsvm accepit Vsq (ve) quo Alexander: Here Alexander recieved the [oracular] response ‘Only this far, Alexander’ (Albu, 2014: 11-12).

Such a saying points to the farthest point Alexander the Great went with his army in Asian expedition and this place was Alexandra Esxhate (Modern Khojand). According to this map, there is Araxes River above Alexandra city and a Scythian community called **Xatis** reside in the upper parts of Araxes River. The river above the Khojand city is Syrdarya and the areas in the upper parts of Syrdarya River belong to today’s Kazakstan.



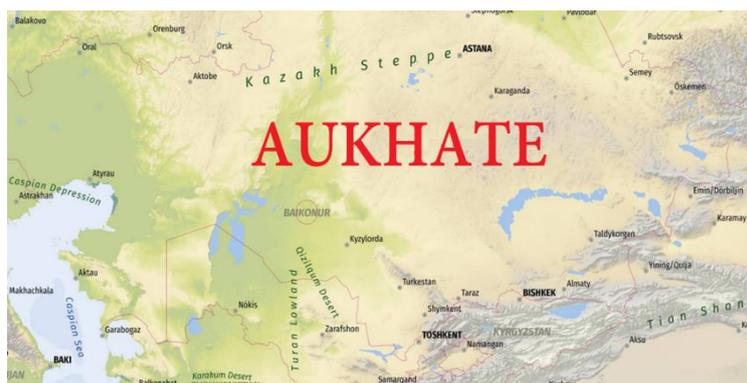
Map VIII. Xatis Community, Alexandria City and Araxes River in Tabula Peutingeriana (Şengül, 2023a)

As it is seen, while Tabula Peutingeriana gives name of people who reside in Kazakstan in 3rd Century AD as Xatis and shows that those are of Scythian origin Yü Huan places Hu-te community in Kazakstan in the same time period and says that they are of Ting-ling origin.

Herodotus says that another name of the Scythians is **Aukhate** (2014: 202). However, in another place where he mentions the Scythian king Skyles, he says

that Skyles is the king of the Ekyths (2014: 222). Ekyth is another spelling of the name Aukhate.

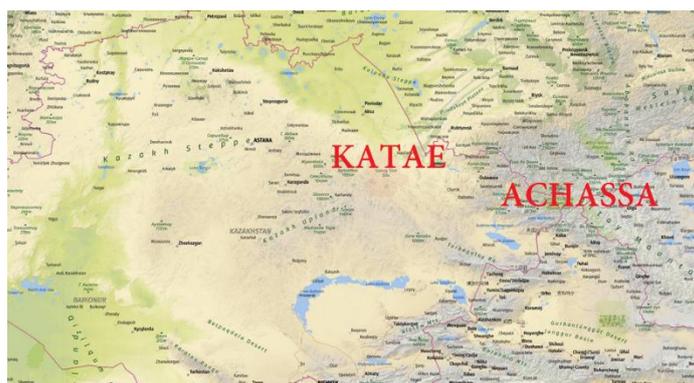
Now, when we consider the identity of the Scythians who migrated west from the Tasmola archaeological culture area as Aukhate or Ekyth it will be seen that the names of both tribes are one and the same with the community called Hu-te, which Yü Huan placed in today's Kazakstan.



Map IX. Aukhate (Scythians) and Tasmola Culture (Şengül, 2023a: 120)

There will be those who object to this, but we find another community called **Chatae/Katae** in the work of Ptolemy, who lived in the 2nd century AD and Ptolemy puts the naming „Scyhan” at the end of the names of the communities he identified as peoples of Scythian origin, and he calls that community as Katae (Chatae)-Scythian and moreover places this community in the country which is west to and next to Achassa region (Ptolemaios, 2006: 663).

In Ptolemy's work, place names are often referred to as tribe names, and geographical names are given by tribes residing in that area. While Achassa stands as a name given to a region, the name of a community named Achassa, which gave its name to that region, is not mentioned in the author's work. However, we must underline that the name Achassa [Hachassa?] fits perfectly with Ho-kes-ssu (Taşağıl 2013: 74), one of the forms in which the ethnonym Kyrgyz is mentioned in Chinese sources. If we take this as the area where the Kyrgyz lived, the information given by Ptolemy and the information mentioned by Yu Huan match. Katae is identical with Hu-te and Achassa/Akhassa (> Hakhassa) corresponds to Ho-kes-ssu.



Map X. The Country of Katae According to Ptolemy (2th Century AD) (Şengül, 2023a: 121)

Interestingly, Humbass and Fiss saw the sameness between the ethnonyms Katae and Aukhate and claimed that the ethnonym *Khatae/Khatai* [Ptolemy] was probably identical with the ethnonym *Aukhatae* [Herodotos] and included the tribal name Eukhatae, which occurs in the work of Pliny, to this list (Humbach & Faiss, 2012: 48).

As can be seen, under normal conditions, the tribe names Aukhate, Ekyth, Katae, Hatı(s) and Hu-te appear as names given to the same community by different authors. This fact is confirmed by the fact that not only that the names of the tribes are very close to each other, but also that they inhabit the same geography. The ethnonym Aukhate was clearly a name given to the Hu-te, the westernmost branch of the Ting-lings.

Pulleyblank gave the Early Middle Chinese form of the tribe name Hu-chieh(Wu-chieh) as **Xə-giat** and stated that this form emerged as a form like *Hagaŋ and that this form was probably the early form of the Turkic name **oğur-oyuz** tribe (Pulleyblank, 1983: 456) and in another work he showed Early Middle Chinese form of Hu-chieh as Xə-giat/giaj^h < *xá-gàt/gàs and Early Middle Chinese one of Wu-chieh as ?à-gàt/k^hàs < *à-gàs/gàt (Pulleyblank, 2000: 74). Hirth reconstructed Wu-chieh/Hu-chieh as Hu-kié (>U-kit > Ugir) (Hirth, 1901: 83).

The form **Xə-giat**, which appears during the attempts done to re-establish the ethnonym Hu-chieh/Wu-chieh, is identical with the ethnonym Aukhate (<Axə-giat < Xə-giat). The designation Wu-chieh/Hu-chieh had nothing to do with the Ogurs. The only tribe name that is associated with the Ogurs was Hu-te,

which occurs in the Chinese source named Weilüeh in 3rd Century AD and is shown by the same source as the westernmost branch of the Ting-lings.

The assumption that the Scythians were the Ogurs will certainly be confirmed if the Scythians came from the Kazakh steppes to the eastern parts of Ural Mountains and then they appeared to be the Sabirs. As will be seen below there is really such an evidence which shows that the Scythians migrated from south to the eastern part of Ural Mountains.

No historical source or document saying that the Scythians migrated from Kazakstan to the eastern part of Ural Mountains but an archaeological culture in Ural region confirms such a migration. It is Sargat archaeological culture.

The most interesting side of this archaeological culture is that the founders of this culture in the east of Ural Mountains are the Scythians who are not autochthon and migrated from the south to this site (Tairov, 1993: 201).

As a matter of fact, DNA researches also show that those who create Sargat culture migrate from south to this field (Molodin & Pilipenko, 2012: 105-106). And again DNA results relates that the creators of Sargat Culture were the Scythians (Casey & Kaestle, 2010: 143-156).

This fact that the archaeological data provide us is perfectly matched with the opinion that they should be Syebi community the „Black Ogur” group that immigrated from the south to north. Archaeological evidences confirm the assumption that the community called Syebi „Sabir „came from south to eastern part of the Ural mountains after leaving the land of Ogur, the main branch in Kazakh steppe.

There is another evidence to confirm that the Scythians were the Ogurs. Ptolemus presents another argument in favour of this. He puts the naming „Scyhian” at the end of the names of the communities he identified as Scythian origin and mentions the ethnonym Syebi/Syebe as Syebe-Scythian (2006: 661).

Sargat culture expanded westward over time and incorporated the local Gorokhovo archaeological culture area into itself. The people of the indigenous Gorokhovo culture entered the Sargat cultural circle by integrating and merging with the Sargat culture, and this unity lasted until the Avar migration mentioned by Priscus in the 5th century AD.

It is said that the Gorokhovo archaeological culture was completely included in the Sargat archaeological culture area between the 2nd and 1st centuries BC and both cultures turned into a single cultural environment and continued to exist until the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD without any external intervention (Mogil'nikov, 1992: 309).

But in the following article, the continuation of this paper, we will present the certain evidence to affirm the fact that Sargat culture belongs to the Sabirs and the mentioned culture disappeared in Vth century AD.

The Gorokhovo archaeological culture obviously belongs to the Magyars (Hungarians). As to the ethnonym [Sabirs „Black Ogurs”] used for the Hungarians. The only reason that the Hungarians are called the Sabir/the Black Ogur is that the owners of the Gorokhovo archeological culture, the Hungarians, lived under the rule of the Sabirs (the Black Ogurs), the owners of the Sargat archaeological culture, and were highly influenced by their cultural area.

Why the Magyars are also called the Turks has a special reason but we will not explain this here because it is topic of another work.

Golden believes that the language of the Sabirs is standard Turkic not Oguric Turkic (Golden, 1980: 36) but it has been revealed that the Sabirs were a branch of the Ogurs. Naturally, the Sabirs spoke Oguric dialect of Turkic. All Turkic borrowings in the language of the Hungarians today actually belong to the language of the Sabirs, that is, the Scythians (2023: 167).

As will be seen now, John Tzetzes' work also confirms that fact that the Scythians are of Turkic origin.

B. The Identity of the Scythians and the Alans in John Tzetzes' Work

There is a widespread belief that the Alans are the continuation of the Sarmatians, and, the Alans are direct descendants of the Sakas since the Sarmatians are relatives of the Sakas.

It is accepted that the Ossetians living in the Caucasus today are the surviving remnants of the Alans. The biggest evidence for this is a so-called list of words found in Hungary and claimed to belong to the language of Yas, and two sentences from the Alan language mentioned by the 12th century Byzantine poet

John Tzetzes in his own work. The kinship of the Ossetians with the Scythians was built on these linguistic remnants.

However, academics who insistently try to associate the Ossetians with the Alans and who study the origin and history of the Alans have constantly ignored the following statement mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus regarding the origin of the Alans.

„...Thus the Halani (whose various peoples it is unnecessary now to enumerate) are divided between the two parts of the earth, but although widely separated from each other and roaming over vast tracts, as Nomads do, yet in the course of time they have united under one name, and are, for short, all called Halani because of the similarity in their customs, their savage mode of life, and their weapons.” (Marcellinus, 1986: 391).

As can be seen, Ammianus Marcellinus states that the ethnonym Alan (Halani) is not actually a designation given to a pure tribe, but is essentially a general term used for the community that emerged as a result of the unification and fusion of a structure consisting of many communities under a single roof over time. In other words, there are tribes and clans that appear to contain not one but more than one ethnic structure of different origins, but later emerged with the name Alan, and these communities seem to have carried the name Alan as a superordinate identity even after leaving the federation of Alan tribes.

However, the so-called word list of the Yas (As/Alan) language, found in Hungary and dated to 1422, can in no way be taken as linguistic materials belonging to the language of the Alans. Because this word list is the court case filed by the widow of George Batiani, who lived in Hungary in the 15th century, against Johannes and Stepahane Safar from the village of Çev. Due to the fact that the village called Yasfalu „Yas Village“, which disappeared during the Turkish rule and whose inhabitants were mentioned in written documents in 1325 and later in 1333, 1414, 1455 and 1477, is adjacent to the Çev village, the words mentioned are accepted as words belonging to the language of Yas people (Nemet, 1960: 7).

Unfortunately, apart from geographical proximity, we do not have any data confirming or stating that the people living in Çev village and owning these words are of Yas origin. It is not possible to directly declare a village named Çev and its people to be of Yas origin just because it is located next to one of the Yas

villages that were spread all over Hungary at that time. The so-called Yas List in no way makes the Ossetians descendants of the Alans.

Moreover, although the Ossetians, who are seen as the living descendants of the Scythians based on the so-called Yas List, never used the names Alan and As for themselves. The Ossetians use these designations for Turkic neighbours (Karachay-Balkar/Balkar) living in the same geography. They call the Balkars „As“, Balkaria „*Asiag*“ and Karachai „*Stur/Ustur-Asiag*“ (Great Asia) (Laypanov & Miziyev, 2008: 139).

While Georgians call Karachays *Alani* and Ossetians call them *Asi*, Abkhazians call Balkars *Azuho* and Ossetians call them *Asson* (Tavkul, 2012: 83; Tavkul, 2015: 147; Tavkul, 2023: 39). It is surprising that the Ossetians, who are claimed to be the descendants of the Alans, do not use these names for themselves, but use them for their neighbors, the Turks. Moreover, the name Ossetians give themselves is IR (Iron) and this naming has nothing to do with the names *As* or *Alan*.

It is not a coincidence that the Ossetians use the name *As* tribe for their neighbors of Turkic origin, the Karachay-Balkars. Because, the relations of the Alans with the Turkic world are expressed in many historical sources from the middle Ages and Modern Ages.

12th-century writer Eustathius relates that the ethnonym Alan comes from Sarmatian *Ala* „mountain“ and the Alans call themselves *Ir* and *Iran* and this designation was used for eastern part of the Caucasia from Terek to Derbent in ancient times (Petermann, 1860: 176).

Even such an explanation supports both Iranian thesis and Turkic one. The names *Ir* and *Iran* are obviously in favour of Iranian view but neither those denominations nor *Alan* carry the meaning of mountain. On the other hand, Karachai-Malkars call each other *Alan* meaning „friend, cognate“ in daily life but their self-designation is *Alan* and *Tavlu/Taul* „mountaineer“ (Tavkul, 2000: 77, 385; Tuğul, 2011: 186). One of the meanings of the word *Alan* in *Derleme Sözlüğü* is „hollow place surrounded by hills“ (DS, 2019/I: 195). The designation *Tavlu/Taul* and the word *Alan* in *Derleme Sözlüğü* coincide with explanation of Eustathius.

The 13th century Andalusian writer Saʿīd al-Maghribī, in his geography book, mentions the Alans as Christianized Turks and adds that in the neighborhood of the Alans, there was a tribe called As from the Turks, who were similar to them in terms of tradition and belief (Konovalova, 2009: 27).

The information given by Al-Maghribī is also directly confirmed by Abu'l-Fida, who lived in the 13th and 14th centuries. He also says that the Alans are Christianized Turks and mentions the Turkic tribe named As living next to the Alans (Ebü'l-Fidâ, 2022: 182).

While talking about the As (Yas) people, the person who made the first old Russian translation and interpretation of the work titled „Jewish Wars“ by the First Century AD writer Joseph Flavius, he emphasizes the connection of the As, that is, the Alans, with the Turkic world by stating that „...*The Yas, whose language is derived from the Pecheneg group, live around the Tana (Don River) and the Maeotis Sea (Sea of Azov).*” (Meshcherskiy, 1958: 454)

The connection of the Alans with the Pechenegs, a Turkic tribe, is also confirmed by the 11th century writer Al-Biruni. In his work, Al-Biruni says that the language of the Alans is a mixture of the Pecheneg and Khwarezm languages (El-Bîrûnî, 2013: 15-16).

The information provided by Saʿīd al-Maghribī, Abu'l-Fida, Al-Biruni and the person who translated Joseph Flavius's work into Russian supports the claim that the Alans were Turks.

It is also necessary to mention the work that was created before the 1856 Paris Conference when British Ambassador Lord Stratford Canning asked Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, through Mustafa Reşid Pasha, to write a treatise describing the situation in the Caucasus.

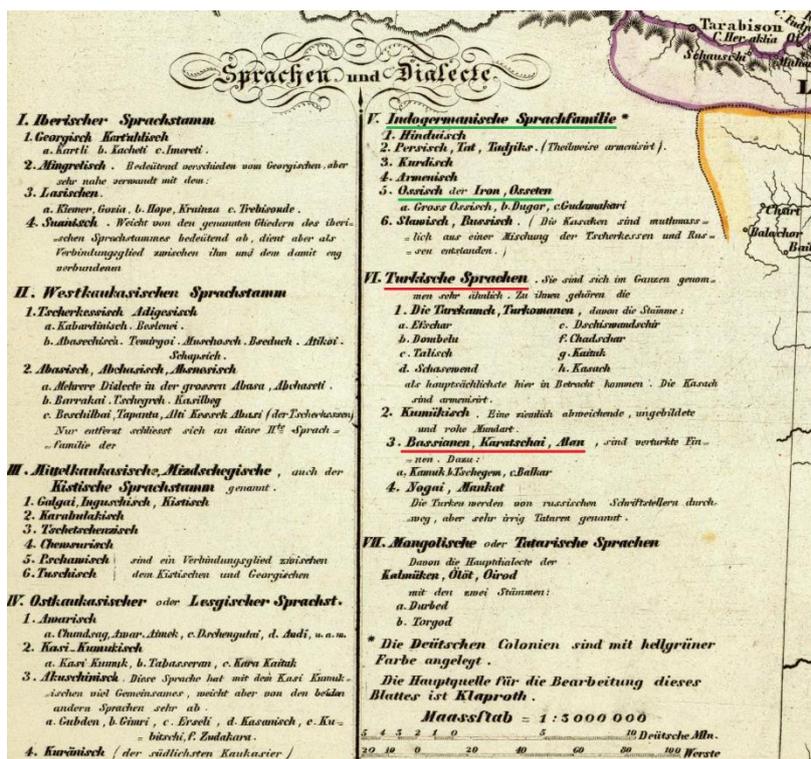
In his book, Ahmed Cevdet Pasha mentions the Alans as a Turkic community while describing the Arab expeditions targeting the Caucasus in the Middle Ages (Cevdet, 2022: 52). It is significant that Cevdet Pasha recorded the Alans as Turks in the 19th century, when there was no debate about the origin of the Alans.

On the other hand, there will be those who will say that such information provided by him cannot be taken into account, but the work of the well-known

German geographer of the same period, Heinrich Berghaus, titled *Physikalischer Atlas*, dated 1852, also confirms Cevdet Pasha. The last part of Berghaus's work is devoted to a series of maps, and in this section, the Caucasus map is also included, and the languages and dialects of the people living in the Caucasus are classified according to their ethnic affiliation and are presented in the lower left part of the map. The most striking point in that classification is that the Alans are shown as a Turkic-speaking community of Turkic origin, and the Ossetians are shown as a group of Iranian-speaking tribes (Berghaus, 1852: N^o15).



Map XI. Berghaus' Map of Caucasia (Berghaus, 1852: N^o15)



Map XII. The Ossetians and Alans in Berghaus' Map of Caucasia (Berghaus, 1852: N°15)

In the work prepared by Yosif Alekseevich Kipshidze, dated 1914, after Berghaus and Ahmet Cevdet Pasha, the following will be stated while giving information about the Alans and their connection with the Turks will be emphasized: „... ႠႭႭႭႭ (Alani): Georgians call the Karachay Tatars (Karachay people) who live on the northern slopes of the main Caucasus Mountain range, near Elbrus, at the source of the Kuban River, Alan.” (Kipshidze, 1914: 193).

In addition to all of them, we also have new results about the origin of the Alans that no one has seen before, but we will not mention them here.

In the Georgian medieval source called Kartlis Tskhovreba, people, whose country is called *Ovseti* and who are called *Ovs(es)*, are associated with the Ossetians and an inference is made to the name of the tribe *As*, based on the first syllable of this tribe's name, *Ovs*, and it is claimed that the name *Ossetia* means something like „Land of Ases“. The use of the name *Ossetian* is widespread and popular because the Russians adopted the name of the tribe mentioned in Georgian sources and called this people that way (Foltz, 2022: 15).

However, the mentioned Georgian source associates the names Ovesti and Ovses with the Turks, not with an Iranian community. Kartlis Tskhovreba says exactly this:

„When the king of the Khazars captured the countries about which we have written, and crossed Mount Caucasus, he had with him his son by the name of Uobos. He gave to his son the prisoners of Armenia and Kartli; and he gave him besides, part of K'avk'as's land that stretched to the west of Lomek'i river and to the western edge of Mount Caucasus. And Uobos settled there. His descendants are the Ovses, and the country is Osseti, which formerly had been the domain of K'avk'as..." (Mroveli, 2014: 17).

As can be seen, the origin of the names *Ovses* and *Ossetia* is related to the Khazar Turks. Both names have nothing to do with *As* (*Yas*), which is a tribal name, but are related to *Uobos*, the son of the Khazar kagan. The name *Ovs* seems to be a form that emerged from the change of the name *Uobos* over time: *Uobos* > *Uovos* > *Ovs* [*b* > *v* shift common in Turkic] and naturally *Ossetia* essentially means something like „Land of *Uobos* (*Ovs*) not *Ases*“ (Şengül, 2023: 40). In fact, it is in no way possible to see the names *Ovs* and *As* as designations that indicate the same tribe.

Two written sources can be cited, albeit indirectly, to prove that the *Alans* cannot be related to the Turkic world. One of these is the work of *Josafa Barbaro*.

Barbaro says that the *Goths* later migrated to *Crimea*, where the *Alans* lived, and as a result of the neighborhood of these two communities, the name *Gothalani* (*Catalania*) emerged and that the *Goths* and *Alans* could talk and understand each other (*Barbaro & Contarini*, 1873: 30).

Such an explanation could perhaps be interpreted as saying that linguistically the *Alans* spoke a language that the *Goths* could understand, and therefore the *Alans* had no connection with the *Turks*. However, *Barbaro's* statements do not reveal what kind of language the *Alans* spoke. Apparently, both communities understand each other's language as a result of their centuries-old interaction, which is a very normal situation. By looking at such information, it is not possible to make any inference about the origin of the *Alans* or the language they spoke.

Another source indicating that the *Alans* cannot be related to the Turkic world is the work of *Ibn Al-Athir*.

In his work titled *al-Kāmil fī'l-Ta'rīkh*, the 13th century writer Ibn Al-Athir wrote that the Mongols sent an envoy to the Kipchaks in order to break the Alan-Kipchak alliance, which stood like a barrier in front of them during the military expedition targeting the Caucasus in 1222 and envoy stated the Kypchaks, : „... *We and you are of one race. These Alān are not the same as you that you should aid them, nor is their religion the same as yours.*“ (Ibn Al-Athir, 2008: 222).

Such an explanation mentioned in the author's work, at first glance, indicates that the Alans are a racially different ethnic group from the Kipchaks and therefore from the Turks, but it does not provide definitive data about the ethnic affiliation of the Alans. Since we will examine these explanations mentioned by Ibn Al-Athir in details in another study, we will not go into detail here.

As to John Tzetzes' work.

ταπαγκὰς μέσφιλι χσινὰ κορθὶ καντά

Tapankhas Mesfili Khsina Korthi Kanda
[Good day, my lord, my archontissa, where are you from?]

τὸ φάρνετζ κίντζι μέσφιλι καϊτζ φουὰ σαοῦγγε

To Farnetz Kintzi Mesfilli Kaitz Fau Saunge
[Do not be ashamed, my lady; let the priest marry you]
(Khazdan & Epstein, 1985: 259; Tzetzae, 2019: 59)

Attempts have all the time been made to read the two sentences from the language of the Alans mentioned above in Ossetian. These reading attempts may or may not be true. However, those who tried to connect the language of the Alans to Ossetian by looking at Tzetzes' work missed a point.

Tzetzes also mentions the following sentence from the language of the Scythians at the very beginning of the same work, in which he includes sentences from some languages, including the language of the Alans, and the explanations of those sentences. If the sentences in the language of the Alans recorded by Tzetzes really belongs to the language of the Alans, who are descendants of the Scythians, the same Scythian sentence must also be explained in the language of the Ossetians, who are claimed to be the descendants of the Scythians.

σαλαμαλέκ ἀλτή ** σαλαμαλέκ ἀλτοῦγεπ.

Salamalek Alti Salamalek Altugep [Altī bāg]
 [Good day, my lady, good day, my lord]
 (Khazdan & Epstein, 1985: 259; Tzetzæ, 2019: 58)

Salamalek is clearly nothing more than the expression „Selamüaleykum“, which is the Turkish pronunciation of the Arabic phrase „As-salāmu‘alaykum“ which the Turks used for greeting in daily language after they converted to Islam, and the same phrase is encountered in the Chuvash as „*Salamalik*“ (Paasonen, 1950: 3,117). Although the Chuvash people were not Muslims, the fact that they preserved an Arabic phrase can be interpreted as a linguistic heritage from the Volga Bulgarian state, which accepted Islam, or can be explained by their being under the influence of their neighbors, the Muslim Tatars. Alti is nothing but the Turkish word Elti/ilti, which means „woman, lady“. Bäg in the word *altī bāg* is nothing but the Turkish word beg/bey which means „lord“. By the way, the phonetic and semantic resemblance between English lady and Turkic *elti* is striking (lady > alady > aldy > elti ?).

The Scythian sentence mentioned by Tzetzes is clearly Turkic. Even if we accept the Alanic phrases in his work as Ossetian, the phrase belonging to the Scythian language is not Ossetian. If the Scythian phrase in Tzetzes’s work is taken into consideration, the conclusion that the Alans do not come from the origin of the Scythians emerges and if we look at the Alanic phrase, the conclusion that the Scythians are not the ancestors of the Alans inevitably emerges.

On the other hand, it can be said that the Scythians had to be Muslims to say such a phrase, but when Islam emerged the Scythians had already disappeared into history and the author made a Turkic sentence which appears to belong to the Scythian language. Such objections may be true, but Tzetzes is familiar with the Turks. In other words, if the author wanted, he could have said that this Scythian phrase belongs to the Turks, but we see that he did not do this.

It is a mystery whether the phrase recorded by the author about the language of the Scythians was taken from the works of previous writers who are contemporary with the Scythians.

The known descendants of the Scythians were a Turkic community we call Sabir, and the claim that the Ossetians are the descendants of the Sakas has never been proven and will never be more than a claim that cannot be proven. The Magyars, owners of the Gorokhovo archaeological culture, carry much more Scythian blood than today's Ossetians.

One Scythian group, which left site of Tasmola culture in Kazakstan and migrated westward, appeared as the Sarmatians and the Sarmatians were really Sarogurs (the White Ogurs) (Şengül, 2023a: 168-171)

It is controversial that even the phrases belonging to the language of the Alans mentioned by John Tzetzes are actually linguistic remnants of the Alans who would be direct descendants of the Scythians.

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