

## **The Asiatic Scythians**

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One of the Central-Asiatic ancient cultural centers is located in the Altai autonomous republic within Russia. The Altai republic is the territory of highlands situated in the very center of Asia at the junction of Siberian taiga, steppes of Kazakhstan and semi-deserts of Mongolia. This region is populated presently by several groups of people known under the names, the Tubalars, the Teleuts, the Shors, the Telengits, the Uryanhait and the Oirots. They all speak a Turkish dialect which stems from the early proto-language.

It is claimed, in general, that the Saka (Scythian) tribes inhabited these regions throughout Classical Antiquity (1), but it is almost never mentioned that the Saka people belonged to the ancient Uighur federation. The name **Saka** comes from the proto-language and is formed out of two monosyllabic words; As and Ok. We can guess that there were two neighboring group of tribes named as the As and the Ok who merged into a loose federation, to form the As-Ok; which in time became to be known as the Saka people. In early Altaic vowels belonging to the same group, such as “a” and “o” could replace each other and even change place within a word. This fact has been mentioned in **02-The Proto-language of Central Asia**.

The **As** people were, most probably, one of the prominent tribes in the region since the continent of Asia is named after them. Even today we have a country named Azerbaijan, whose name is made out 4 monosyllabic Turkish words. **Az** or **As** is the tribe name, **Er** stands for male or human, **Bay** is a title meaning leader and **Jan** meaning spirit. So the name stands for “The spiritual leadership of the As people”.

Herodotus described the Saka as people wearing trousers and pointed hats. They carried bows, arrows and daggers. Their battle ax was called the “sagar”(2). They worshiped the sun god and buried their dead at the top of high peaks, as mentioned by **A. Siliotti** (1):

**Archeological research has shown that the plains in the southern and western regions of Kazakhstan were densely populated from the eight century BC; it was here that concentrations of immense tumulus type necropolises contained grave goods of such splendor that archeologists call the tumuli “royal kurgan”. (page 203)**



The word “kurgan” is made out of **Ok-Ur-gan**, which means “The location where the Ok resides”. Ur is a Turkic word meaning to reside or to settle. There were two ancient Sumer cities in Mesopotamian named Ur and Uruk. When the suffix -gan is added to any verb, the new word becomes a noun; therefore kurgan is the place of final residence for the Ok leaders. The art objects found in these kurgans are generally made out of gold and convey symbols of the early Altaic culture.

Above we see an elk with huge horns joined together with a gryphon. The special symbolism of joining several animals in one piece of art was a common practice employed among ancient Asiatic cultures. The artifact above is made out of pure gold and was found in a kurgan near **Issik göl**, a lake in Kazakhstan. The exaggerated horns are typical and symbolize power, as mentioned in **03-The Hidden Meaning of Petroglyphs**.

The symbolism hidden in these artifacts and images can be considered as being part of a semiotic writing system. This semiotic system of conveying ideas has been the precursor of several writing systems employed today all over the world. Below we see ibexes carved in rock with excessively exaggerated long horns. Comparing these carvings to the refined art of the Scythians one can conclude that the Scythians were the offspring of the ancient Central-Asiatic people.



A further proof of this connection is found in an article published by **Natalya Polosmak**. She starts her article with the following words(3):

**Under capricious skies in southern Siberia a rare unlooted tomb lies ready to illuminate the culture of the ancient Pazyryk people. These semi nomadic herders laid their well-appointed dead here in the high steppes, the Pastures of Heaven, as close as their world came to the great beyond.**



Drawing of the tattoo on her skin →



Metallic statue of an elk

Pazyryk is a special site where more than 150 kurgans have been found and investigated by Russian archeologists. It is located on top of the high Ukok plateau which is at the junction of Russia, Kazakhstan, China and Mongolia (map above). Frozen deep inside a kurgan the well preserved body of a lady, probably a shaman woman, was discovered. She had the tattoo of an elk on her shoulder (central image above). On the right side we see another elk statue from the same Pazyryk site. The common feature of these elks was the overgrown horns, clear indication of mystical or even physical power.

The name of this plateau is formed out of two monosyllabic words; Uk and Ok. Uk (spelled as ook). Uk is an ancient proto-word meaning “up”. Actually “up” come into English from the Viking language which is a Ural-Altai language. Up is pronounced as ‘oop’ in Swedish. The “U”, which is pronounced as “yoo” has acquired a “y” in English. The same addition happened also in Turkish. “Up” is “yuka-ry” in Turkish where the first syllable is pronounced as “yoo”. There is also another clue in the name Ukraine, which is the name of the country above the Black sea. The similarity between Ukary in Turkish and the country name Ukraine is worth noticing. The suffix –ru/ry/gy stands for “towards” in Turkish. So Ukraine means “towards the north”.

A further indication is found in the common tribal name of indigenous people living in the North-Eastern parts of Asia. These are the Yukagir who occupied a huge territory from Lake Baikal to the Arctic Ocean. If we split the name ‘Yukagir’ as Yuka-gir the meaning “enter up” appears, where ‘yuka’ is “up” and ‘gir’ means “enter” in Turkish. This name fits perfectly to the tribes that moved up north of Central Asia.

With these correlations we can deduce that the Ukok region was the high plateau of the Ok people.

## References

- (1) **Dwellings of Eternity**, Alberto Siliotti, Barnes and Noble books, 2000, (page 202).
- (2) **Histories**, Book 4, Translated by Rawlingson, Wordsworth Editions, 1996
- (3) **Pastures of Heaven**, National Geographic, Vol. 186, No.4, page 80.