

## INFORMATION ON SAK-MASSAGETS AND THEIR INTERPRETATION IN ANCIENT WRITTEN SOURCES

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**ABSTRACT:** This article is dedicated to the analysis of the interpretation of sak-massagets in ancient written sources. The main focus is on political events, the marches of Cyrus II and Darius I against the nomadic tribes, the “Land of Saka” and the incorporation of the Saks into the ancient Persian kingdom.

**Key words:** Cyrus II, Darius I, sak, saka, massaget, Sogdian, Bactrian, Khorezm.

### Introduction

The nomadic cattle-breeding Sak tribes living in the steppes of Central Asia were first mentioned in the written sources in the ancient Persian inscriptions (late 6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC) as “Saka”. Initially, this term meant “country” and then applied to the tribes<sup>1</sup>, that is, “Saka” was used first as a toponym, then as an ethnonym.

In the Behistun inscriptions of Darius I, along with 23 conquered lands (Elam, Babylon, Mydia, etc.), the land of nomads is called Saka<sup>2</sup>. Elsewhere in the inscription, Saka is mentioned among the countries that revolted against Darius I, that is, “separated” from the king (including Parthia, Margiana)<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Oranskiy I.M. Иранские языки в историческом освещении (Iranian languages in historical coverage). – Moscow: Наука, 1979. – P. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Reader on the history of the Ancient East. Behistun inscription of Darius I / translated by V.I. Abaev. – Moscow: Высшая школа, 1980. Part. II. – P. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Reader on the history of the Ancient East... – P. 26.

The Hamadan inscriptions contain information about the kingdom of King Darius I, its size and territorial boundaries: “The kingdom from the land of Saka behind Sughd to Ethiopia, from India to Lydia”<sup>4</sup>. In all of the above examples, “Saka” is described as a country.

However, Naqshi Rostam's stone inscriptions near Persepolis, one of the state capitals of Darius I, mention “saka haumovarka” (saks praying for drink haoma) and “saka tighrauda” (saks wearing sharp-pointed hats) and “saks living on the other side of the sea or river”<sup>5</sup>. Inscriptions on the statue of Darius I, found in the city of Suza, also mention that “swamps and soil country saks” after Khorezm<sup>6</sup>.

The chronology of the records is noteworthy here. By the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, a vast ancient Persian kingdom was established, from Libya, Egypt, the Mediterranean to the Indian Oasis. According to the Greek historian Herodotus, the kingdom consisted of more than 70 countries, peoples, and tribes<sup>7</sup>. Among the herdsmen, the Saks consisted of various large ethnic groups.

When Cyrus II, the founder of the ancient Persian kingdom, conquered the southern regions of Central Asia (Parthia, Margiana, Bactria, Sughd) (545-540 BC), the Sak tribes living in the northeastern regions of the region were largely unknown to the Persians. But as a result of the encounter of Cyrus II with the Massagetes (530 BC) and the march against the saka-tighraudas by Darius I in 519, the knowledge of the nomads about the boundaries of their territorial location greatly expanded.

### **Main part**

This situation can be seen in the texts of the Behistun inscriptions. The carvings on the rocks of Behistun, dedicated to the victorious movements and marches of Darius I, date back to the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC., beginning in the fall of 521 and writing letters in ancient Persian, Elamite, and Akkadian languages on this magnificent epigraphic monument was finished in early 518<sup>8</sup>. Thus the political events that took place in the kingdom for more than two years were reflected in the writings of Behistun.

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<sup>4</sup> Reader on the history of the Ancient East... – P. 36.

<sup>5</sup> Sagdullaev A. Қадимги Ўзбекистон илк ёзма манбаларда (Ancient Uzbekistan in the early writings). – Tashkent: Ўқитувчи, 1996. – P. 32.

<sup>6</sup> Yedakov A.V. Новые надписи Ахеменидов (New Ahamanid inscriptions) // ВДИ. – Moscow, 1976. №2. – P. 91-95.

<sup>7</sup> Herodotus. History. In 9 books /translation of G.A. Stratanovskiy. – Leningrad: Наука, 1972. – Book. III, - P. 89-94.

<sup>8</sup> Struve V.V. Датировки Бехистунской надписи (Dating of the Behistun Inscription) // ВДИ: – Moscow, 1952, №1. – P. 26-48; Dandamaev. Политическая история Ахеменидской державы (Political history of the Ahamanid Empire): – Moscow: Наука, 1985. – P. 98-100.

At the beginning of the Behistun inscriptions there are listed the countries within the state that Cyrus II and the rulers of Cambyses inherited to Darius I. For this reason, the land of nomads was originally defined by the general concept of “Saka”. Then, in the final parts of the inscriptions, the marches against the saka-tigrahaudas in the land of Saka were announced and in other writings of Darius I (Naqshi Rostam, Suza) saka-haumovarka, saka-paradrayya (saks behind the sea), saka parasugdam (saks behind Sughd) were mentioned as different tribes<sup>9</sup>.

The origin of the ethnonym “Saka” and its etymology are in many respects unclear. This problem was considered by G. Beyli, R. Fray, V.I. Abaev, B.A. Litvinskiy, I.M. Oranskiy. G. Bailey proposed the interpretation of the term “saka” in the meaning “man”, “husband” due to the root “sak” (“strong”, “to be light”) <sup>10</sup>. R. Fray seems to agree with this view<sup>11</sup>. I.M. Oransky considered this etymology to be very reliable<sup>12</sup>. Information on the matter is also mentioned in B.A. Litvinsky's monograph<sup>13</sup>. Some orientalist have also compared the word “saka” with the name “dog” of the Nogai tribe in Mongolian, saying that the totem of nomadic tribes should be interpreted as “dog”<sup>14</sup>. But there are great chronological differences between the history of the Saks and Mongols, and it is expedient to take them into account.

As a result of the attacks of Cyrus II and Darius I to Central Asia, ancient Greek historians became acquainted with information about the steppe cattle-breeding tribes. Central Asian settlers and Saks took part in the Persian invasions of Greece as part of the armies of Darius I and Xerxes (490-480 BC). When the Greek historian Herodotus traveled through Egypt, Old Asia, Babylon, and Ecbatana (455-445 BC)<sup>15</sup>, the ancient Central Asians of the Persian Empire – the Sogdians, Bactrians, Khorasans, and Saks – served in the Persian military colonies of Egypt, Babylon, and Susa and in craft workshops.

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<sup>9</sup> Оранский М.А. Иранские языки в историческом освещении... С. 14.

<sup>10</sup> Bailey H.W. Languages of the Sakas // Handbuch der Orientalistik. Bd. IV. – Leiden-Köln, 1958. – P. 133.

<sup>11</sup> Фрай Р. Наследие Ирана / Пер. с англ. В.А. Лившица и Е.В. Зеймаля. – М.: Наука, 1971. – С. 69.

<sup>12</sup> Oranskiy I.M. Иранские языки в историческом освещении ... – P. 14, Note 5.

<sup>13</sup> Litvinskiy B.A. Древние кочевники «Крыши мира» (Ancient nomads “Roofs of the World”). – Moscow: Наука, 1972. – P. 156-159.

<sup>14</sup> Fray R. Heritage of Iran ... – P. 69, Note 59.

<sup>15</sup> Borukhovich V.T. Научное и литературное значение труда Геродота (Scientific and literary significance of the work of Herodotus) // Herodotus. History. In nine books. Translation and notes by G.A. Stratanovskiy. – Leningrad: Наука, 1972. – P. 465-466.

Herodotus had never been to Central Asia, so he mentioned the Saxons 11 times and the Massagets 19 times in his work “History”, based on various stories he had heard about the region and its people, and a collection of various inquiries<sup>16</sup>.

According to Herodotus, along with Babylon, the Bactrians and Egyptians, the Saks were an obstacle to the military campaigns of Cyrus II<sup>17</sup>. The stories of the Greek historian about the Saks are mainly related to the events of the Greco-Persian Wars. For example, Herodotus describes the Saks in the armies of King Xerxes as follows. “The Saks (Scythian tribe) wore sharp-pointed hats, trousers, and were armed with their bows and daggers. They also had double-edged military axes-sagaris. This tribe (namely the Scythian tribe) was called the Amirgiy Saks. After all, the Persians called all the Scythians as Saks<sup>18</sup>.

The Saks in the army of Ahamnides formed the military core of this army together with the Saxons, Persians, Medes, and Bactrians<sup>19</sup>. The Saka tribes provided the Persian army with a large number of cavalry trained for regular military life. They served in Persian military garrisons in Egypt, Babylon, and other lands<sup>20</sup>.

In Persepolis, the Saxons and Khoresmians, unlike armed (with a short dagger-akinak and a military ax-sagaris) other peoples (Medes, Elamites, Egyptians, Lydians, etc.), were depicted in relief images of various peoples (23 groups) carved on large stone slabs mounted on the side of a high luxurious apadana staircase in the palace of Darius I and Xerxes<sup>21</sup>. In this regard, the images of Persepolis and Herodotus' information about the weapons of the Saks are consistent.

In the battle of Marathon (490 BC), the cavalry of the Saks demonstrated their bravery and forced the Greek warriors in the central part of the battlefield to retreat<sup>22</sup>. The stability of the Saks was also demonstrated, according to Herodotus, in the battles of Fermopilus and Plataea (480-479 BC)<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup>Sagdullaev A. Қадимги Ўзбекистон илк ёзма манбаларда (Ancient Uzbekistan in the early writings). – Tashkent: Ўқитувчи, 1996. – P. 34.

<sup>17</sup> Herodotus. Book.I, 153.

<sup>18</sup> Herodotus. Book VII, 64.

<sup>19</sup> Litvinskiy B.A., Ryankov I.V. Военное дело у народов Средней Азии в VI-IV вв. до н.э. (Military affairs among the peoples of Central Asia in the 6<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries. BC) // ВДИ. – Moscow, 1966. №3. – P. 36-52.

<sup>20</sup> Dandamaev M.A., Lukonin V.G. Культура и экономика древнего Ирана (Culture and economy of ancient Iran). – Moscow: Наука, 1980. – P. 229.

<sup>21</sup> Wilber D. Persepolis / translated from English by E.L. Vlasov. – Moscow: Наука, 1977. – P. 70-71.

<sup>22</sup> Herodotus. Book VI, 113, IX, 7.

<sup>23</sup> Herodotus. Book VIII, 113.

The Saks served alongside the Lydians, Phrygians, Egyptians, and Indians in the colonies of the Persian kingdom between the two rivers. They were provided with weapons, clothing and food. From written sources, a Sak warrior named Sakita is known<sup>24</sup>.

Massagets lived in the steppes between the Caspian and Aral Seas, adjacent to the saka-tigrahauds. Massagets are known only from ancient written sources. They are not mentioned in the Avesto and ancient Persian writings.

Some researchers have suggested that the Massagets formed the military alliance of the Sak tribes. In his time, the German scientist I. Marquardt proposed to interpret the name “massagets” from the meaning of the word “masya” – “fish” as “fishermen” or “great saks” and “great ghettos”<sup>25</sup>. The issue remains controversial.

Herodotus' reports on messages were widely used by researchers to shed light on issues of ancient history<sup>26</sup>. According to the Greek historian, Cyrus II planned to march on the land of the Massagets after conquering Babylon and Assyria. Herodotus writes: “After having these nations, Cyrus decided to subdue the Massagets. It is said that these massagets are a brave and innumerable tribe. They were located in the east, in the direction of sunrise, behind the river Araks, facing the Issedons. Some consider them to be Scythian tribes”<sup>27</sup>.

Herodotus gave information about the customs of the Massagets, their economy and living conditions, their weapons and equipment.

I.V. Pyankov places Massagets to the north of Hyrcania and east of the Caspian Sea. Accordingly, the researcher revealed the essence of the content of Herodotus' data, including the training and food of the Massagets, clothing and lifestyle, weapons and methods of warfare, marriage customs, funeral rites, and beliefs<sup>28</sup>.

Herodotus' stories about the history and culture of the Massagets were widespread in the ancient world. The Greek geographer and historian Strabo addressed this issue in particular. He used Herodotus'

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<sup>24</sup> Dandamaev M.A., Lukonin V.G. Культура и экономика древнего Ирана (Culture and economy of ancient Iran). – Moscow: Наука, 1980. – P. 293.

<sup>25</sup> Marquart I. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte von Eran. – Göttingen, 1896. – S. 78.

<sup>26</sup> Pyankov I.V. Массагеты Геродота (Massagets of Herodotus) // ВДИ. – Moscow, 1975. №2. – P. 46-70.

<sup>27</sup> Herodotus. Book I, 201.

<sup>28</sup> Pyankov I.V. Массагеты Геродота (Massagets of Herodotus) ...

data to supplement them with additional evidence, as the knowledge of Central Asian nomads was greatly enriched during Strabo's reign (64 BC to 24 AD).

Strabo writes: “Beginning in the Caspian Sea, most of the Scythians are called Days. The tribes to the east of them are called Massagets and Saks. Their general population is nomads”<sup>29</sup>.

“The Massagets proved their bravery in the war against Cyrus... They were excellent riders and infantrymen; armed with bows, daggers, armor, and copper military axes; in battle they wear golden waist bows and head-ties; their horses are covered with gold”<sup>30</sup>.

Various written records of the Saks date back to the time of Alexander the Great of Macedonia. In the works of historians Diodorus, Quintus Curtius, Ruth, Arrian, and other ancient authors, there was a picture of the Sak tribes being called “Scythian, Scythians” by a common name.

At the Battle of Gavgamella (331 BC) with the armies of King Darius III of Persia, the Greco-Macedonians encountered Sak cavalry. The Sak riders on the right wing of Darius III's army dealt a severe blow to the Greco-Macedonians<sup>31</sup>.

The Saks took an active part in the struggle of the Sogdian general Spitamen against Alexander. Their military methods became prominent in the battle with the Greeks on the shores of Politimet-Zarafshan on the threshold of Morocco in 329 BC, Arrian describes it this way. “Spitamen decides to gather another 600 Scythian cavalry into his army, to lift his spirits from the Scythian alliance and to fight the attacking Macedonians. The Scythians zealously attack the Macedonians standing and retreating on the battlefield.

Sensing the mistakes of the Macedonians, the cavalry barbarians are thrown into the river from both banks. Some of them chase those who cross the river and those who stay away, while others face those who cross the river, throw them backwards, into the water or shoot and attack those who approach the river”<sup>32</sup>. Spitamen constantly relied on his cavalry in his battles, and retreated to the steppes at the end of his struggle against Alexander of Macedon.

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<sup>29</sup> Strabo. Geography. In 17 books / translated by G.A. Stratanovskiy. – Moscow, – Leningrad: Hayka, 1964. –Book XI, VIII, 2.

<sup>30</sup> Strabo. Book XI, VIII, 6.

<sup>31</sup> Arrian. Поход Александра (Attacks of Alexander) /translation of M.E. Sergeenko. – Moscow – Leningrad, 1962. – Book III, Chapters 8, 3, 4.

<sup>32</sup> Arrian. Book IV, Chapters 5, 2.

Also noteworthy is the information of the Roman historian Quintus Curtius Rufus that the king of the Khorezmians, Frataferm (Farasman in Arrian's work), was united with nomadic massagets and dahs<sup>33</sup>. This event corresponds to the period of development of the Khorezm kingdom of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.

Based on written sources, from the 80s to 90s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the history of sak-massagets began to be covered in the works of some Western orientalist<sup>34</sup>. In European historiography, V. Geyger, I. Markvart, J. Prashek, A. Germann used the term "Eastern Iran" in reference to Central Asia, meaning that the Persians and Medes were described as the peoples and tribes of the region who spoke the East Iranian language. However, the geographical interpretation of Central Asia as "Eastern Iran" does not correspond to reality. Nevertheless, the concept of "Eastern Iran" is reflected in the title and text of some works published in the 1970s<sup>35</sup>.

In the process of covering the history of nomadic tribes, the researchers focused on the general geographical features found in written sources, i.e., information on the Caspian and Aral Seas, the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya. It is known that the first geographical and regional names that can be associated with the places inhabited by steppe cattle-breeding tribes of Central Asia are mentioned in Avesto. These include the sea Vorukasha, the rivers Ranha and Wahvi Datiya<sup>36</sup>.

The sea was inhabited by nomadic tribes such as the Vorukasha and the rivers, such as the Tur and the Danu. According to B.A. Litvinsky, the "Tur, Turanian" tribes of Avesto are described in ancient Persian inscriptions as "saka, saks"<sup>37</sup>, meaning that Turs were the ancestors of the saks.

S.P. Tolstov and Y.G. Gulyamov connected the terms "Ranha, Aranha, Arang" with the name of the Amu Darya<sup>38</sup>. There is also a tradition of comparing the Ranha (Ranga, Rakha) river with the Syr

<sup>33</sup> Quintus Curtius Rufus. History of Alexander the Great / translation and notes under the editorial of V.S. Sokolova. – Moscow: MSU, 1963. – Book. VIII, 8.

<sup>34</sup> Geiger W. Ostriranische Kultur in Altertum. – Erlangen, 1882. 520 s.; Marquart I. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte von Eran. – Göttingen, 1896. – 258 s.; Prašek J. Geschichte der Meder und Perser bis zur makedonischen Eroberung. – Gotha, 1906. Bd. I. – 282 s.; Herman A. Alte Geographie des unteren Okusgebiets. – Berlin, 1914. – S. 21-32.

<sup>35</sup> Dyaknov I.M. Восточный Иран до Кира (к возможности новых постановок вопроса) (Eastern Iran before Cyrus (to the possibility of new formulations of the question)) // History of the Iranian state and culture. – Moscow: Наука. – P. 122-154.

<sup>36</sup> Avesto. The Book Yasht / M. Ishakov's translation. – Tashkent: Шапк. – P. 17,24,26.

<sup>37</sup> Litvinsky B.A. Кочевники «Крыши мира» (Nomads of "Roofs of the World"). – Moscow: Наука, 1972. – P. 156

<sup>38</sup> Tolstov S.P. Древний Хорезм. Опыт историко – археологического исследования (Ancient Khorezm. Experience of historical and archaeological research). – Moscow: MSU, 1948. – P. 53; Gulyamov Y.G. Хоразмнинг суғорилиш тарихи (Irrigation history of Khorezm). – Tashkent: Фан, 1959. – P. 292.



Darya and Volga rivers<sup>39</sup>. In the works of ancient authors, the Amu Darya was called Araks and Ox, Oxus, Syr Darya-Yaksart. In Khorezmian, Bactrian and Sogdian languages, the Amu Darya is called “Vakhsh, Vakhshu”<sup>40</sup>. D.Sh. Kurbanova points out that there are ideas about the origin of the hydronym “Oxus” from the concept of “Okuz” and the name of the Amu Darya “Okuz” and vice versa. In this regard, based on researcher V.A. Livshits's data, he compared the local (Khorezm, Sogdian, Bactrian) and Greek forms of personal names associated with the concept “Vakhshu”. For example, the local Vakhshuarta and the Greek variant-Oxiart, Vakhshuvazdax-Oksubaroz, Vakhshhebuak-Oxseboakes, Vakhshudata-Oxudates. D.Sh. Kurbanova concluded that the original term “Vakhshu” in all its names is called “Ox” in Greek, and that the Greek concept has nothing to do with the word “Okuz” taking into account the results of the sacrificial comparison<sup>41</sup>. In the literature, the problem of determining the direction of Darius I's march against the saka-tigrahaudas is noteworthy. The researches of V.V. Struve, A.A. Freyman, M.A. Dandamaev, J. Balkar, G. Cameron, G. Harmatta were dedicated to this issue<sup>42</sup>. At this level, interest in the subject in different years has been marked by its controversial aspects. The march to the Saxons occurred was in 519 BC according to the Behistun records, during the third reign of Darius I, and it is described as follows: “King Darius informs: after this I rode against the Saks, the land of Saka, wearing a sharp-pointed hat. When I reached the river after that, I crossed the river on ships. After that, I crushed the saks”. G. Harmatta suggested a new reading of the message and concluded that the text of the writing contains the name of the river – Arahsha<sup>43</sup>. Arachsha seems to be much closer to Herodotus' Araks hydronym. Arahsha in ancient Persian and Araks in Greek may be

<sup>39</sup> Girishman R. Иран и миграции индоариев и иранцев (Iran and the migration of Indo-Aryans and Iranians) // Ethnic problems of the history of Central Asia in antiquity (II millennium BC). – Moscow: Наука, 1981. – P. 140-144.

<sup>40</sup> Lyvshic V.A. Надписи и документы (Lettering and documents) // Kalaly-gyr 2. Cult center in Ancient Khorezm 4<sup>th</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC. – Moscow: ИВЛ, РАН, 2004. – P. 190.

<sup>41</sup> Kurbanova D.Sh. Хоразм воҳасининг қадимги ва илк ўрта асрлар маънавий маданияти (Ancient and early medieval spiritual culture of Khorezm oasis). – Tashkent: Publishing house of National Library of Uzbekistan named after A. Navoi, 2015. – P. 151.

<sup>42</sup> Struve V.V. Darius's campaign on the Saks-Massagets // News of the Academy of Sciences. V. 3. – Moscow, 1946. №3. – P. 231-250; Frayman A.A. Пленный враг Дария-скиф Скунха (Captured enemy of Darius-Scythian Skunkh) // News of the Academy of Sciences. V. 7. – Moscow, 1948. №3. – P. 235-240; Balcer S.M. Dariuš Scythian expedition // Classical Philology. Vol. 76, 1972. – P. 241-258; Cameron G.G. Dariuš the Great and his Scythian (saka) campaign. Bisutun and Herodotus // Acta Iranica. Vol. 4, 1975. –P. 77-88; Harmatta G. Darius expedition against the Saka tigraxauda // Studies in the sources on the history of Pre-Islamic Central Asia. – Budapest, 1979. – P. 19-28.

<sup>43</sup> Harmatta G. Dariuš expedition against the Saka tigraxauda // Studies in the sources on the history of Pre-Islamic Central Asia. – Budapest, 1979. – P. 24.



different names for a river. It is known that Greek historians and geographers have adapted the names of places, cities, mountains, rivers in the east to their own language (for example, Vakhsh, Oxus).

In the story of Herodotus, Cyrus II arrives at the Araks River near the Caspian Sea on his way to the Massagets. Cyrus II saw the river and built a bridge from the ships, and at the same time ordered the installation of military towers on the ships<sup>44</sup>. According to I.V. Pyankov, Araks is the Uzbay basin of the Amu Darya, which flows into the Caspian Sea<sup>45</sup>. It can be seen that Araks and Arahsha can be compared to Uzboy, i.e. Cyrus II and Darius I made their marches to the nomadic tribes living on the borders between the Caspian and Aral Seas.

Beginning in the 1950s, information about sak-massagets began to be used in the chapters of generalized monographs to cover topics such as the ancient population of Central Asia, its economy, material culture, and foreign policy<sup>46</sup>. At the same time, the study of the relationship between the sedentary farming population and the steppe cattle-breeding tribes was of great importance. In covering the issue of the Aral Sea Scythians and Khorezm, S.P. Tolstov noted: "The history of other centers of civilization in Central Asia and the adjacent provinces cannot be imagined in isolation from the history of the steppe tribes; it should be noted that this is especially true of Khorezm"<sup>47</sup>. Thus, in the first written sources, the issue of the need to compare the information on the history of the Aral Sea population with archeological materials was raised.

The study of the monuments of the Sak tribes of the Eastern Aral Sea (the lower Syr Darya) and the Southern Aral Sea (the lower Amu Darya) has been interpreted on a new basis. In Y.A. Rapoport's article dedicated to the history of ancient Khorezm, the concept "Saks-Khorezmians, Khorezm-Saks" was first realized<sup>48</sup>. This opinion was based on Strabo's conclusion that "the Attasiys and Khorezmians belonged to the tribes of Massagets and Saks"<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> Herodotus. Book I, 205.

<sup>45</sup> Pyankov I.V. К вопросу о маршруте похода Кира II на массагетов (To the question of the route of Cyrus II's campaign against the Massagets) // ВДИ. – Moscow, 1964. №3. – P. 115-130.

<sup>46</sup> History of the Uzbek SSR. Т. 1, Book one. – Tashkent, 1955. – P. 38-52; Essays on the history of the USSR. Primitive communal system and the most ancient states / Ed. P.N. Tretyakov and A.L. Mongait. – Moscow, 1956. – P. 241-258; History of the Tajik people. V. 1. – Moscow: ИВЛ, 1963.

<sup>47</sup> Tolstov S.P. Қадимги Хоразм маданиятини излаб (In search of ancient Khorezm culture). – Tashkent: Фан, 1964. – P. 386.

<sup>48</sup> Rapoport Y.A. Краткий очерк истории Хорезма в древности (A short essay on the history of Khorezm in antiquity) // Aral region in antiquity and the Middle Ages. – Moscow: ИВЛ РАН, 1998. – P. 29-30.

<sup>49</sup> Strabo. Book XI. 8, 8.

Secondly, in the article of the researcher co-authored with Yu.A. Vishnevskaya, the images of Central Asian peoples were compared in the reliefs of the tombs of ancient Persian kings carved into the Naqshi Rostam rock in Iran<sup>50</sup>. In this monument, there were described the “throne-bearers” – Saka-Tigrahauda (1 statue), Saka Khaumovarka (2), Khorasan (3), Saka-Paradrayya (4), Parthian (5), and Aryan (6), a Bactrian (7), the leader of the revolt in Margiana against Frada-Darius I (8), the leader of the Skunha-sakatigrahaudas (9) among the 30 Ahamanid tribes<sup>51</sup>. The costume of Khorezmians, the dagger on the side and are depicted almost identically with the clothes, hats, and weapons of the aforementioned sakas. The upper and general appearance of the Parthians, Areya, and Bactrians is very different from that of the nomads. Therefore, according to Y.A. Vishnevskaya and Y.A. Rapoport, Strabo's information about the Khorasmians, that is, his information about the ethnicity of the Sak-Massagets, is vividly confirmed by the relief images of the Achamanid period<sup>52</sup>.

In addition, it should be noted that in the landscapes of Persepolis there are almost no significant differences in the content of the images of Khorezmians and saka-tigrahaudas (appearance, costume, weapons, horses they are leading)<sup>53</sup>. In ancient Persian inscriptions, nomadic tribes are distinguished from each other by the characteristics of their ethnographic and territorial location (sharp-edged hats, haoma-worshipping, saks behind the sea or river, saks living in country of swamps). Similarly, Herodotus and Strabo describe the geographical location of massagets (plains, islands, river dwellers, and swamp people).

From information about sak-massagets in ancient written sources, B.I. Weinberg in the process of analyzing the historical geography of the Aral Sea population and V.N. Yagodin used it to reveal some aspects of the socio-economic relations of the Khorezm oasis and other steppe tribes<sup>54</sup>. This approach

<sup>50</sup> Vishnewskaya O.A., Rapoport Y.A. Городище Кюзели-гыр. К вопросу о раннем этапе истории Хорезма (Ancient settlement “Kyuzeligyr”. On the early stage of the history of Khorezm) // ВДИ. – Moscow, 1997. №2. – P. 167-169.

<sup>51</sup> Vishnewskaya O.A., Rapoport Y.A. Городище Кюзели-гыр ... – P. 168. Picture 8.

<sup>52</sup> The above shown source. – P. 167.

<sup>53</sup> Wilber D. Persepolis ... – P. 70-71.

<sup>54</sup> Vainberg B.I. Ethnogeography of Turan the 7<sup>th</sup> century. BC – 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. – Moscow: ИВЛ, 1999. – P. 195-210; Yagodin V.N. Низовья Амударьи в эпоху распада Первобытно-общинного строя и возникновения первичных государственных образований (The lower reaches of the Amu Darya in the era of the collapse of the primitive communal system and the emergence of primary state formations) // Khorezm in the history of the statehood of Uzbekistan. – Tashkent, 2013. – P. 22-25.

was used in H. Matyakubov's work<sup>55</sup> on the history of the Khorezm oasis of the Bronze and Early Iron Ages and in a co-authored monograph on Khorezmian civilization<sup>56</sup>.

### Conclusion

It should be noted that the written sources analyzed are a peculiar to the history of the Sak-Massaget tribes of the 6<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC and they helped to study some political processes, socio-economic issues and culture. The data available in ancient sources have been used by researchers of various periods. Based on the analysis of written sources, the following issues were considered:

Political events, the marches of Cyrus II and Darius I against the nomadic tribes, the “Land of Saka” and the incorporation of the Saks into the ancient Persian kingdom;

the service of the Saks in the military garrisons of the Ahamanid state and their participation in the Greco-Persian wars;

sak-massagets, living behind the sea and rivers (Arahsha, Araks) and the presence of various tribes in them;

the nomadic way of life, customs, beliefs, weapons, and military methods.

Comparison and comparative analysis of the results of written sources and archaeological discoveries will reveal new scientific problems.

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<sup>55</sup> Matyakubov H. Хоразм воҳаси бронза асри ва илк темир даври тарихи (History of the Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age of the Khorezm oasis). – Tashkent, 2017. – P. 65-68.

<sup>56</sup> Kdyniyazov M.Sh., Yagodin V.N., Mambetullaev M.M., Sagdullaev A.S., Kydirniyazov O.Sh. История цивилизации Хорезма (History of the civilization of Khorezm). – Nukus: Qaraqalpaqstan, 2017. – P. 63-65.

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