

External relations of Scythian

The paper is a case study of an ancient language known only from foreign traditions. It is argued that a fairly adequate description of its phonetics and contacts with other languages can still be achieved. The Scythian word stock shows certain exceptions to the regular phonetic correspondences that are probably due to borrowing. It seems likely that in Ciscaucasia and the North Pontic area the Scythians and their ancestors encountered bearers of West Iranian or other Aryan, North Caucasian, and unidentified Indo-European languages and partially embraced their onomasticon, theonyms, and names of some *realia*. On the other hand, Scythian loanwords can be detected in East Caucasian, Median, Avestan and Thracian.

Keywords: Scythian, Thracian, Avestan, North Caucasian, language contacts.

My paper is a case study of an ancient language known only from foreign traditions. I believe that a fairly adequate description of its phonetics and contacts with other languages can still be achieved. The most distinctive trait of Scythian phonetics is the change $d > \delta > l$, cf. Scythian Παράλαται, the name of the Scythian royal caste, and Avestan *paradāta*, the mythical dynasty of kings. There is also the change of the $*xš-$ cluster into a sibilant in the initial position. Thus, the famous Olbian decree in honour of a certain Protogenus dealing with the events of the late 3rd century BC mentions the tribe of Σάιοι (in the plural genitive case Σαίων, from Iranian $*xšaya-$ ‘king’) and its king Saitapharnes (Σαιταφάρνης, from Iranian $*Xšaitafarna-$, ‘[Possessing of] a bright/regal *farnah*,’ the text recorded only the genitive case Σαιταφάρνου) (IOSPE I²: 32, A, lines 10, 34, 83). The Iranian origin of both names is unmistakable, and so is the Scythian change $*xš > s$ in the initial position. Therefore, both the ethnonym and the anthroponym of the Olbian decree should be regarded as Scythian and not Sarmatian, as it has been occasionally believed. Moreover, as Tomaschek (1888: 721) rightly pointed out, the ethnic name can be identified with that of the ‘regal Scythians’ (οἱ βασιληῖοι Σκύθαι, the text recording only the plural genitive case, τῶν βασιληίων Σκυθέων) mentioned by Herodotus (IV, 20). The same change can be seen in the name of Σατράκης, the king of Central Asian Scythians, a contemporary of Alexander the Great mentioned by Arrian (Anab. Alex. IV, 4, 8). These examples can neither chronologically nor/or geographically pertain to the Sarmatians. Moreover, the initial $Xš-$ of Sarmatian proper names is invariably rendered as Ξ: cf., for instance, Ξάρθανος (Tanais, CIRB 1287, AD 244), Ξαιορσάκης (Pantikapaion, CIRB 689, 2nd century AD) as well as the Ossetic reflex $xs-$. Therefore it seems likely that the change $*xš > s-$ did take place in Scythian.

The second part of the names of Scythian kings recorded by Herodotus, Ἀριαπίθης (Herod. IV 76, 78) and Σπαργαπίθης, being clearly the reflex of Common Iranian $*pāiša-$ ‘outlook’, shows the change $*ś > \theta$ instead of the standard change $*ś > s$ reflected, for instance, in the cognate name of the prince of the Massagetae — Σπαργαπίσης (Herod. I 211, 213). True, it is believed that $-\theta-$ emerged in these names under the influence of Greek names with the element $-\piείθης$ (Διοπέιθης, etc.) (Vasmer 1923: 12; Schwyzler 1968: 206 and Schmitt 2002: 149; 2003: 5). Yet some words showing the change $*ś > *θ$ (and finally t) were borrowed by Os-

setic (for instance, *færæt* ‘axe’ from **paraθu-*, going back to common Iranian **paraśu-*, etc.) where they should be treated as Scythian loanwords: the regular Ossetic reflex of **ś* is *s*. Therefore I think that *-θ-* in the names of Ariapeithes and Spargapeithes was the regular reflex of Common Iranian **ś*.

Given the above-discussed change $d > \delta > l$, the emergence of intervocalic *-d-* in Scythian calls for an explanation. Judging from the rendering of the name of the Scythians both in Greek and Akkadian, by the time of their acquaintance Common Iranian **d* had already changed to Scythian δ . However, Herodotus (I 103) mentions Μαδύης, the Scythian king of the 7th century BC. It means that at the same time Scythian had a plosive *d* not going back to Common Iranian **d*. This fact can be accounted for by the change **-nt-* > *-d-*, typical of Southeast Iranian languages, cf. Yidga *lad* ‘tooth’ < **danta*, etc. (Эдельман 1986: 163). In this case the name of Μαδύης should be explained as the reflex of Indo-Iranian **mantu-* (cf. Avestan *mantu-*, Old Indian *mántu-* ‘counsellor; ruler’), not of Iranian **madu-* ‘honey; mead’. Scythian forms showing, according to generally accepted etymologies, *-d-* < **-d-* and *-nt-* < **-nt-* can be explained differently. Thus, the name of the Scythian king Idanthyrso is recorded as Ἰνδᾶ(ν)θυρσοσ in some of Herodotus’ manuscripts (Common Iranian **d* survived in Scythian in the **-nd-* cluster). Moreover, intervocalic *d* of the forms Ἰδάνθυρσοσ and Ἰδανθούρας can go back to **-nd-* (in this case the first part of the name can be traced to **vinda-* ‘acquiring’). Multiple forms of this name (cf., for instance, Грантовский 1998: 251; Иванчик 2009: 69–71) imply that the phoneme/consonant cluster rendered alternately as δ or $\nu\delta$ in Greek could be pronounced in Scythian in a specific way, hindering its unambiguous perception by foreign speakers. It could be the cluster *-nd-*; cf. its reflexes in modern East Iranian languages showing both *-nd-* and *-d-*: Munji *vond-*, Upper Munji *vod-*, Yidga *vad-* < **band-* ‘to tie’ (Эдельман 1986: 169), Pashto *āyund-* < **āgunda-* ‘to dress’, but Pashto Afridi *adūm* < **handāma* ‘thigh’ (Skjærvø 1989: 403). Given that Iranian *-nd-* could be rendered by Greek *-ντ-* as well (cf. the rendering of Old Persian *Vīdāfarnah-* by Greek Ἰνταφέρνης / Ἰνταφρένης), it can be surmised that the element *-αντ-* in such names as, for instance, Ἀριάντας (Herod. IV 81) renders Scythian **-anda-* (as in the name of a certain Κολανδάκης from the Olbian graffito on the wall of a black-figure kylix dated to the first half of the 4th century BC — Толстой 1953: 11, № 7) (cf. the name of the Persian satrap Ἀρσάνδας mentioned by Polyaeus [VII 11, 7; VII 34; VIII 47]). It seems all the more plausible since the widely accepted explanation of such names as Iranian adjectives or participles ending in *-ant-* does not take into account that the final *t* of the latter was dropped in the nominative and vocative cases, and Greek could hardly have borrowed the oblique stem. Yet another example of the alleged survival of Common Iranian **-nt-* in Scythian, the hydronym Παντικάπης, also does not necessarily contradict our thesis of the change **-nt-* > *-d-* in Scythian, since the names of big rivers are prone to be substrate.

The Scythian wordstock shows, however, certain deviations from regular phonetic correspondences that are probably due to borrowing, i.e. West Iranian or Aryan *κτ* (*kt/xt*)- instead of East Iranian *-γd-*, *s* instead of *θ* < Common Iranian **ś*, etc. These linguistic phenomena and the ensuing historical and ethnocultural conclusions will be dealt with below. Let us first turn to the relevant names and words recorded by Herodotus.

Ὀκταμασάδης is the name of the king of Scythia mentioned by Herodotus (IV 80). Its first part (Ὀκτα-) seemingly renders either Aryan **ukta* or West Iranian **uxta-* ‘said, proclaimed’ (past participle from *vak-*) (Müllenhoff 1866: 567 = Müllenhoff 1892: 116; Vasmer 1923: 15). Humbach and Faiss’s etymology (Humbach and Faiss 2012: 7): from Iranian **hu-kr̥ta* ‘well-built; well-shaped’ implies an otherwise unattested disappearance of the vocalic *r* and can therefore hardly be accepted. O. Trubachev pointed out that *-kt-* became *-xt-* in Iranian and held that the name of Octamasades (where *-κτ-*, according to him, rendered *-kt-*) was Indo-

Aryan (Трубачев 1999: 199–201 = Трубачев 1985: 140–143). Actually, it is not necessarily so. Iranian *-xt-* was invariably rendered by Greek *-κτ-*, e.g. Βάκτρα from *Bāxtri-* or Ἀρταῦκτης from **Arta-uxta-*, and never by *-χτ/θ-*. It is true, however, that Greek *-κτ-* never renders the East Iranian reflex of Aryan **-kt-*, i.e. *-γδ-*, always transcribed as *-γδ-* (Ἰγδαμπαῖς, Σόγδιος, etc.). S. Tokhtas'ev suggested in this connection that in some East Iranian languages, including Scythian, Indo-Iranian *-kt-* could become *-xt-* without a subsequent transition to *-γδ-* (Тохтасъев 2005: 98–99, n. 227). It seems, however, more likely that Scythian kings could bear non-Scythian names. There is also some circumstantial evidence in favour of a non-Scythian origin of Octamasades' name, i.e. the fact that it was borne by the son of the king of the Sindoi mentioned in an inscription from the Semibratnee site on the south bank of the Kuban river on the Taman peninsula, dated palaeographically to the 4th century BC (Блаватская 1993; Тохтасъев 1998; Яйленко 2008).

Herodotus (IV 53) narrates that ἀντακάϊος is a great spineless fish from the mouth of the Borusthenes river, used for salting. Trubachev (1999: 64–65, first published in Трубачев 1977) compared it to Old Indian *ánta-* 'end; limit' (present in Iranian as well — ЭСИЯ I: 173–175) and *kāya-* 'body', meaning something like 'sharp-bodied.' If Greek *-ντ-* stood for *-nt-* (and not *-nd-*, which is also possible, cf. above) of the source language, the word was probably non-Scythian — as stated above, Common Iranian **-nt-* apparently became *-d-* in Scythian. As Trubachev already noted, ἀντακάϊος was reflected in West Caucasian and Kartvelian languages of the Black Sea Caucasian coast. Thus, Giorgio Interiano, an Italian traveller of the late 15th — early 16th century in his description of the Adygs wrote that there was in their land a kind of sturgeon called *anticei* just as it was called by Strabo (Кавказ 2010: 29). Interiano's compatriot Archangelo Lamberti, who was a missionary in Megrelia from 1635 to 1653, noted that a kind of local sturgeon was called *Angiachia* (Ламберти 1913: 207). The latter name is also recorded in Kipshidze's Megrelian dictionary (Кипшидзе 1914: 195) (I am indebted to Yakov Testelet's for this reference). The word has neither a West Caucasian nor a Kartvelian etymology and it seems likely that the Adygs and Megrelians borrowed the name for sturgeon from the early inhabitants of the east coast of the Black Sea, judging from the area, either Sindiian or Maeotian. Given that the name of the Maeotians, i.e. Μαῖται¹ / Μαῖῶται² / Μαῖῆται,³ is reminiscent of the name of the Near Eastern kingdom of Mitanni where the ruling élite was Aryan, it can be surmised that Maeotian was an Aryan language.

Ταβίτι, according to Herodotus (IV 59), is the Scythian name of Hestia, the goddess of the hearth. It is traditionally traced to the Iranian stem **tap-* 'to burn; to heat' (Zeuß 1837: 286 und Anm. *; Müllenhoff 1866: 558, Anm. 1 = 1892: 108, Anm. ***; Mayrhofer 2006: 17; Humbach and Faiss 2012: 7) though Vasmer (Vasmer 1923: 16–17) rightly doubted that *-β-* could represent Iranian *-p-*⁴ and suggested sagaciously that the initial voiceless stop of the name of Tabiti corresponded to the Iranian voiced consonant. However, his comparison of the Scythian goddess's name with the causative participle **dāvañantī-* 'burning; heating' from the Old Indian stem *dū-* 'to burn' does not explain the intervocalic beta in Greek rendering. In this connection

¹ This form is recorded in epigraphy, cf. CIRB 10, 25, 40, 180, 971, 972, 1015, 1039. This list does not include nos. 8, 9, 11, 39, 1040 where the ethnonym can be safely reconstructed in accordance with the standard formula (except for no. 9 showing a somewhat unusual formula).

² The most widespread form of Greek literature.

³ The Ionic form used by Herodotus (IV 123).

⁴ Indeed there are no examples of voicing of intervocalic *-p-* in Scythian, cf. the names of Api, Lipoxais, Pappaios, Spargapeithes, etc. Tokhtas'ev (2005: 78–79, n. 109) suggested a dissimilation of voiceless stops, but there are no parallels for such a dissimilation in Scythian.

Holzer's hypothesis of the existence of a certain Indo-European language reflecting Indo-European (including Indo-Iranian) unvoiced consonants as voiced and vice versa⁵ in early Eastern Europe (Holzer 1989: 13 et passim) is worth noting. It seems likely that the name of Tabiti was a substrate borrowing cognate to the Indo-European stem **dh₂p-* 'sacrificial meal' (cf. Latin *daps* 'sacrificial meal, feast', Armenian *tawn* 'feast,' Old Icelandic *tafn* 'sacrificial animal, feast,' etc.),⁶ which does not contradict the image of the hearth goddess.

Hesychius recorded the word **σανάπη* (*σάναπτιν* in the manuscript, *σανάπην* is Scali-ger's conjecture) as Scythian for 'drunken woman'. Its first part *σανά-*, meaning 'wine' (cf. Ossetic *sæn/sænæ* 'id.'), can be traced to Proto-North Caucasian **swīnē* 'barberry; currants' (Avar *saní* 'barberry', Lak *sunū* 'pomegranate', Adyghe *sāna*, Kabardian *sāna* 'grapes; wine' — NCED: 971) and, judging from its phonetic form and semantics, is a West Caucasian borrowing.⁷ The second part seems to be a reflex of the Indo-European stem **peh₃ / ph₃* 'to drink' (Vasmer 1923: 50.) The same word, according to Hecataios, existed in Thracian (*ἐπεὶ δὲ οἱ μέθυσοι σανάπαι λέγονται παρὰ Θραξίν...* "Since drunkards are called *σανάπαι* among the Thracians..." — FGH I F 34), and was probably a Scythian loanword. It is all the more plausible since the Thracians had their own word for wine: *ζίλαι* (Hes. *ζίλαι ὁ οἶνος παρὰ Θραξί*).

The word *ἀκινάκης* used by Herodotus to call Persian (VII 54) and Scythian (IV 62; 70) swords (cf. also Sogdian *kyn'k* 'id.') cannot belong to the inherited Indo-Iranian wordstock where **ki* would have become *ci*. In Greek it is regarded as a loanword, either Iranian (Frisk 1960–73, I: 53) or 'Pre-Greek rather than Iranian' (Beekes 2009, I: 51), with no suggested etymology. The word can be traced back to Proto-Nakh **hāhķīnekV* 'iron knife': **hāhķi* 'iron,' cf. Chechen *ēčig*, Ingush *äšk*⁸, Batsbi *šajhķi* 'id.' + suffix forming adjectives *-in* + *nekV* 'knife,' cf. Batsbi *nek* 'id.' — for North Caucasian etymology see NCED: 851–852⁹. The combination **hāhķi-in* accounts for the long iota in the Greek loanword *acīnacēs* implied by Latin prosody: it is the last word in the first line of Alcaic hendecasyllabic verse where the antepenultimate syllable can only be long (*Hor. Od. I, 27, 5*) (cf. Chantraine 1999: 47; Beekes 2009, I: 51).

The Scythians proper also contacted with the speakers of East Caucasian languages as evidenced by the phonetics of an Iranian loanword in East Caucasian, reconstructed as **μῆλι* 'felt; felt cloak' (Archi *warti* 'felt cloak,' Tabasaran *verč* 'felt,' Lezghi *lit* 'felt,' Dargwa Akushi

⁵ Holzer traces voiceless consonants of the postulated substratum only to Indo-European voiced aspirates and not to the voiced unaspirates of the traditional reconstruction, resp. glottalized consonants of Gamkrelidze — Ivanov's and tense consonants of Shevoroshkin's and Starostin's reconstructions. However, in at least one of his examples (see below, s.v. *Τάναϊς*), the substratum *t-* is clearly the reflex of the Indo-European unaspirated / glottalized / tense stop. As to *Τάναϊς* and *Ταβιτί*, it can be accounted for either by the fact that the reflexes of unaspirated / glottalized / tense stops were unvoiced as well — as far as I can judge, there is no contradicting evidence — or by the presence of a laryngeal as it was the case with the formation of Indo-Iranian aspirates — cf., for instance, **ratha-* 'chariot' from **rót-h₂-o-* — EWAia II: 429–430.)

⁶ On this stem and its reflexes see Toporov 2012: 167–169.

⁷ Contrary to a widely accepted hypothesis (ИЭСОРЯ I: 512–513; III: 66–68, with literature; EWAia II: 605; Тохташев 2005: 102 and n. 251), the word can hardly be cognate with Old Indian *śaná*, Middle and New Persian *šan* 'cannabis' going back to the etymon with a sibilant/stop alternation in the word-initial position whose reflexes are German *Hanf*, Ossetic *gæn/gænæ*, Russian *конопля* 'id.' etc.

⁸ Chechen and Ingush forms are the results of the addition of the diminutive suffix **-k* and a regular palatalization (NCED: 851)

⁹ Cf. NCED: 851–852. Borrowing of Proto-Nakh *hāhķin-ig* 'made of iron' or **=iāχ-in* ("=" denotes a class marker, cf. Batsbi *d-aχē*, Chechen *d-eχa*, Ingush *d-šāχa* 'long') 'long' + *nekV* 'long knife' seems less plausible phonetically, though by no means impossible.

warhi, Dargwa Chirag *warse* ‘felt cloak,’ Lak *warsi* ‘felt cloak,’ Avar *burtina* ‘felt cloak; felt,’ Chechen *werta* ‘felt cloak,’ etc.) (Климов 1972: 54; Старостин 1988: 113 = Старостин 2007: 314) — cf. Avestan *varasa-* ‘hair,’ Old Indian *vālśa-* ‘shoot; branch; twig.’ As indicated by S. Starostin, the phoneme * θ can be reconstructed for a small number of East Caucasian stems, probably borrowings (Старостин 1988: 154, n. 3 = Старостин 2007: 314, n. 2). In the source-language etymon in question it clearly goes back to * \acute{s} < Indo-European * k . Among the recorded Ancient Iranian languages the change * \acute{s} > θ is characteristic only of Old Persian and Scythian. But the language of the ancestors of Persians still had * \acute{s} when they had come to the Near East; otherwise they would not adopt the name of Assyria, i.e. *Aššur* as **Ašura*, hence Old Persian *Aθura*, given the presence in their language of *s* and *š* sibilants far more resembling the Akkadian phoneme.¹⁰ It appears therefore that the East Caucasian form could not be borrowed from Proto-Old Persian and Scythian remains the only likely donor language.¹¹

The ethnic name *Skudra* known from Old Persian inscriptions is usually identified with the Thracians since they are named after the “Overseas Scythians” (*Sakā tayaiy para draya*) and before the “Greeks bearing a shield[-like hat]”¹² (*yaunā takabarā*) on the list of nations/provinces of the Achaemenid Empire. Such an ethnic attribution seems to be on the whole well-grounded (see below), yet it is substantiated only by geographic arguments. Both *Skudra*’s name and their clothes as depicted by Achaemenid reliefs¹³ are reminiscent of the Iranians.¹⁴ True, the word *Skudra* has been compared to such toponyms as *Skodra* in Illyria, *Skydra* in Macedonia, etc., yet these etymological exercises are no more reliable than the attempts at linking together the Scandinavian ethnonym *Rus* and the Slav hydronym *Ros*’. Now, the etymology proposed by Szemerényi (1980) is far more convincing. Basing himself on Akkadian (*ašguzāia*, *asguzāia*, *iškuzāia*¹⁵) and Greek (Σκούθαι) renderings of the Scythian proper name for themselves he has shown that both Greek θ and Akkadian *z* reflect the interdental voiced fricative δ (δ in the conventional Iranological transcription), the characteristic Eastern Iranian reflex of the Common Iranian * d , and has reconstructed the Early Scythian ethnic name as **Skudā*.¹⁶ Then he confronted this proper name with that of the *Skudra* and surmised that the latter was a Median derivative of the verbal root **skud-*, formed with the aid of the suffix *-ra* and therefore none

¹⁰ True, it can be surmised that the Persians adopted the name of Assyria from Median in the regular Median form **Asura* and, knowing that Median *s* often corresponds to Persian θ , changed *s* to θ . However, in a number of positions Median *s* corresponds to Persian *s*, so such a shift does not seem plausible.

¹¹ Indeed, the word could originate from an extinct Iranian language showing, like Old Persian and Scythian, the change * \acute{s} > θ , but I prefer to deal with established facts.

¹² That is, the wide-brimmed πέτασος hat. The Akkadian versions of Achaemenid inscriptions make it clear by pointing out that they have shields “on their heads” (*ina qaqqadišunu*).

¹³ On the clothes of personages either labelled as *Skudra* (*iyam Skudra*, “this is a Skudra”) or identified as such see Walser 1966: 54–55, 60–61, 65–66, 85, 95–97.

¹⁴ According to Diakonoff (1981: 140, note 65), V.A. Livshits “toyed with the idea that the land *Skudra*- of the Bisutun inscription may stand for European Scythia, and not for Thrace as is usually assumed (or for both...)”.

¹⁵ In ancient Semitic languages no syllable could begin with two consonants, hence a prothetic vowel in the Akkadian word (see, e.g., Diakonoff 1991: 80; Коган 2009: 35), *a-* in Assyrian and *-i-* in Babylonian dialect (Дьяконов 2008: 255). On Akkadian rendering of Iranian words with initial consonant clusters see Грантовский 1970: 73 = Грантовский 2007: 84–85.

¹⁶ Later the spirant δ/δ became *l* in Scythian as well as in South-Eastern Iranian languages, namely Bactrian, Pashto, Munji and Yidga. This fact accounts for the name Σκόλοτοι recorded by Herodotus, i.e. **skula-ta*, where *-ta* is a plural marker, and is one of the isoglosses linking Scythian together with South-Eastern Iranian idioms and not with Sarmato-Alano-Osetic ones as it has been believed (see Szemerényi 1980; Витчак 1992; Кулланда 2011).

other than the Median rendering of the Scythians' proper name akin to the Akkadian *ašguzāia*, *asguzāia*, *iškuzāia* and the Greek Σκύθαι. The only contestable point of this etymology is, in my opinion, the assumption that the word *Skudra* is not a mere phonetic rendering of a foreign ethnic name but its reinterpretation by means of singling out the root and providing it with a new suffix. True, Iranian-speaking Medians or Persians would probably have been able, in contradistinction to the Assyrians and Greeks, to define the root of a Scythian word. However, in order to do that they should have had a reflex of the hypothetical root **skud-* in their own tongue, and there are no such reflexes in Western Iranian languages. All the proposed etymologies of the word **Skudā* are either not substantiated at all by the Iranian data¹⁷ or based solely on Eastern Iranian materials.¹⁸ It seems more likely that the Medians would have tried to render the sound of a foreign phoneme with the aid of their proper phonetic means, all the more so since there is yet another example of Eastern Iranian δ (*ḍ*) rendered by the “dental + *r*” cluster in a Western Iranian language, namely the ‘Median’ *Bāxtrī-*¹⁹ corresponding to the Avestan *Bāxδī-*. The irregular correspondence *-xtr-* — *-xδ-* has not been explained convincingly. It has been believed that the original Eastern Iranian form had been **Bāxδrī-*, and later *-r-* was dropped (Humbach 1966: 52). However, there are no parallels for such a development in Eastern Iranian languages. Given the two above-mentioned Median renderings of Eastern Iranian proper names, would it not be more natural to suppose that the Medians, like the Greeks and the Assyrians, merely tried to imitate the sound of the foreign phoneme *ḍ* rendering it in an intervocalic position as a cluster of a voiced dental stop and a resonant (*-dr-*), and in a position after a voiceless consonant *x* as a cluster of a voiceless dental stop and a resonant (*-tr-*)?

How was the Scythian ethnic name transferred to the Thracians? The point is that, according to classical sources, there existed close links between the Scythians and the Thracians. For instance, among Thracian tribes one encounters Iranian ethnic names showing a specific Scythian phonetic development. Thus, Hecataios (St. Byz., fr. 128 = FGH I F 157) and Herodotus (VII, 110–113) mention the Thracian tribe Σάτραι, whose name is clearly a reflex of Iranian *xšaθra* with a Scythian *xš-* > *s-* change in the initial position (cf. Tomaschek 1893: 68).²⁰ A poem by Archilochus written in the second half of the 7th century BC mentions the ethnic name Σάϊοι (in the plural genitive case Σαῖων).²¹ The island of Thasos, where Archilochus lived, was situated near the Thracian shores and its inhabitants constantly warred with the Thracians. Moreover, the *scholia* to this fragment identify the Σάϊοι as a Thracian tribe (see Bonnard’s commentary in Archiloque 1958: 5–6). However, one simply cannot help remembering the already cited Olbian decree in honour of Protogenus mentioning a homonymous tribe. As To-

¹⁷ As Leibniz’s hypothesis, supported by Justi and Szemerényi (Justi 1896–1904: 441; Szemerényi 1980: 21 and n. 44), stating that this word goes back to the Indo-European root meaning ‘to shoot.’

¹⁸ As Cornillot’s hypothesis (Cornillot 1981) linking the name **Skudā* to Wakhi *skid* ‘skull-cap,’ formerly ‘pointed cap,’ and that of Trubachev (1999: 137, first published in 1980) comparing it to the Ossetic participle *sk’yd* / *sk’ud* ‘torn; split.’

¹⁹ A proper Old Persian form where *tr* > *š* has survived in the Elamite rendering *ba-ak-ši-iš*, cf., for instance, the Elamite version of the Bisutun inscription (DB I, 13; III, 80; 85) and the so-called Persepolis fortification tablets (PF 1555, 8–9 — Hallock 1969: 434).

²⁰ This phonetic trait of some North Pontic Iranian idioms has been pointed out by Harmatta (1951: 308–309), although he did not consider it as pertaining to Scythian.

²¹ This passage (Archilochi frgm. 13 in Archiloque 1958) has been repeatedly cited in connection with North Pontic ethnonymy and anthroponymy — cf. Tomaschek 1893: 43–44; CIRB: 95. Unfortunately, the context of Archilochus’ quatrain does not enable one to define the ethnicity of the Σάϊοι: it is merely stated that one of them (Σαῖων τις) is boasting of Archilochus’ shield lost in battle.

maschek (1888: 721) rightly pointed out, the ethnic name can be identified with that of the ‘regal Scythians’ (οἱ βασιλήϊοι Σκύθαι, the text recording only the plural genitive case, τῶν βασιληίων Σκυθέων) mentioned by Herodotus (IV, 20),²² just as the Σαυδάραται (< Iranian **saw-dar-a-ta*, ‘Wearing black’), mentioned in the same inscription, were identified with Herodotus’ Μελάγχλαινοι, ‘[Wearing] black cloaks.’²³ All the similarities of Scythian and Thracian ethnic names can hardly be mere coincidences.

We do not know under what circumstances the Thracians embraced Scythian ethnic names, yet it can be surmised that the process was somewhat similar to that of the Eastern Slavs acquiring the Scandinavian name *Rus*, the Slavic Bulgarians acquiring their Turkic name or the Romanized population of the would-be France acquiring their Germanic name. Probably a small Scythian group formed the élite of Thracian society, labelled the local population with their name(s) and dissolved among them like Scandinavians and Turcs among the Slavs or Franks among the Romanian-speaking French.

As stated above, both linguistic and extra-linguistic considerations seem to imply that the name *Skudra* used by the Medians and the Persians as the designation of the Thracians can be traced to the North Pontic Scythian own name for themselves, **Skuḍa*. Moreover, the presumed Median rendering of a specific Eastern Iranian phoneme *ḍ/δ* through a dental + *r* cluster in the word *Skudra* is similar to that in the word *Bāxtrī-*, corresponding to the Eastern Iranian toponym *Bāxδī-*. The only difference is that in the latter case the dental became voiceless, being assimilated to a preceding voiceless fricative. Thus, it seems likely that *ḍ/δ* in Eastern Iranian loanwords in Median was regularly — although, of course, two examples is a far cry from regularity — rendered by a dental + *r* cluster.

Words of Scythian origin can also be traced in Avestan. They show phonetic evolution differing from the Avestan proper. Thus, Kersaspa is called both *gaēsu* ‘curly’ (Y. 9, 10) and *gaēθu* ‘id.’ (Yt. 13, 61; 136), besides *sūra-* ‘strong, powerful’ (cf. Old Indian *śūra-* ‘id.’) one encounters *aiβi-θūra-* ‘mighty’ (Yt. 10, 6; 78; 13, 40; 75; Y 1, 18; 4, 6; 65, 12), etc. The above-mentioned reflexes go back to Indo-Iranian **ś* (< Indo-European **k*). As stated above, among the recorded Ancient Iranian languages the change **ś* > *θ* is characteristic of Old Persian and Scythian. It can be shown, however, that these words are not Old Persian. The initial cluster *θr-* of the relevant Avestan lexical layer, going back to Indo-Iranian **sr-*, is reflected differently in Old Persian where it shows the change **sr-* > **hr-* > *r-*. Suffice it to compare Avestan *θraotah-* ‘stream,’²⁴ Old Indian *srótas* ‘id.’ and Old Persian *rautah* ‘id.’.

Thus, it appears that in Ciscaucasia and the North Pontic area the Scythians and their ancestors encountered the speakers of yet unidentified Indo-European and non-Indo-European languages and partially embraced their onomasticon, theonyms, and names of some *realia*. On the other hand, Scythian loanwords can be tentatively detected in East Caucasian, Avestan, Median and Thracian.

²² Harmatta, who also confronted these ethnic names (op. cit.: 309), arbitrarily identified the Σάϊοι with the Sarmatians.

²³ It is worth noting that such an etymology of the ethnic name Μελάγχλαινοι is in perfect accord with Herodotus’ claim (IV, 20) that the Μελάγχλαινοι are not Scythians: ...Μελάγχλαινοι, ἄλλο ἔθνος καὶ οὐ Σκυθικόν (“The Μελάγχλαινοι ... are another tribe, not Scythian”), since Common Iranian **d* would have become *l* in Scythian.

²⁴ The Avestan word survived in such compounds as *θraotō.stak-* and *θraotō.stāt-* ‘flowing; running’, usually in the feminine gender and in the plural, since it is applied to waters, *āp-*: *yejñhā paiti θraotō.stācō āpō tacinti nāuuaiiā* (“over which [earth] flowing navigable waters run” — Yt 13, 10); [*yazamaide...*] *vīspā āpō xā paiti θraotō.stātasca* (“[we sacrifice] to all the waters in sources and streams” — Y. 71, 9.).

Abbreviations

- CIRB — *Corpus Inscriptionum Regni Bosporani*. Moscow — Leningrad: Nauka 1965.
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С. В. КУЛАНДА. Внешние связи скифского языка.

В статье предпринято исследование скифского — древнего бесписьменного языка, из-
вестного только по упоминаниям его слов в иноязычных текстах. Представляется, тем
не менее, что основные фонетические черты, характеризующие скифский и отличаю-
щие его от прочих иранских, могут быть установлены достаточно надежно. Отклоне-
ния от регулярных фонетических соответствий наблюдаются в заимствованиях, судя по
которым скифы и их предки контактировали в Предкавказье и Северном Причерно-
морье с носителями западноиранских или иных арийских, северокавказских и неустан-
новленных индоевропейских языков и заимствовали ряд теонимов, личных имен и на-
звания некоторых реалий. С другой стороны, скифские заимствования можно обнару-
жить в восточнокавказских языках, мидийском, авестийском и фракийском.

Ключевые слова: скифский, фракийский, авестийский, северокавказские языки, языковые
контакты.