

Sarmatians and their influence on Germanic peoples

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Prefatory

FIRST OF ALL: This article is, except by Libre Office's internals, NOT checked on spelling, grammar and sentence construction. Me, a Dutch, did not find someone this time to help me out with that. So, take it in its uncorrected version.

When in 2012/2013 the author of this article started to research the early Franks from the time they were still pagans, he met the name 'Sarmatians' again. That was not a completely unknown term for him at the time, but it was only during this research project that he really got aware on how much these ethnic groups from the Asian steppes were in exchange with the Germanic tribes shortly before and in the first 6 centuries CE.

In his 2017 book "At Elder Shrines", the Sarmatians are discussed several times, in some cases in more detail, and there's quite a lot speculated about them, because they had a lot of contact with the early Franks.

Many of the notes at that time were not used for the book and were stored unused for several years; of some of them the author no longer even knows the sources; at that time he thought he could keep that in mind. Too much time has been passed since then.

Instead of deleting all of these notes, it seemed to him more rational to use them in some way, and so he started researching again.

An important role was played by the fact that for several decades the Sarmatians have been increasingly associated with Germanic tribes, whereby the influence of these steppe peoples on the Germanic tribes is often the central focus. Sometimes there are theories, theses, suggestions and conjectures in which the author's hair stood on end. That is why here is an overview of facts, theories, assumptions and speculations on this topic – and even that may lead to some readers' blank astonishment.

Before we start talking about Sarmatians and Germanic peoples, something must be made very clear:

The author does not want to put his hand in the fire to ensure that everything below is correct. The state of facts is far too uncertain for this. Writers from Classical Antiquity can sometimes be interpreted ambiguously, and what they saw or heard firsthand or secondhand and wrote down is often their own understanding and interpretation of it. And it is often uncertain whether they were correctly informed. What historians in the past few centuries have written about those times is usually also the view of the writing scientist and they disagree with each other about some theories or views – even archaeological finds have to be interpreted and those views sometimes change too. In general, some interpretations may even be located in the field of fringe science. Moreover, in the following, there are also assumptions and interpretations by the writer of this text, which are sometimes not really obvious.

Many aspects of this article therefore are clearly to be assigned to the area of speculation. The author himself has no problem with this, but he has tried to make that clear in the relevant places. And if you want to close yourself off from the many speculations, then at the end of this article you should pull off all of them and see what is left. Careful and critical reading is therefore necessary; for those who are more interested, the literature in the appendix is recommended.

So, who then were the Sarmatians?

In his 9-volume work "History" the Greek historian and geographer Herodotus (around 490/480 – around 430/420 BCE) mentioned the people of the "Sauromats" and he wrote that this people had emerged from Scythian men and Amazons. This may belong to the realm of myths:

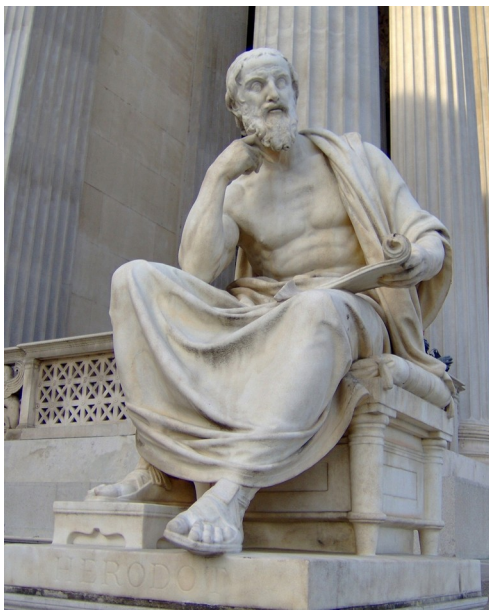


Illustration: Herodotus

Source: <https://de.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Wien-Parlament-Herodot.jpg>

According to the historian Herodotus, the Amazons are said to have fled after Heracles defeated them at Thermodon in the southern Black Sea region. With ships, they landed in the northern Black Sea region, today's southern Russia and Ukraine. See for this as well the Herodotus quotation in the section "Sarmatian warrior women" below.

But Sauromats and Scythians probably had a lot of similarities in culture and language. When the invading Sarmatians conquered the lands of the Sauromats, the latter at least may have been partially adopted into the Sarmatian peoples. Sarmatians and also Romans defeated the Scythians and at the latest from the 3rd Century CE on these disappear from history; what was

left of them will have become part of other peoples.

The terms "Sauromats" and "Sarmatians" were often used as synonyms; historically this is not correct; the development of both ethnic groups is different, it can therefore only be assumed that elements of sauromatic culture have been adapted by the Sarmatians through their submission and mixing.

'The' Sarmatians were not a homogeneous ethnicity, but consisted of different peoples, or tribes. According to the historian and geographer Strabo or Strabo (around 63 B.C.E. – 23 C.E.), the **Iazyges** inhabited the western Ukrainian steppe between the lower reaches of the Danube and the Dniepr. The **Roxolani** lived between the Dniepr and the Don rivers in the eastern Ukrainian steppe. Bordering them the **Aorsi** dominated the large area between the Don and the Caspian Sea. South of the Caucasus there was the people of the **Siraki**; the **Kalybes** had colonized the iron-rich mountains of the Caucasus. And then there was the **Alan** people, who from the 2nd century B.C.E. first settled in the north of what is now Kazakhstan and northeast of the Caspian Sea, then in the 1st century moved on to the steppes between the Volga and Don rivers up to the Caucasus. There were many more peoples to be counted among the Sarmatians, such as **Maiotes**, **Massagetes**, **Sakes** and some smaller ones.

The Siraki are said to have been a relatively small people, but if Strabo says that their king Abeacus was able to mobilize 20,000 warrior riders during the reign of the Bosnian ruler Pharnakes (63–47

BC), that may give an impression of the size of the Sarmatian peoples – and what crowds came to Central and Western Europe.

The Roman soldier and historian Ammianus Marcellinus (330 – between 391 and 400) writes about the Alans in his 31-volume work “Res Gestae”:

They have no cottages, and never use the plough, but live solely on meat and plenty of milk, mounted on their waggons, which they cover with a curved awning made of the bark of trees, and then drive them through their boundless deserts. And when they come to any pasture-land, they pitch their waggons in a circle, [...] these waggons, in short, are their perpetual habitation, and wherever they fix them, that place they look upon as their home.

They drive before them their flocks and herds to their pasturage; and, above all other cattle, they are especially careful of their horses.

All their old people, and especially all the weaker sex, keep close to the waggons, and occupy themselves in the lighter employments. But the young men, who from their earliest childhood are trained to the use of horses, think it beneath them to walk. They are also all trained by careful discipline of various sorts to become skilful warriors.

Nearly all the Alani are men of great stature and beauty; their hair is somewhat yellow, their eyes are terribly fierce; the lightness of their armour renders them rapid in their movements; and they are in every respect equal to the Huns, only more civilized in their food and their manner of life. And as ease is a delightful thing to men of a quiet and placid disposition, so danger and war are a pleasure to the Alani, and among them that man is called happy who has lost his life in battle.

They have no idea of slavery, inasmuch as they themselves are all born of noble families; and those whom even now they appoint to be judges are always men of proved experience and skill in war.

Compiled from Res Gestae, 31.2

It is assumed, however, that Ammianus did not see this himself, but rather 'trusted' older authors in such ethnographic descriptions.

The Roman poet Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso, 43 BC - 17 or 18 CE) was exiled by the Emperor to Tomi on the Black Sea (now Constanța in Romania). His work “Tristia” (Lamentations) dates from this time, in which he writes in Book III about the Sarmatians:

If anyone there still remembers exiled Ovid, if my name's alive in the city now I'm gone, let him know that, beneath the stars that never touch the sea, I live among the barbarian races. The Sarmatians, a wild tribe, surround me, ... [...] Men keep out the dreadful cold with sewn trousers and furs: the face alone appears of the whole body. Often their hair tinkles with hanging icicles, and their beards gleam white with a coat of frost.

Ovid continues to write about the Sarmatians in winter:

While the warm winds still blow, the Danube between defends us: with his flood he prevents war. [...] Whether the savage power of wild Boreas freezes the sea-water or the flowing river, as soon as the Danube's levelled by dry winds, the barbarian host attack on swift horses: strong in horses and strong in far-flung arrows laying waste the neighbouring lands far and wide.

Book TIII.X: "Winter in Tomis" and Barbarian Incursions"

A. S. Kline translation

As far as is known, the members of the above-mentioned peoples did not see themselves as Sarmatians, but as Iazyges, Roxolani, etc., in other words, similar to the case with the 'Germanic' peoples. They were so called by outsiders, probably because of some connecting elements, such as enough similarities in language and perhaps the type of warfare.

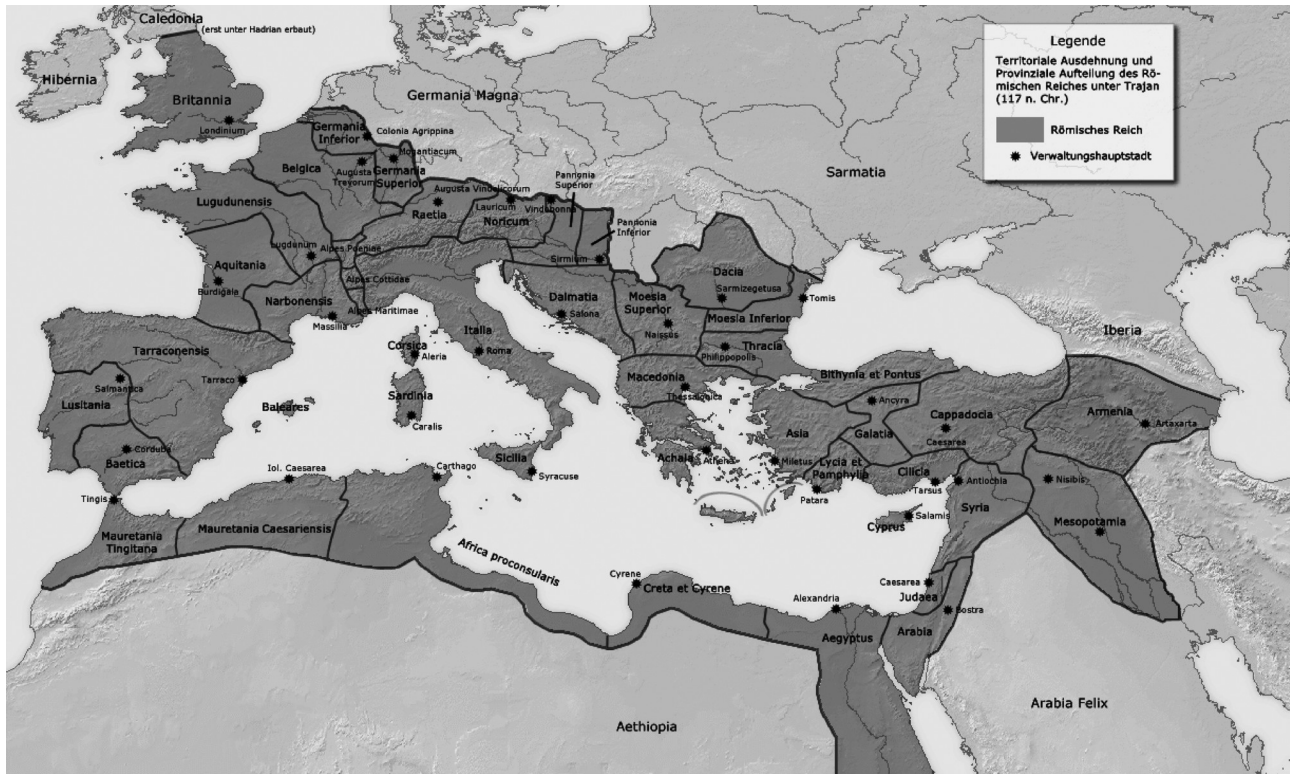
In fact, the Alani (Alans), Aorsi, Iazyges, Rhoxolani, and Sirachi have never been mentioned together in an ancient narrative as having a common Sarmatian origin ...

Anca Dan, p. 97–134

Map below:

The lands of the Sarmatians in Roman time before they entered Middle and Western Europe

Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roemischeprovinzentrajan.png>, public domain.



The great expansion of the Sarmatians began at the time of Alexander the Great, i.e. between 334 and 325 BCE. At that time they left the area between the Dnieper and Volga and moved to the southwest. The first characteristic Sarmatian kurgans (burial mounds) appeared between the Don and Donets at the end of the 4th century. On the left bank of the Dnieper there are many finds from the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE. From this point on, some fortified settlements were also established by the Scythians, most likely in response to the expansion of the Sarmatians.

In the 2nd century BCE Sarmatians were often involved in unrest in the Crimea and the Bosphorus regions. The Greek historian Polybios (around 200 – around 120 BCE) mentions a peace treaty of 179 BCE and an alliance between the Sarmatian king Gtalos and the city of Cheronos (where Sebastopol is today) against the Scythians living in the Crimea.

The possible legendary story of the Sarmatian Queen Amage dates from this time. It reads, re-narrated:

The people of Chersonese, a Greek colony in the Crimea, had pleaded for the promised protection of this queen against the Scythians of the Crimea. In order to keep this promise, she headed a cavalry force of 120 men, each rider had three horses with them and covered about 212 kilometers in one day to the palace of the Scythian king. After conquering the palace, the guards were killed to the last man, then the entire royal family, including their friends and councilors, was massacred, with the exception of one son, whom she left alive and who was placed on the throne after ordering him to behave properly from now on.



Illustration: Queen Amage

Source: <http://thefemalesoldier.com/blog/amage> – Courtesy of the site operator.

Because already in the first centuries CE in Eastern Europe an area called Sarmatia is documented, Sarmatians must have settled there early on. They apparently had a lively exchange with Germanic neighbors in several areas; for this the Quadi and Vandals may come into consideration.

Gaius Octavian, the later Emperor Augustus, conquered from 12 to 7 BCE. an area west of the Danube. The Sarmatians advanced several times to the left side of the Danube, and from the beginning of the 1st century, Sarmatian raids were reported on Roman territory on the other bank of the river.

After Sarmatians had driven the Dacians out of the area between the Danube and the Tisza, the Roman emperor Tiberius (42 BCE - 37 CE, ruled 14–37 CE) recognized their country 'Sarmatia' through a treaty, albeit as a vassal state of Rome. Rome granted independence to the Sarmatians, and the Sarmatian Iazygen were to protect the Roman border from external attacks and provide cavalry troops as auxiliaries for Roman legions.

As enemies of Rome, Sarmatians and Germanics already fought together early on; between 167 and 180 d.Z. the Sarmatian Jazygen during the Markomanian wars supported Germanic tribes against Rome.

Armored Cavalrists



Illustration: Roxolan lancers and archers

Source: The Sarmatians, 600 B.C.-A.D. 450

Armored lancers on horseback probably came from the vast plains that stretch from northeastern Iran to Transoxania and Central Asia. This region already existed in the 5th century B.C. a tradition of armored cavalry, especially among the Baotrians, Chorasmians, Massagetes and other Saka nomads. The Sarmatians probably adopted there tradition of armored riders from the Parthians.

The Sarmatian armored riders were notorious and feared in battle. The Romans had already suffered bitter defeats in the east against similar Parthian and Sasanian cavalry, and also had already painful confrontations with Sarmatians, and therefore they highly valued Sarmatians as allies and part of their army.

The Sarmatian armored lance riders used two-handed thrust-lances. Equally famous and feared were the Sarmatian mounted archers. Their reflex bows had a long range and their arrows, which were even shot backwards from galloping horses,

could penetrate good armor. It was a preferred tactic of the Sarmatians to ambush their enemies by pretending to retreat.

Sarmatian armor usually consisted of iron or bronze scales riveted to leather or heavy cloth. Sometimes, however, the scales were made of horn. Such a type of scale armor was described by the Greek travel writer and geographer Pausanias (around 115 – around 180 CE):

[The Sarmatians] collect their mares' hooves, clean them and split them until they resemble a dragon's scales. Those who have not seen a dragon have at least seen a green pine cone. Well, the stuff they make from the hooves is like the cracks on a pine cone. They drilled holes in these hoof pieces, and after sewing them together with the tendons of horses and oxen, they used them as corselets (chest protector), which are both sword-proof and arrow-proof.



Of course, the long lance and bow were not the riders' only weapons; they wielded long swords from horseback to hit their enemies. (Such swords were found in both women's and men's tombs.)

However, heavy armored riders were probably limited to only a few tribes. Brezinski notes:

It is surprising that a recent survey of archaeological finds (Simonenko 2001, p.305) suggests that the Alans were more heavily armoured than most Sarmatian groups except the Siraces.

The Franks also 'used' the military clout of Alans. Later more about that.

Illustration: Left: Sarmatian guardsman, right: Sarmatian rider with dragon banner

Source: The Sarmatians, 600 B.C.–A.D. 450

Sarmatian female warriors

Since the 6th century, Amazons have always been represented in the "Scythian tradition", that is, Scythian costumes. The background is the contact of the Greek culture with the Scythians through the colonization of the northern Black Sea region. A lively cultural exchange took place between the two cultures. This contact had a huge impact on the further development of the Amazon myth. According to the historian Herodotus, the Amazons are said to have fled after Heracles defeated them at the Thermodon river in the southern Black Sea region. With ships they landed in the northern Black Sea region - today's southern Russia and Ukraine. There they met the nomadic people of the Scythians and became friends with Scythian men. Eventually both peoples mingled. According to Herodotus, the Amazons insisted on being allowed to continue their warlike lifestyle. The Scythian men agreed and so, with the Amazons, a new Scythian people came into being, the Sauromatians. With this legend, Herodotus explained to the Greeks the disappearance of the Amazons from their original homelands in the Thermodon region in Asia Minor.

Translated from: Informationen zur Ausstellung Amazonen – Geheimnisvolle Kriegerinnen (Information about the exhibition Amazons - Mysterious Warriors), historical Museum of the Palatine Speyer, 2010–2011.

"Historically documented are female warriors among the Scythians and Sarmatians," says Lothar Schwinden from the "Rheinisches Landesmuseum". And so it stands to reason that the myth could go back to these equestrian nomads who between the eighth century BCE and the third century CE settled in what is now southern Russia and the Ukraine. Of course, they lived and fought together with their husbands.

Translated from „RP-Online“, 25. August 2011

Herodotus (around 484 - around 425 BCE) reports that the women of the Sauromats wore men's clothing, rode hunting, and went to war, and that no Sauromatic woman was allowed to marry until she had killed an enemy.

The Greek doctor Hippocrates wrote in the 4th century B.C.E. about the Sarmatians:

Their women ride horses, shoot with bows, throw spears from horseback and wage war. They do all this while they are still young women, and they do not enter marriage until they have killed three enemies.



About the nomads who inhabited in the middle of the 1st millennium BCE the Eurasian steppe is today some knowledge gained mainly through finds from grave complexes (mostly burial mounds, so-called Kurgans). There are also descriptions of ancient, mostly Greek, authors. They tell of the "Amazons", a myth that is still known today. There would have lived warlike women along the coast of the 'pontos euxeinos' (Black Sea), who wore men's clothing and were skilled riders and warriors. Women's graves with weapons and skeletons with combat injuries prove that women in early nomadic societies were actually involved in combat and actively participated in them.

Translated from

Illustration: Early-Sarmatian female warrior (Reenactment)

Source: <https://www.sarmaten-steppenkultur.de/index.php/de/darstellungen/kriegerin/>

From the 4th century BCE the name of such a woman is handed down: Tirgatao. She was a Sarmatian queen who controlled state affairs and also participated in wars. It is not certain whether there were still such warriors among these peoples when they embarked on their long migration to Central and Western Europe, for no clear evidence exists about that. There are more than a thousand years between most of the corresponding grave finds of

Sarmatian female warriors and their presence in Central Europe - a long time in which profound cultural changes may have taken place. Nevertheless, the effective defense of wagons and families with weapons can be safely trusted to be handled by Sarmatian female warriors, even in Late Antiquity. Brzezinski and his co-authors write about Sarmatians from before they appeared in Central Europe:

The early Sarmatians are now generally regarded as the reality behind the myth of the Amazons. [...] women of the Sauromatae hunted, shot bows and threw javelins from

horseback, and went to war dressed in the same clothing as men. This has been confirmed by archaeology: early Sarmatian female graves often contain bronze arrowheads, and occasionally swords, daggers and spearheads; while skeletons of girls aged 13 and 14 have bowed legs - evidence that, like boys, they were often in the saddle before they could walk. The status of women was so unusual that some writers believed that women ruled Sarmatian society.

Brzezinski, S. 1, 2

Quaden

In 50 CE the Iazygian cavalry was involved in internal follow-up battles between the people of the Quades, which are considered to be a people of the Germanic Suebi. They defended Vannius, who had been appointed king by the Romans and made the country very wealthy, against his cousins Vangio and Sido, who had taken over with the help of neighboring Germanic peoples. Vannius was defeated and fled with his allies to the Danube, via which they traveled by ship to Pannonia, where they were granted their own residential area by Rome.

The Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus wrote about the Quades and Sarmatians:

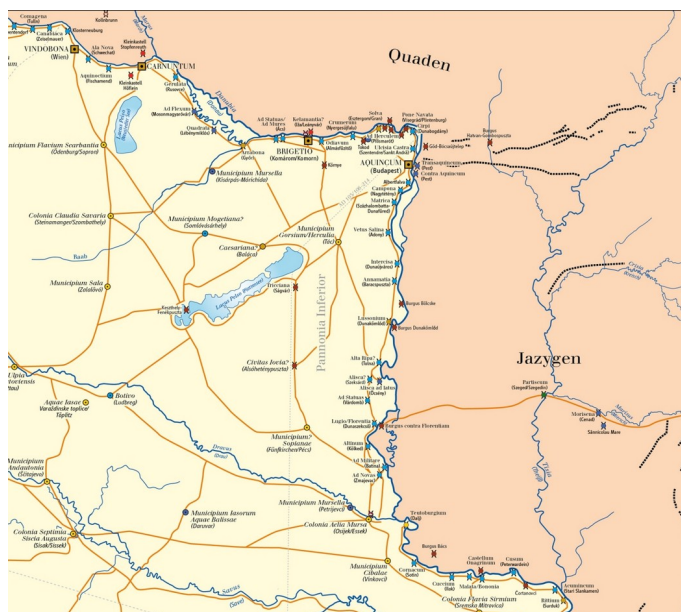
In the mean time, while the emperor was passing the winter quietly at Sirmium, he received frequent and trustworthy intelligence that the Sarmatians and the Quadi, two tribes contiguous to each other, and similar in manners and mode of warfare, were conjointly overrunning Pannonia and the second province of Moesia, in straggling detachments.

These tribes are more suited to predatory incursions than to regular war; they carry long spears, and wear breastplates made of horn scraped and polished, let into linen jackets, so that the layers of horn are like the feathers [147] of a bird. Their horses are chiefly geldings, lest at the sight of mares they should be excited and run away, or, when held back in reserve, should betray their riders by their fierce neighing.

They cover vast spaces in their movements, whether in pursuit or in retreat, their horses being swift and very manageable; and they lead with them one or sometimes two spare chargers apiece, in order that the change may keep up the strength of their cattle, and that their vigour may be preserved by alternations of rest.

Res Gestae, 17.12, C.D.Yomge translation

Apparently, Germanic Quadi and Asian Sarmatians had come so close that they had customs and fighting techniques in common; that may point to deeper Sarmatian-Germanic contacts.



Map: The vertical border line to the right of the Iazygen is the 'Limes Sarmatae'. Detection points: to the left is the Roman city of Carnuntum near Vienna, and where the vertical border begins above is Aquincum situated, today's Budapest. Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Limes4.png>

When the Roman Emperor Valentinian I (364 – 375) tried to protect a part of the northern border by building castles and forts, he also moved the border section "Limes Sarmatae" further north. By doing that Roman troops also occupied Quadic

territory. The Quadi protested against this breach of contract. The King of the Quadi was invited by the Romans to talk about it and, contrary to all rules of hospitality, murdered after a meal. This led to a war between Rome and the Quadi, which had coalesced with the Sarmatian Iazygen. The Romans won, but their attempts to expand to the north were put to an end for now.

Marcomanni

Meanwhile, the Sarmatian Roxolani and the Bastarnae (Bastarni) moved west, where the Iazygen already existed. They invaded Moldova and Wallachia. Warriors of the two Germanic peoples of the Marcomanni and Quadi were also involved in the battles caused by that:

The Marcomanni were a Germanic people who belong to the tribal or ethnic group of the Suebi. They had to leave their original residential area in the middle Elbe region (as far as known) due to the pressure of neighboring peoples. Around the start of the Common Era they appeared in the area between the Ore Mountains and the Danube, where they still lived in the 2nd century. Depending on the circumstances, they were rural settlements at times, and more nomadic at other times.

In the period between 14 and 96 CE the Marcomanni formed a Roman client state, who were, if necessary, obliged to provide auxiliary troops for the Roman army. In the 2nd century CE that changed; Marcomanni, Quadi and Jazyges repeatedly invaded the Roman Empire; Wars, peace treaties and breaches of contract alternated. Only Emperor Commodus (who ruled from 180 to 192) managed to achieve a longer peace.

In the Marcomannic Wars that took place between 166 and 180 CE, the main opponents of Rome under Emperor Mark Aurel were the Germanic peoples of the Marcomanni, Quadi, Vandals, Longobards and Bastarni, and the Sarmatian peoples of the Iazyges and Roxolani. The assumption here is that the alliances formed at leadership level were also sealed by marriages; hence there could have been Germanic-Sarmatian mixed marriages.

Tacitus repeatedly mentions the Sarmatians in his "Germania", they already appear in Chapter 1: *Germania as a whole is separated from the Gauls and from the Raeti and Pannonii by the Rhine and Danube rivers, and from the Sarmatians and Dacians by mutual fear or mountains; the Ocean surrounds the rest,*

J.B. Rives, p. 77

Something about the history of this region:

When the Sarmatians invaded the Roman empire in 88, presumably also few rebellious parts of the Marcomanni were involved, they encountered the Roman Legion XXXI Rapax. They crushed the Romans and, according to the Roman historian Suetonius, killed their commanders. Friendship contracts and new wars (Sarmatian raids) took turns. A rock bottom for the Romans was probably when Iazyges and Roxolani struck the Roman province of Pannonia. The clashes between Sarmatians and Romans became so numerous that Rome spoke of the 'Sarmatian War'. The Marcomanni were not yet completely involved.

After the fighting, Bardaspos, leader of the Sarmatians, asked for a peace treaty. Marc Aurel refused. Thereupon, before the emperor's eyes, the Sarmatians chose Zanticus as their new leader and told the Romans that if no peace was made, he would leave and return with all the Sarmatian peoples.

Eventually, in 175, the Roman emperor Mark Aurel (121–180) after all ended this war, probably because Avidius Cassius, governor of Syria, had proclaimed himself emperor because he had been told that Marc Aurel had died. The emperor was forced to primarily take care of that and was therefore unable to fight any further Sarmatian incursions. The peace treaty established a 15 km no man's land in the Sarmatian area between the Empire and the Sarmatians. The Sarmatians released 100,000 prisoners of war and delivered a cavalry of 8,000 men to Rome, but they were allowed to

keep their rich booty. Rome, in turn, was committed to building a defensive wall on the Sarmatian eastern border against the Dacians. These Sarmatians then from opponents became now federates of Rome. That included an irrevocable lease with Rome, in which they remained completely autonomous.

Of the 8,000 Sarmatian cavalymen, became 5,500 men the sixth Victrix legion to be sent to Britain. They had to secure the northern border of the Roman Empire near Hadrian's Wall, the barrier against the Picts and Saxons.



Illustration: Gravestone of a Sarmatian horseman who fought for the Romans in Britain.

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Grosvenor_Museums_-_Grabstein_3_Sarmate.jpg

Later they were partially withdrawn from Britain. A larger group of cavalry, the 'ala prima Sarmatarum', was permanently stationed there, and a large Sarmatian colony arose in "Bremetenacum Veteranorum", in what is now Ribchester in Lancashire, where Sarmatian veterans were given land and they settled there permanently with their wives and children. Corresponding Sarmatian gravestones testify this. These Sarmatians have probably mixed with the local population - and in turn this 'mixture' became mixed later with Germanic people from southern Denmark and northern Germany who settled in Britain.

In addition to the commitments made by treaties between Rome and Sarmatian peoples, many Sarmatian warriors may have volunteered for well-paid service in the Roman army, and as elite soldiers they were very welcome there.

Back to the Marcomanni ...

At the urging of Bishop Ambrosius, a peace treaty was concluded in 396 with Fritigil, the Queen of the Markomanni who had converted to Christianity; already previously she had asked Ambrosius to expand the missionary work in this sense.

It is not known whether Sarmatians were involved in that, but due to the close cooperation in earlier years, marriage relationships were not uncommon as a seal of the agreement.

In the 7th century, the Marcomanni living in Bohemia merged with the immigrated Slavs, and the Marcomanni who lived south of the Danube may have become integrated the people of the Bajuvari.

Goths, Bastarni (Bastarnae)

In the late 2nd century CE East Germanic Goths are documented in the area of the Black Sea. It is still unclear whether they moved there as already being a people, or only emerged there as an own people - there have been and there are still many controversial disputes about this. But this is not the place to have this discussion.

Although these Goths had Sarmatians as neighbors there, it does not seem that there were many quarrels between the two, even on the contrary, there seem to have been cooperation up to the point of intermingling. Other East Germanic peoples who had Sarmatians as neighbors also seem to have had fewer problems with the steppe riders than one might think. When Tacitus published his *Germania* around the end of the 1st Century, Sarmatians and Germanic tribes were already neighbors, and for Tacitus (and his human sources), apparently those Germanic peoples and the Sarmatians were not even clearly distinguishable from each other. Chapter 46 of *Germania* states: *As for the nations of the Peucini, Veneti, and Fenni, I am unsure whether I should assign them to the Germani or the Sarmatians. To be sure, the Peucini, whom some call Bastarnae, are like Germani in speech, way of life, mode of settlement, and habitation; all of them are filthy and their leading men inert; debased by mixed marriages, they are starting to look like Sarmatians. The Veneti have taken a great many customs from the Sarmatians, for in plundering forays they roam through all the forests and hills that rise between the Peucini and Fenni. Still, they are more properly classed as Germani, because they have fixed homes and bear shields and take pleasure in moving fast by foot: all these things are at odds with the Sarmatians, who live in wagons and horses.*

J.B. Rives, p. 96

Note: the Peucini are regarded as a sub-tribe of the Bastarnae

The origin of the Bastarnae is controversial, but mostly they are classified as an East Germanic people. This means, however, that the transitions between Bastarnae and Sarmatians were so fluid that the Roman outsider no longer saw any clear differences.

Even the interpretation exists that the Bastarnae would have been a Germanic-Sarmatian mixed people.

The Greek historian Procopius (Procopius of Caesarea, ca. 500 – ca. 562) wrote in his work about the Vandal war of the Emperor Justinianus:

There were many other Gothic peoples in the past and they still exist today, the largest and most important of them are the Ostrogoths, Vandals, Visigoths and Gepids. In ancient times they were called Sauromatians and Melanchlaines; some also called them Getic peoples. Although they all have different names, as I said, they do not differ from each other in any other way: They all have a white skin and blond hair, are tall and stately in appearance and use the same laws and practice the same type of worship.

Translated from Urs Müller, p. 26

Procopius apparently could not distinguish the Goths from the Sarmatians (Sauromatians). The direct neighborhood, cultural exchange and common (mostly warlike) activities can have blurred many differences between Sarmatians and Goths. In the discussion on this today, it is even questioned whether the Eastern European Goths were Germanic at all. And related to that is also the unanswered question as to whether these Goths were the descendants of the 'Gutones' (Gotones), who, as Tacitus reports, around the start of the Common Era settled in the area of the Vistula estuary in northern Poland - from time to time this is a repeating discussion.

In the second half of the 3rd century, the Goths were split up into the 'Greuthungi' and 'Thervingi', which were later called Ostrogoths and Visigoths. In 378 the Thervingi, while looking for a new residential area on Roman territory, struck a Roman army under Emperor Valens.

When the Hunnic invasion became a real threat, the Thervingi split up into different groups, most of them left their residential area and, as Visigoths (Visigoths), a part of the Thervingi settled on Eastern Roman territory, where they were safe from the Huns. Another part is said to have moved north-west - it is believed that Sarmatians also joined here, who also did not want to be overrun by the Huns.

Some years later, the Visigoths, who lived on Eastern Roman territory, were persuaded to move further west and eventually founded their own empire in the southern half of Gaul and northern Spain. Sarmatians who belonged to the cavalry of the Gothic army are said to have joined this migration to the west. These warriors, together with their families, probably got absorbed in the southern-Gallic Gothic empire or in the upper class of the population there.

Sarmatians often joined Germanic armies, they were involved in the invasion of the Visigoths in Italy. There is a thesis that the burial of the Visigoth king Alarich in or at the river Busento is due to a Sarmatian burial rite.

Vandals

In the 5th century, it was the high tide of the 'big migration period', a large group of the Alans joined the Vandals on the journey they had started and, after their migration through Gaul, where they stayed for three years, and Hispania, finally arrived in Africa, where they founded their own empire. At the very beginning of the journey, Vandals and Sarmatians attacked the province's gold mines together in western Dacia.

This 'Vandal hike' was felt by Germanics and Gauls: the Greek historian of Late Antiquity Zosimus wrote around 500 in his "Historia nea" (New History):

In previous times, when Arcadius and Probus were consuls for the sixth time, the Vandals, Suebi and Alans united, intersected these areas, looted the peoples beyond (i.e., south and southwest) the Alps and murdered many inhabitants.

The Alans must have been an important part of the 'Vandal Journey', because Gunderic (379-428), King of the African Empire called himself *Rex Vandalorum et Alanorum* (King of the Vandals and Alans). It is even speculated that Alans married into the Vandal royal family.

Emperor Majorian (457-461) deployed Sarmatian troops (mostly Alans) in battles against the Vandals in Africa and after the defeat of the Vandals those Alans were 'stationed' in Gaul, i.e. left behind.

Vandals and Sarmatians have probably gone through a 'merging process', because the religious scientist and historian for medieval studies Roman Zaroﬀ states with regard to the vandals in his study:

One could speak of a "sarmatization" of Vandal warfare, their economy, clothing and behavior, ...

This is supported by a picture of a Vandal rider on a Sarmatian horse. This horse can be recognized as Sarmatian because it bears a brand of this people.



Illustration: Vandal Horseman, c. 500 CE. From a stone mosaic in Bordj Djedid near Carthage

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vandal_cavalryman,_c._AD_500,_from_a_mosaic_pavement_at_Bordj_Djedid_near_Carthage.jpg

The Swiss researcher Urs Müller writes about this:

Horse brands or branding signs could serve as further evidence of the Sarmatian influence on Germanic cavalry. According to the pictures we know, the Sarmatian horses carried branded

horse signs, so-called Tamgas. An often shown picture a part of a mosaic from Borj Djedid, Carthage, from the 5th / 6th century CE shows a waving horseman, often referred to as a vandal. The hindquarters of his horse shows a tamga. The horse of another rider of the same mosaic, hardly ever shown, has such a Tamga. ...

Translated from Urs Müller, p. 89

After the North African Vandal empire had lost its battle against an Eastern Roman army, many prisoners of war were deported to the Eastern Roman Empire, many others fled to the Gothic empires in the east and west. After the Visigoths were driven out of southern Gaul, many Goths withdrew across the Pyrenees. It is not known whether the Vandals and Alans did so too; The latter may also have moved to their people who had some settlements further north. There is a conjecture that Vandals from southern Gaul would have moved to the Burgundians - kinship-related and religiously that would be possible, because they had the (Christian) Arianism in common. But none of this goes beyond the level of speculation.

Burgundians

It was probably the heavy mass migrations in Eastern Europe and further east that also forced the Germanic Burgundians, who had their homelands in what is today Poland, to move westwards. It is likely that Sarmatian Alans were part of it, i.e. joined the trek from its beginning.

It is reported that an army of Burgundians and Alans had supported the anti-emperor (usurper) Jovinus in his effort to become Rome' ruler. The Eastern Roman historian Olympiodorus (between 365 and 380 – after 425) reports:

Jovinus was proclaimed usurper at a place called Mundiacum in the province of Germania II at the instigation of Alanen Goar and Guntarius, who appeared as the Burgundian phylarch (Ruler of a tribe).

After they failed to settle permanently along the Rhine, which they tried for a while, they established their own kingdom in northeastern Gaul, federated with Rome:

Whether in 436 the Burgundians along the Rhine were defeated by the Roman military leader Aëtius and his Roman troops, by Huns under Hunnic command or by Aëtius with units of Huns in his army is still a matter of debate, in any case they disappeared from the Rhine region and only live on there in legends. The rest of the Burgundian people were assigned a few years later a settlement area in the Sapaudia on Lake Geneva by the Roman leader Aëtius, where they were to share the region with the local population. That was certainly not just a gift, because in the battle on the Catalaunian fields, Burgundian troops fought alongside Aëtius against the Huns; this shows their commitment towards the Roman emperor.

The Burgundian Empire may have consisted of Burgundians and an Alanic minority; in peacetime these could hardly be distinguished from one another, but since Burgundians mainly had an infantry army, the Alans probably formed the cavalry and had their own armament - therefore their ethnicity could be easily recognized on military occasions. During excavations, objects were found on burial grounds in the former Burgundian Empire, which indeed point to Alans.

Most of the Alans gathered a little further west around the city of Orleans and, like the Burgundians, also fought on the side of the Romans in the battle on the Catalaunian fields against the Hunnic army under Attila.

The Burgundian-Alanic mixture thesis is poor, but it could be supportive that the Eastern Roman historian Agathias (around 531/53 - around 582) describes the Burgundians in the West as a Gothic people and it is proven that in Eastern Europe Sarmatians and Goths had versatile contacts, even in such a way that ancient authors mixed them up. Burgundians are also referred to several times as Goths in the German Nibelung myth. Hence, there most likely was an old acquaintance, probably

also a linguistic and cultural rapprochement. Even blood relationships between members of both peoples cannot be ruled out. There is certainly some evidence of corresponding marriage connections. In the biography of the Roman emperor Maximinus Thrax, this ruler is described as the son of an Alanic woman and a Goth. And Jordanes' *Getica* also describes a marriage between an Alanic princess and an Ostrogoth prince.

The Russian-American historian George Vernadski (1887–1973) believes that mixed marriages between Goths and Alans occurred frequently, but only the cases that occurred at a ruler level were described.

The latter could be supported for the Burgundians by the Germanist and specialist in onomastics Norbert Wagner, who says about the name of the Burgundian prince 'Gundiuc' that he is Sarmatian. He argues that the mixture of various Germanic and non-Germanic peoples and sub-peoples was reflected in the personal names in the course of the migration. Urs Müller comments on that name Wagner uses for his thesis:

The second name that Wagner examines in detail is that of the Burgundian king Gundiuc. This king, who was first attested in 456, is usually mentioned in the descriptions under the name Gundoweich. This is because the mention of his name by Gregory of Tours, who describes him as Gundevechus. However, other sources call him Gundiuchus, Gundiocus, Gundiucus. [...] Wagner compares Gundiuc's name with that of Attila's father, Mundiuc. He considers this name, which has also been handed down in the form of Mundzucus, which is why it appears in the descriptions as Mundzuck, as possibly Iranian-Alanian. [...] Wagner cannot interpret the second term -iuc. But he tries to show the origin of the name Gundiuc. The definition word Gund-, oldhighgerman 'Gunt' (fight) occurs very often in Germanic names.

The question now is where did the '-iuc comes from. Wagner suggests two options. On the one hand, the name of the Hunnic Prince Mundiuc could have been the model, whereas Wagner himself raised good linguistic and political objections, on the other hand - more interesting for us - the names of the Hun and the Burgundian could be traced back to Iranian-Alanian models. Here Wagner is thinking of a concrete scenario. He initially suspects that Gundiuc was the son of the famous Burgundy king Gundahar, a possibility that certainly can be true. Then he assumes that the varying part of the name came into the family through a non-Germanic and non-Hunnic marriage. Now, that Gundahar together with the Alanic prince Goar declared Jovinus the anti-emperor in 411, Wagner assumes that the political connection could also have had a level of kinship. This would give the possibility that Gundahar had an Alanic wife and Gundiuc was a son from this marriage, which could explain the non-Germanic second part of the name as being of Alanian origin. That can be correct ...

Translated from Urs Müller, p. 124, 125

Langobards

There are hardly any scientific studies on the invasion of the Longobard army into Italy, and this may deal with the scarce and very uncertain source situation; existing legends are not really suitable as reliable history. It is only after the Longobards have arrived in the Alpine region, and even more after they have settled in northern Italy, that the source situation improves. Nevertheless, we know that the migration from northern Germany took almost a century before they in 568 settled in Italy. The Longobards occupied 488 parts of Lower Austria in 505, they added the Tullnerfeld (also Lower Austria) to their territory, 510 they invaded the Roman provinces of Pannonia I and Valeria and 547/48 also Savia and Noricum Mediterraneum.

68 The prefect of the Sarmatian people, in the area of Roanne (= Roannais, split off as the western part of the Lyonnais) and the Alauni (instead of Velavi? = Vellavi = Le Puy-en-Velay).

69 The Prefect of the Sarmatian people, in (the area of) Langres.

70 The Prefect of the Sarmatian people, in Au

Translated from Reinhold Kaiser und Sebastian Scholz, p. 92, 93



Map: Sarmatian settlements in the Northeast of Gaul

Source: https://www.marres.nl/sarmatische_sporen.htm

At the beginning of the 4th century, Frankish and Alemannic invasions continued to occur on the Rhine region, and therefore, as a border security, Sarmatians were settled in the Hunsrück area. These are later said to have been at least partially merged into the Franks.

There are places in France, Italy and elsewhere in Europe with names that are believed to be related to those of late Sarmatian settlements, such as in France Sampigny, Sermaise, Sermoise, Sermeries, Sarmato and also Alaincourt and Aillainville. Archaeological finds also make it clear, as e.g. Christian Pilet in a Claus von Carnap-Bornheim publication (see list of literature) has evidenced that there were also people with a Sarmatian migration background in the empire of the early Franks, who thus influenced the culture of the Gauls and Franks through the contribution of their culture.

The northernmost town in Gaul, where Sarmatians were stationed according the above-mentioned source, was near the northern French municipality of Famars or, according to the old Roman name Fanum Martis (temple of Mars), at the border with Belgium. The place was located along Via Belgica, a connecting road between the towns of Bavay and Tournai. The Sarmatians might have had the a task in the Imperial Border Guard. They had partially previously been stationed at Xanten and relocated in the course of a violent change of emperor in 413.

According to an uncertain source, there were also Sarmatians located in the area around the Dutch city of Maastricht:

Around 414: The Roman emperor Honorius [...] succeeded once again in restoring Roman rule in northern Gaul with the help of successful generals. But everything once Roman territory north and east of the lower Meuse is abandoned, except for the Roman city of Colonia (Cologne). With the approval of the Roman authorities the Germanic Burgundians settle in the area west of Cologne, and also with the approval of the Roman authorities, parts of the Alans settle in the area around Maastricht.

Translated from: Einblicke in die Frühzeit der Eisenverarbeitung, S. 198

It is unknown whether these settled permanently in the Maastricht region and were merged with the local population.

At the end of the 3rd century, a Sarmatian troop together with their companions (families, etc.) was said to have been stationed on behalf of the Roman army command along the Lower Rhine and later in western Belgium. A small part of this group is said to have remained at today's Krefeld.

In both places, this served to secure the border. Then, when Rome's power declined and was no longer noticeable in Western Europe, the Sarmatian troops remained in their places and probably settled there permanently.

In exchange for their hereditary military service Sarmatian soldiers and their families were settled in the Belgica secunda province, where they received estates. Many are said to have joined the Franks - there was no place for a 'neutral' Sarmatian power at the time. There is speculation that leaders of such Sarmatian elite units have also asserted themselves as leaders of Frankish warrior troops, and it is precisely from this group of leading people that marriage connections to the Merovingian princes are said to have been established. There is no hard proof for this, but there is some uncertain evidence:

1. A bull's head was depicted on the bridle of a horse, which was found in the grave of the Frankish ruler Childeric I. However, its religious or mythological interpretation is uncertain. In this context often the royal myth of origin is pointed out: Merovech's conception by a sea monster with a bull's head. The bull's head found cannot be clearly clarified in itself, there are too many possibilities for this; one of these possibilities would be pointing to the Sarmatians.
2. Gregory of Tours reports in book II Chapter 31 of his "Ten Books of Histories" (Decem libri historiarum) that Bishop Remigius addressed King Clovis I at his baptism with the honorary name 'Sicamber'. The name, again uncertain, could refer to a place Sicambria from Antiquity in Hungary, where in Late Antiquity on Roman command Sarmatians were stationed. These are said to have been later stationed in Gaul, still in Roman service.
3. The 21 horses, the remains of which were found at the tomb of King Childeric I, can point to a tradition corresponding to equestrian peoples such as the Sarmatians, because such sacrifices in Western and Central Europe are sometimes classified as typically Sarmatian. They are said to have been part of the burial ceremonies for high nobles of this people.
4. Basina, Childeric's wife, who came from Thuringia, is said to have asked for the king's hand. This does not fit with the image of Germanic women of the time, but probably rather of Sarmatian customs, where women were also warriors.
5. For whatever reason Childeric had fled to Thuringia when he was young; after he came back with a strong troop of warriors he was able to take his place again. If speculation 4 would be true, that could have been Sarmatians - these might have been more feared by the Franks than Thuringian warriors.
6. Long hair as a sign of dignity of the Merovingian aristocracy is supposed to indicate steppe customs, which is actually attested. Brezinski explains: *Sarmatian nobles often reached 1.70-1.80 m in length, measured on the skeletons, and they had robust bones - which proves the nomadic meat-milk diet. Like the Scythians, they wore long hair and beards. The Sarmatian rulers of the Bosporan Kingdom are usually depicted on coins with long hair, ...*
7. In a legend told in two works of Late Antiquity, the origin of the Franks is linked to the demise of the legendary city of Troy in Asia Minor. This is probably not more than a fairy tale, but ... *The chapter, following the one about the settlement in Pannonia, about the Emperor Valentinian, the Trojans (Franks) and the Alans is an addition to the actual Troja myth. [...] The Alans, who originally had settled north of the Caucasus in the Asian Scythia, had penetrated from there to Europe, the first country west of the Maeotis in the European 'Scythia inferior' (Scythia minor) was called after them 'Alania'. It would therefore be plausible that the Alans after being struck by Emperor Valentinian fled to the Maeotis (i.e. the area around Lake Asov).*

Translated from Dieter Geuerich, S. 19



Map: Alania

Since other strong peoples already lived there (in the Maoetis), the Alans moved further west and were later also settled in northern Gaul.

There is more evidence, all just as uncertain as the ones listed here. In summary, the indications could point to the possibility that the Merovingians 'blood' also contained Sarmatian 'blood'. And since the Merovingians were related to the early

Carolingians, a Sarmatian legacy from Charlemagne cannot be ruled out. Yet, more than a "may be, but does not have to" can not be determined here, and since it can not be proven, corresponding speculations are basically idle, but should not remain unmentioned.

It is equally idle to interpret the documented presence of a Sarmatian settlement in the immediate vicinity of Childeric's royal seat in such a way that a princely intermarriage occurred between his parents or grandparents; Here too, nothing more can be stated than a 'it might be possible'.

Nonetheless, there were many Sarmatians in the Frankish empire; the armies of Clovis, Childeric's son, counted about 6,000 mounted elite soldiers in addition to infantry, and this at least partly indicates to Alans.

By the mid-5th century the Sarmatians were no longer in control of their own destiny and by the 6th century, little trace of them remained in western Europe. They had not disappeared, but rather had been woven seamlessly into the colourful tapestry that was to emerge as Medieval Europe.

Richard Brzezinsky, Mariusz Mielczarek, p. 2

For Gaul and Upper Germania, a merging of Sarmatians with Frankish peoples and Gauls can be assumed to be safe. This is also borne out by some 'Sarmatian-based' grave finds:

The Merovingian necropolis Obernai in Alsace consists of eighteen burials in east-west direction. Three of them contained silver earrings. One contained two small gold needles on the deceased's chest, possibly attaching a garment like a veil.

A chatelaine (a decorative pendant that was used to attach small items to clothing) was attached to a belt to which various items were attached, such as a silver mirror similar to those of the Caucasus Alano-Sarmatian population, tweezers, and several large colored glass beads and amber. This woman also had a triangular antler comb, which was decorated at both ends with geometric motifs and horse heads.

In addition to the 'Sarmatian' grave goods, there is also evidence of an intentionally deformed skull, which is also a clear indication of Sarmatians:

In addition to numerous and sometimes valuable grave goods in a total of 18 tombs from the Merovingian period, which were oriented east and west, the archaeologists also came across the skeleton of a richly decorated woman. Moreover, apart from her extensive grave goods - which identify her as a member of a population group from the east - what made this woman more than clearly of high social standing was her severely deformed so-called long skull.

Translated from:

<https://de.sott.net/article/12513-Vollstandig-erhaltener-Langschadel-im-Elsa-gefunden>



Illustration: Deformed skull of a Sarmatian woman
 Source: <https://de.sott.net/article/12513-Vollstandig-erhaltener-Langschadel-im-Elsa-gefunden>

Similar 'Sarmatian' graves like this one were discovered independently of each other in Northern Gaul, Germany and Eastern Europe and are often equipped with rich funerary objects.

In Late Antiquity, Franks and Alemanni deposited their deceased in row graveyards. At the time, burial mounds were not a (common) custom on the mainland, south of the north German lowlands. In

their steppe-era, Sarmatian peoples knew cremations. Grave finds have shown that Sarmatian body burials also took place in Central and Western Europe. High-ranking nobles apparently were privileged by getting a burial mound. Now it is not imperative that all burial mounds that were created in Late Antiquity in Central and Western Europe have to point to Sarmatians, but as a characteristic it should be remembered the grave of Childeric I, the father of Clovis - the discussion about his possible Sarmatian origins have been haunted by literature for many years. From a cultural point of view, it may be of value to examine undeveloped burial mounds from this era. However, if the mutual exchange is taken into account, in burial customs Sarmatians may also have been influenced by Germanic (and Gaulish) people, because objects of Sarmatian origin were also found in Germanic or Gallic burial grounds.

Alamanni

This name, which for the first time 289 CE appears in Latin as Alamanni and later also as Alemanni, refers to a community of peoples that initially consisted mainly of Elbe Germanics, so it is likely that they are largely attributed to the Suebi. The merger was probably purpose-oriented - together they were stronger and the chances of successful looting are much greater.

In addition, it is assumed that Suevi immigrants from the Danube also joined them. These would be then (parts of) the Marcomanni, Quadi, perhaps descendants of the earlier Hermunduri and Semnones (it is assumed sometimes that the earlier Semnones were later known as Juthungen). Tribal parts of the Quades may have joined forces with the Alemanni in Pannonia in the Battle of the Bolia (469), which they lost - in this battle, the Ostrogoths defeated a Germanic coalition of Danubians, Skirens, Rugians, Heruli, and Gepids and allied Sarmatians; that may have been a trigger for the migration to the west.

This means that sarmatian (Iazygic) influences must have been incorporated into the Alemanni confederation at an early stage - what exactly and to what extent cannot be determined entirely, at the 2001 exhibition in the Ellwangen "Alamannen Museum" entitled "Die Reiterkrieger von Pfahlheim" quite a few references of the Alemanni to the Alans were presented. Everything that, for example, has to do with improved riding technics, such as riding with stirrups or spurs, and what occurs for the first time in large numbers in Pfahlheim, is basically attributed to the influence of the Alans. (Pfahlheim is a local district of the city of Ellwangen in the German state of Baden-Württemberg).

Yet 'the' Alamanni cannot be interpreted as a unified people:

The report by the Emperor Probus, which speaks of nine reges of different gentes (nine kings or princes of different peoples)) who, as federates of the Romans and with their approval, owned the territory on the right bank of the Rhine, gave a first insight into the structure and organization of

the Alemannic associations at the end of the 3rd century. the report is in an appreciating way supported Ammianus Marcellinus, who reports about 80 years later about a battle against the Alemanni, which took place near Strasbourg in 357. In contrast to the letter of Probus, whose authenticity can be doubted due to the problematic situation of transmission, the description of Ammianus, who was an attendant of the Roman commander-in-chief Ursicinus from 353 to 357, even in Gaul, and thus to some extent an eyewitness to the events, is considered reliable. Accordingly, the Alemanni are led by numerous reges, without one of them being given clear priority. Often several reges go together in battle, but never all of them together join in a conflict with the Romans, who also negotiate and conclude contracts with single peoples of them. When we speak of the entirety of the Alemanni, Ammianus speaks of the "kingdoms" (regna), the "peoples" (populi) or the "districts" (pagi) of the Alemanni.

Translated from Dieter Geuenich in „Die Alamannen“, p. 77

This makes it clear that 'the' Alamanni were not a merger of several Germanic tribes or sub-tribes, but a conglomerate of several at least partially independent groups with their own princes.

Under Clovis, Burgundians and Alemanni became Frankish dependencies and that is why Alanic(?) - Frankish executives could also have had their influence in Alemannic areas.

Since the territories of the Alemanni peoples bordered those of the Thuringians, Franks, Burgundians and the territory of the warlord Syagrius, in all which Sarmatians lived and had influence, it is actually inescapable that Alemanni must also have felt this influence, since they were not completely isolated.



Map: Realms around 500 CE

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Central_Europe_End_5th_Century_German.jpg

Thüringians

A tribal kingdom developed among the Thuringians in the second half of the 5th century, and the Thuringian Empire became an important power factor in Central Europe at the beginning of the 6th century. At the beginning of the 6th century, it stretched from the upper Danube and the upper Main valley deep into the Lower Saxony area, on the other side from the Werra river to the basin of the middle Elbe.

Much has been published about the possible origin of the Thuringians. In some older sources it is assumed that the people of the Hermunduri formed the original basis, to which later other small peoples joined. However, since the Hermunduri had disappeared already from the written sources a few decades before the beginning of the 3rd century, an emigration or dissolution of this people rather can be presumed, in any case, the medieval historian Matthias Springer, after a critical examination, rejected the Hermunduri presumption as untenable and that has been widely accepted. A few others see the origin of the Thuringians in the name of the Thyra river in the southern Harz region, but this cannot be an explanation of an ethnogenesis.

For some time now there has been another view that has considerable arguments in itself:

The historian Heike Grahn-Hoek dealt with the "emergence of European nations in the Middle Ages" as part of her research work at the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft). Frankish and Thuringian early history in particular were her specialties. With regard to the Thuringians, she developed a strong hypothesis that these are identical to the Gothic Thervingi of the 3rd and 4th centuries, which would have settled in the area of today's Thuringia after their period of wandering around.

The thesis that an existing people settled in Central Germany is supported by a remark by the Roman author and horse breeder Vegetius Renatus, who lived at the end of the 4th century, and published on warfare and equine medicine. In his work he praised the horses of the "Touringi" (he calls them a breed of horse that is particularly suitable for military service). This remark can rule out that the early Thuringians were a newly formed people - it must have been a people with a solid horse breeding and training tradition. This author is the first to mention the people of the 'Thuringian' in writing.

Ammianus writes in Book 31.4.12 of his „Res Gestae“ about Theruingi:

Athanaric, fearing similar treatment, departed; recollecting that long ago, when he was discussing a treaty of alliance with Valens, he had treated that emperor with contempt, in affirming that he was bound by a religious obligation never to set his foot on the Roman territory; and that by this excuse he had compelled the emperor to conclude a peace in the middle of the war. And he, fearing that the grudge which Valens bore him for this conduct was still lasting, withdrew with all his forces to Caucalandes, a place which, from the height of its mountains and the thickness of its woods, is completely inaccessible; and from which he had lately driven out the Sarmatians.

Charles Duke Yonge translation

Where exactly this Caucalanda was located is not clear, it was assumed for a long time a forested mountainous area in Transylvania. However, the area south of the upper reaches of the Dniester (Dnjestr) in the forest Carpathians appears to have prevailed.

In addition, Ammianus also mentions the Theruingi's desire for a land of settlement that was remote and completely unknown to the Huns:

In the mean time a report spread extensively through the other nations of the Goths, that a race of men, hitherto unknown, had suddenly descended like a whirlwind from the lofty mountains, as if they had risen from some secret recess of the earth, and were ravaging and destroying everything which came in their way. And then the greater part of the population which, because of their want of necessities, had deserted Athanaric, resolved to flee and to seek a home remote from all knowledge of the barbarians; and after a long deliberation where to fix their abode, they resolved that a retreat into Thrace was the most suitable for these two reasons: first of all, because it is a district most fertile in grass; and also because, by the great breadth of the Danube, it is wholly separated from the barbarians, who were already exposed to the thunderbolts of foreign warfare. And the whole population of the tribe adopted this resolution unanimously..

Ammianus, 31.3.8, Charles Duke Yonge translation

There is talk here of a division of the Thervingi people. One part (the Christian part) moved to Thrace, but the pagan King Athanaric with the rest of his people moved to the Forest Carpathians. Athanaric was deposed there for unknown reasons, and he fled to Constantinople, where he in 381 was welcomed by Emperor Theodosius I. The written sources remain further silent about the Thervingi in the Carpathians. But within 20 years, rather even less, Vegetius Renatus mentions the "Thuringi" as living in Central Germany - an area that was not known as a residential area of another people at the time. The 'Carpathian Thervingi' probably continued their flight from the Huns to the west.

Athanaric's successor is said to have been Radagais, who is also referred to as pagan. And Zosimos proves the geographical origin of Radagais by stating that he came from the country between the Danube and the Rhine. This is exactly the description of the geographic location of the Thuringian Kingdom and it would make no sense if he had been native to the Carpathian Mountains region. The name Radagais also occurs later in the Thuringian-Warnian royal family with a prince Radagais. The component Rada- can be found in royal Thuringian names such as Rade-gundis (two princesses) and a Thuringian duke / king Radaulf from the 7th century.

As early as the 1980s and 1990s, Berthold Schmidt has showed that significant groups of bearers of the Cheryakovsk / Sintana-de-Mures culture (which is associated with the Goths) came to Central Germany and settled in the center of the later Thuringian Kingdom. These groups are known under the terms 'Grossbadegaster' and 'Niemburger' groups. They arrived in central Germany in the 370 / 380s when Athanaric's Thervingi disappeared from the sources. According to Grahn-Hoek's argument, these new settlers would have been the Athanaric-Thervingi, probably led by Radagais. Initially, they were apparently able to establish themselves in their new residential area relatively quiet; Rome had to concentrate on its borders, where many struggles took place - these were also the focus of contemporary historians and writers. Around 400 CE lived north and west of the early Thuringian the Saxons and Franks, south and southwest the Alemanni and Burgundians and further east Markomanni, Vandals and Quadi - in the beginning without a direct border with the Thuringians. Therefore, the new settlers had enough time to settle down permanently. In the 5th century, like so many other peoples outside Rome's borders, they then took part in raids on Roman territory.

Eugippius (around 465– after 533), a church writer and later proclaimed a Saint, wrote the hagiography of St. Severin of Noricum (around 410–482) and the Thuringians are mentioned several times in it:

"[...] So gather yourself and go to the city of Lauriacum with me." [...] And when the people of Batavis hesitated to leave their homes, he added: "Although this city, to which we go, must be abandoned as soon as possible before the onset of barbarism, let us now go to leave this place the same way." When he imprinted such things, most people followed him. Some proved to be persistent, and those stubborn ones did not escape the enemy's sword. In the same week the Thoringi stormed the city; and of those who had stayed there despite the words of the man of God, many were slaughtered, the rest was taken prisoner and had to pay the penalty for their defamation.

And a second time:

And the king said: I will not ruin this people, for whom you come as a friendly advocate, by the cruel looting of the Alamanni and Thuringians, or slaughter them by the sword, or turn them into slavery if I only had neighbors and suburbs in which they could be accommodated.

This concerns attacks by the Thuringians, who crossed the Danube between Passau and Vienna and raided and pillaged Roman cities in Austria.

The Thuringians had apparently lost their fear for the Huns. They certainly knew of Attila's hostility towards Rome and may therefore have seen good allies in the Huns for even more profitable raids.

The Huns had not forced the Thuringians to join their alliance, Moreover, Attila's army went further south, below Thuringia to the west. The Thuringians were therefore voluntary allies of the Huns. When Attila died in 453, Edekon, the then Thuringian prince and commander in chief, managed to assert himself against Attila's successor and he was able to begin to build up his great empire. It is not known whether he received help from other peoples who had been his allies under Attila, it is quite possible and reasonable that groups of Alans and Huns joined the successful Thuringians - this was not an unusual behavior at the time.

The researcher Wolfgang Haubrichs sees in the Theruingi-Thoringi case a linguistic problem. He thinks that because 't' and 'th' would be '* þ' in Germanic, Terwingen (also Teruingi) was not likely. (But Ammianus Marcellinus writes the name with 'h': Theruingi).

It may be that Heike Grahm-Hoek's thesis cannot be fully understood linguistically, but that does not weaken the historical derivation to such an extent that it should be rejected.

It may even be reinforced by the old Thuringian law, the *Lex Thoringorum*; which, according to Graem-Hoek, contains traces that differ from Frankish law and are rather based on Visigothic law; whether the Thuringian participation in the alliance of the Gothic king Theoderich against the expanding Franks has anything to do with it is unknown - Theoderic's niece Amalaberga married the Thuringian prince Herminafrið as a seal of this alliance.

Gothic-Thuringian relations had already existed earlier; Members of Thuringian and Gothic ruling families sometimes have identical names and this indicates genealogical connections.

Archaeological finds and place names that end in '-lev' or '-leben' are clear indications that there was an early exchange between Southern Scandinavia and Thuringia; that will probably have been the Anglii who had joined the Thuringians. Archaeological finds also point to regular contacts with the north.

In many places on the Internet and in other (especially German) reading it can be read in these and similar words: "Sarmatian settlements can also be found in Thuringia". Because no sources are mentioned in that context, during the research for this article it was searched for them. Because that search was unsuccessful, inquiries were made in specialist forums and specialist circles. The final comment from one of the experts stands for all feedback:

[...] So: There are indications of any kind of cultural transfer from Sarmatians to Thuringia, but no known settlements."

Whoever made the remark about Sarmatian settlements in Thuringia, it turned out to be 'fake news'.

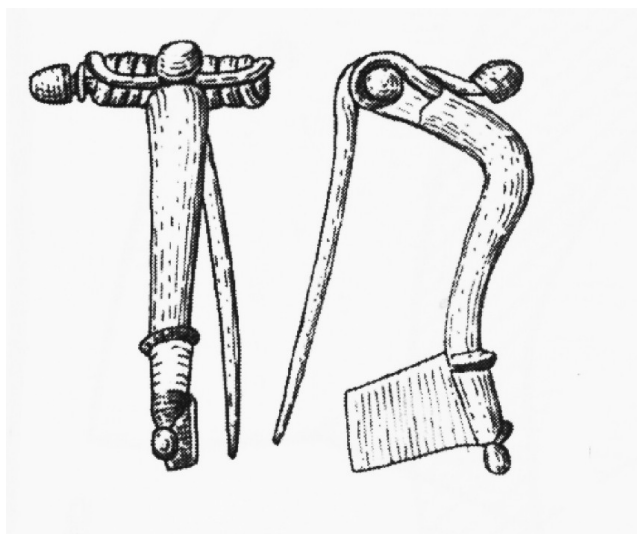


Illustration: Brooch Sarmatian style, found on a burial ground near Schlotheim, southern Harz

Source: Sigrid Dušek, Tafel 10

In 1948, a skeleton with an artificially deformed skull was found near Ingersleben in the Thuringian district of Gotha. From an archaeological point of view, this is likely to be an adult woman, since only women with deformed skulls are known in Central Germany during the migration period. (However, the interpretation is not certain). In the steppes between the northern Black Sea and the northern Caucasus, the custom of skull deformation was part of the culture

of the steppe dwellers of the 3rd and 4th centuries. Apparently there were women of the steppe people married to the Thuringians. Because it would be possible for families of the Sarmatians to live in Thuringia, this find could indicate Sarmatians; the Huns knew this habit too, but since the Hunnic army under Attila moved much more south through Europe, a Hunnic skull is less likely - yet, in this context, Hunnic families who joined the Thuringians after Attila's death is a possibility here that should not be ruled out.

Similar deformed skulls (see above) were found in Merovingian burial grounds from the migration period in Gaul, which are interpreted as the customs of Asian steppe peoples; this may be seen in the actual presence of Sarmatian families there.

Huns

And then the Huns infested Western Europe ...

A large part of the remaining Sarmatian population of the Carpathian Basin was compelled to join the Hunnic Alliance, partly they formed the agricultural basis for the Huns and provided them with auxiliary troops. Archaeological studies have shown that the Sarmatian cultural traditions have been preserved among the settlement population.

In addition, the Huns, on their westward move, incorporated several Germanic peoples (Ostrogoths, Skires, Thuringians, Gepids, Markomanni, Suebi, Quades, Heruli, Rugians, Burgundians and (some) sub-peoples of the Franks who lived in areas on the right bank of the Rhine) and Sarmatians in middle - and Western Europe to join their army, some of that was forced, some did that voluntarily - the alternative was extermination and death. And thus, in the decisive big battle in France, Germanics fought against Germanics, Sarmatians against Sarmatians and even Huns against Huns, because the Roman military leader Aetius also had Huns in his army who did not want to submit to the leader family to which Attila belonged.

After Attila and his army lost the decisive battle in northern France, his retreat from Northern Italy and his death, only a part of the Huns retreated later to Eastern Europe and probably partly even further to the east. The Germanics returned to their residential areas, and many Huns and Sarmatians from the Hunnic army may have remained in Western, Central and Eastern Europe at the latest after Attila's death in 453, when the union of the Huns fell apart; rival Germanic peoples who had lost many fighters during the war could use the experienced and feared fighters of Sarmatian and Hunnic peoples very well in their lines. These groups were probably small enough to pose no danger to their hosts.

Depending on the area, they slowly merged into the respective Germanic or Gallic populations. Corresponding grave finds underline this.

There were also groups of warriors from the Hunnic union who joined the armies of the Byzantine emperor.

In any case, many groups of Sarmatians and Germanics were further pushed towards each other in the last phase of the Hunnic migration, it can hardly be any other than that there was further mixing among them. Again, this cannot be proven conclusively.

Dracones

From "At Elder Shrines", p. 176:

Units of Sarmatian rider-warriors together with their entourage were called Dracones, in the Roman army a regiment of 500 of these riders would have formed such a unit. They apparently could be recognized by their commander who was followed by one of his men, who carried a dragon's head made of metal on a long pole. A dragon's head

of such a 'Draco standard' was found at the German town Neuwied, northwest of Koblenz, where in the 2nd century a Roman fort was built; that find could have belonged to a Sarmatian unit serving in the Roman army. As a Roman standard, it can be traced exactly down to the horse-peoples such as the Sarmatians. These Draco standards are even documented as had been carried by Carolingian cavalry in the 9th century. It is presumed that among the Sarmatian peoples a "Draco" was a group of warriors, perhaps a 'sworn community', together with their women, children, servants and half-free servants.

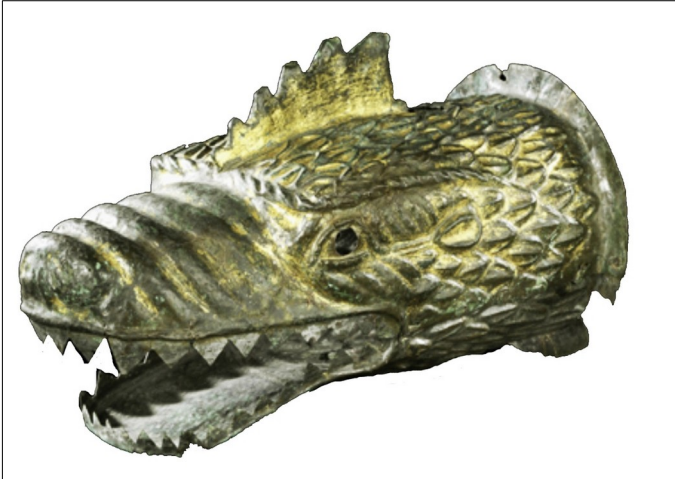


Illustration: Part of a sarmatian Draco-standard

Source: Jost, Cliff A., *Welterbe Limes: Der Limes in Rheinland-Pfalz, Koblenz, 2014, cover picture*

Authors from Classical Antiquity have often compared the heavy armored Sarmatian lancers to dragons; in battle these at high-speed attacking riders with their armor and long lances must have been a terrible sight for the enemy, which infantry had little to oppose with.

The Roman military administration also recruited many warriors from the Sarmatian

peoples; first, because they were trained to use the dreaded composite bow - because these warriors with this weapon were as good as the Sassanids, they were used in the wars against the Sassanid Empire. These "eastern" troops were also deployed in Western Europe, where they participated in the border defense against attacking Germanics. Many of them stayed there permanently and married Germanic women, not only from the direct area, but even those who lived much further away (see the quote from Ulla Lund Hansen below).

In the 4th century, many Roman cohorts had a dragon standard as a field symbol. It is quite possible that they have adopted this from the Sarmatians.

In Britain, after the withdrawal of the Roman army, the Draco standard and the dragon head symbol were taken over and used by Celts and later also by the Anglo-Saxons. Perhaps this can be explained by the presence of armored Sarmatian warriors in Roman military service on Hadrian's Wall. Some historians suspect that the dragons in the coats of arms of Wessex, Wales and other British ruler dynasties are derived from Sarmatian Draco standards.

The Sarmatian Religion

The only reference to a Sarmatian pantheon is a 5th-century writer's note that in the Alan language, the name of today's city of Feodosia in the Crimea was "Ardabda" at the time, meaning "seven gods". This is in line with the old Indo-Iranian tradition of worshiping seven gods, a practice that is also said to have been a characteristic of the Scythian religion. The actual composition of a Sarmatian pantheon is unknown - we don't even know if the different Sarmatian peoples worshiped the same gods. Perhaps it is about one of these seven gods when Ammianus Marcellinus writes that a deity comparable to Roman Mars would be worshiped by the Alans in the form of a bare sword driven into the earth. This ritual is sometimes interpreted as the establishment of the Mundi axis, which connects the world of men with the world of the gods, and is also said to have served as the confirmation of an oath. Such an interpretation is confirmed by information about the Scythians,

who had a similar ritual; but the Scythians used special fixed altars, the complete absence of which was noted by the classical writers among the Sarmatians. Therefore, the religious practices of the Sarmatians had a more nomadic character that also suited their nomadic way of life. In general, it may well apply to the religions of the horserider peoples from the steppes that the worship of horses, gods of war, gods of the sun, fire and a Heavenly Father was very important. They do not seem to have used temples or similar buildings of worship and there are but few images of deities. That may have been due to their nomadic way of life.



It cannot be determined whether the Sarmatian peoples worshiped exactly the same gods as the Scythians who lived before in the same area, at least in 459 Herodotus mentions some Scythian gods, each of whom he equates with a Greek deity:

Tabiti (= Hestia) – highest goddess

Papaios (= Zeus)

Api (= Gaia) – wife of Papaios

Oitosyros (= Apollon)

Argimpasa oder Artimpasa (= Aphrodite Urania)

Thagimasadas (= Poseidon)

Illustration: This golden picture of a Scythian goddess - probably Tabiti - made in Greece was made as a pendant. It's actually no bigger than a thimble.

Source: Kathryn Hinds, p. 41

The names of some gods are also known from the myths and legends of the Ossetians, who are considered to be descendants of the Alans, such as. Chazuar, supreme god, Vayu, god of the winds and Sapha, patron of the holy hearth fire. It is unknown whether these gods were worshiped by Sarmatians in Europe; it is also possible that after giving up their nomadic way of life - there was little room for this in Europe - they would devote themselves to the gods of the respective region they

lived in. Like so many aspects of this subject, such considerations cannot rise from the level of airy speculation.

Ammianus Marcellinus (31,2,23) reports on religion and prediction among the Sarmatians:
Nor is there any temple or shrine seen in their country, nor even any cabin thatched with straw, their only idea of religion being to plunge a naked sword into the ground with barbaric ceremonies, and then they worship that with great respect, as Mars, the presiding deity of the regions over which they wander.

They presage the future in a most remarkable manner; for they collect a number of straight twigs of osier, then with certain secret incantations they separate them from one another on particular days; and from them they learn clearly what is about to happen.

Charles Duke Yonge translation

Like Gaulish and Germanic peoples, Sarmatians have also been Christianized. The "Ecumenical Encyclopedia of Saints" mentions a St. Alan from the 7th century, whose name, as is stated there, means "the Alan" and refers to the Sarmatian people. And there is the view that St. Amandus of Maastricht (7th century) is also of Sarmatian origin.

Sarmatians and the Arthur-Legend

Was there already a lot of speculation so far, this section is really a hot topic in that context, especially in the English-speaking areas ...

The stories or legends or myths about King Arthur can be classified in England at the end of the Roman and beginning of the post-Roman era, shortly before the Angli, Saxons and Jutes started in larger groups to emigrate to England. At first side, this section may hardly straight away have anything to do with 'Germanics', unless as enemies, because Arthur fought (also) against Saxons who invaded England - one may think here of the mythical figures of the Hengist and Horsa - but it is generally considered that there was indeed already battling against Saxons at the time.

Arthur's troops are said to have also carried a dragon banner with them - whether that is an echo of the Sarmatian 'Draco' remains to be seen - in any case, it would fit into a 'Sarmatian-Arthur connection theory'. There are various researchers who have dealt with this connection.

In his book "Arthurian Figures of History and Legend" the author Frank D. Reno writes in the preface:

The purpose of this text is to clarify the distinction between Arthurian folklore and history ...

In the beginning of the book the author also writes:

Although Monmouth's "Arthur" and "Pendragon" were shams, C. Scott Littleton and Linda Malcor offer strong archaeological, geographical, and chronological evidence that there indeed was an Arthur in Britain near the end of the second century. His full name was Lucius Artorius Castus, a Roman praefect of VI Legion Victrix, comprised of Sarmatian troops and assigned by Rome to defend the frontier of Britain at Hadrian's Wall. The word "Sauromatae" is most likely translated as "lizard people," tying the "prominent role played by lizards (or dragons) into the symbolism associated with the Arthurian legends." Their probability is based upon the ancient bas-relief of a Sarmatian warrior carrying a serpentine banner, a ven-erated creature of the Sarmatian tribe which no doubt became the dragon insignia of Artorius and his troops, and later spread as the symbol for the Roman cavalry.

Reno, p. 6, 7

The American anthropologist and mythologist Scott Littleton (1933-2010) and the researcher Linda A. Malcor wrote in their book "From Scythia to Camelot: A Radical Reassessment of the Legends of King Arthur, the Knights of the Round Table, and the Holy Grail" conceivable historical connections between the Arthurian tales and the presence of Sarmatian horsemen in Britain. The short description of the book reads:

This work challenges scholarly wisdom concerning the origins of the legends of King Arthur and the Holy Grail. The authors assert that the Arthurian and Holy Grail traditions did not derive from Celtic folklore and mythology, but rather from the folklore and mythology of the peoples of ancient Scythia (modern South Russia and Ukrainian Steppes). The authors argue that this folklore was carried to Britain and Gaul from the Steppes by Alan and Sarmatian tribes during the final days of the Roman Empire. They also demonstrate that several key figures in the legends, including the Fisher King and the Maimed Kings are based on historical individuals who lived during the early years of the 5th century. This book presents an analysis of the origins and developments of the Arthurian legends.

The authors argue that the stories about the Knights of the Round Table also go back to the heavily armored Sarmatian lancers:

The Welsh name Arthyr is derived from the Roman Artorius. While no Artorius is attested at the time in which Arthur is said to have lived (ca. 500), there is some reason to suspect that the name Arthur itself, which has always posed problems from the standpoint of Celtic etymology, derived from the name of the Roman commander to whom the Iazgyes were initially assigned: Lucius

Artorius Castus, prefect of the VI Legion Victrix, which was charged with defending the northern frontier against the depredations of the Picts and other Caledonian tribes living beyond Hadrian's Wall. A career soldier of the equestrian class who hailed from Campania, Castus had served in Upper Pannonia and was intimately acquainted with the fighting abilities of his new lazygian recruits.

Littleton, p. 62

It would go far beyond the scope of this article to present the evidence and the related arguments of Littleton, Malcor and Reno - the reference to the corresponding works in the literature list at the end must suffice.

The authors also point out numerous parallels between elements of the Arthurian legend and the myths of the Nart people. These myths are a collection of sagas of the Ossetians (and some neighboring ethnic groups) that deal with the 'Narts', a mythical people of gods, demigods and / or heroes - 'Nart' means either 'hero' or 'giant'. They are also seen as 'mythical ancestors' who casually could travel between 'heaven' and 'earth' and also have their homes in both places.

In any case, there are several elements in the aforementioned Nart myths that, admittedly, with a little or a some more imagination, can make one think of the Arthurian stories. An example:
At first those present were stunned and listened to Batrad's voice, but when he finished they started to whisper uneasily. And they said to each other: "The stag came to the ax by itself!"
"He came by himself - why hesitate for a long time!" And they began to consider what death they should give Batrads. Batrads listened to them in silence.

Suddenly a very old man appeared from the crowd of people who had come to pay his last respects to the dead man and asked: "Where is his horse, where is it! Say, it me, where's his horse?"

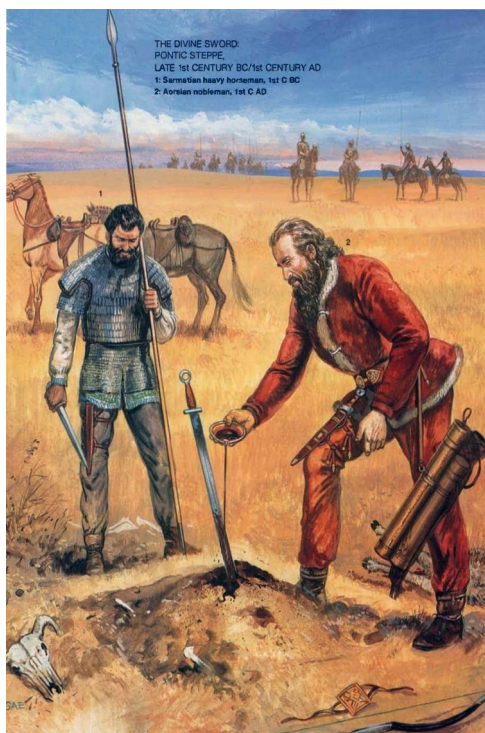
"It stays over there. He rammed his spear into the ground and tied it to it," he was answered.

"Before you talk about his death," said the old man, "first pull out the spear and lead the horse aside!"

So they did it. But whoever tackled Batrad's spear, alone or together, could not even move it.

"How are you going to kill a man whose spear you can't even pull out of the earth?" asked the old man.

Translated from André Sikojev, S. 213



This story reminds us of the Excalibur sword that not even the strongest men could pull out of the stone, except for Arthur in his day.

There are several versions that tell of Batrad's death. One version says that he can only die if his sword is thrown into the Black Sea. There is a resemblance to Excalibur, which was thrown back into the lake after Arthur's death, where it came from.

Illustration: Holy sword ritual with the Sarmatians

Source: The Sarmatians, 600 B.C.-A.D. 450

By the way: The stuck sword called Gramr, is a motif that also occurs elsewhere, such as in Norse mythology, where Odin had stuck a sword into an apple tree in the hall of Volsung with the indication that only the one for whom it

was intended could pull it out. Sigmund, grandson of Volsung and Sigurd's father, manages to pull the sword out of the apple tree.

In the Nart myths there is also a large magical bowl called Nartymonga, which is used on their banquets and, after being emptied, fills up automatically. Only the most impeccable heroes are allowed to drink from it. This bowl can be compared to the grail in the Arthurian legends, from which only the noblest knights are allowed to drink. According to old texts, it was supposed to have been brought from Rome to Britain by a certain 'Alan' (from the Alanic people?).

A connection is also seen between Arthur's Excalibur sword and a Sarmatian ritual in which a drawn sword is thrust into the ground or into a pile of wood to honor by that the god of war of their settlement. (See the Ammianus quote above).

And finally, the Sarmatian sub-people of the Kalybes were known for their unique blacksmithing. In the context of this section, there is the thought that this name could have a connection with Caliburn (Excalibur), the sword of Arthur.

It is not known whether some of the Saxons, when they invaded Roman Britain together with the Franks at the end of the 3rd century, remained and became part of the population there - after they were defeated by the Romans they may have fled in all directions - it seems likely that not all were able to escape to Gaul by ship.

Later Saxon incursions led to land taking and ultimately, not without battles, these have remained and may have mixed with the surrounding population and by that also some culture may have been exchanged.

The Greek researcher and author Periklis Deligiannis writes e.g. for Greek history magazines. In 2006, he wrote an article titled (from Greek in English translated) "King Arthur, Arthurian Legend and the Sarmatian connection" A quote:

In 175 CE Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius settled thousands of Sarmatian cavalry mercenaries in Britain. Two centuries later, the Western Roman Empire withdrew its legions from the island. It appears that the independent "Roman-British kingdom" has maintained its unity and coherence, but soon afterwards it was stroke by the ruthless Anglo-Saxon invasion. The Sarmatians mingled with the Celtic and Roman-British populations and took the lead in countering the "barbarians". There is a strong possibility that this Sarmatian presence in Britain provided the historical background to the legend of King Arthur and his Knights from the Round Table.

So there are reasonably certain historical events that several researchers agree on, and their interpretations are similar.

Sarmatians in the North?

The source situation for the Sarmatians, who settled permanently between the Alps and the North and Baltic Seas, is extremely sparse, as is the general source situation for Lower Germany and northern regions in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, i.e. after the Roman era.

During the Big Migration, many members of ethnic groups from the Sarmatians and Huns remained in the area of what is now Germany. Sarmatians have also settled on 'Germanic' soil before; For example, the Gallo-Roman civil servant and poet Ausonius mentioned in his work "Mosella" from 371 a village in the Moselle valley where Sarmatian farmers lived. And the researcher and emirate professor at the University of Copenhagen Ulla Lund Hansen states:

In addition, there is much in favor for the thought that women from southern Scandinavia - especially from Zealand and Funen - sometimes got married to men from these distant areas, presumably to secure alliances, trade and other contacts.

[...] Central Europe is a conglomerate of connections between Romans and Germanics, between peoples of the Germanics,, between Sarmatians and Romans and probably also

between Sarmatians and Germanics. The contacts trend not only from south to north, but also from east to west, from west to east and indeed also from north to south.

Translated from Ulla Lund Hansen in: Claus von Carnap-Bornheim, S. 357, 366

One could happily speculate more about possible influences that such personal contacts and connections with Sarmatians in northern Germany and southern Denmark could have had, but since it probably does not affect large groups of Sarmatians, the influence can have been very little, if at all.

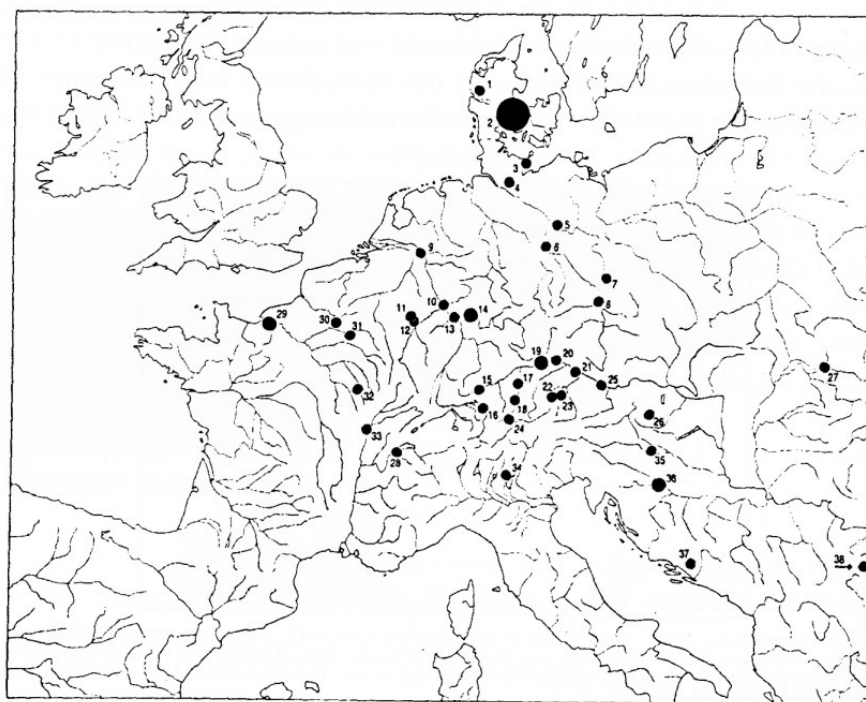
The other way around, that is to say Saxons, who have stayed in southern regions, in areas where there were also Sarmatians, have already existed:

There were also Saxons who had settled along the Gallic Channel coast, who had joined forces with Aetius' army. [...] ... among the soldiers of Armorica, who had been included in Clovis' army, were Alans, Gallo-Roman magnates and their followers, former Roman soldiers and their descendants who had retained their military organization, Bretons, imperial military colonists (laeti), and smaller groups of Saxons, who had been previously allied themselves with the Roman Emperor and had settled in the corresponding area. [...] Who exactly these Saxons were is unclear, in any case, in the second half of the 5th century, presumably around 463/465, they had occupied several islands in the river Loire.

From: At Elder Shrines, different pages

It is not known whether these Saxons maintained connections with their relatives in northern Germany, whether there were supplies and loot was sent to relatives. Then Sarmatian influences in the military and in the arts and crafts could have come north, all the more so since it concerned probably only Saxon warrior groups and not whole families. But that cannot be more than mind games.

Archaeological finds probably point to Sarmatian influences in southern Scandinavia, but it is not known whether these are direct or indirect connections.



Map: Find places of ring pommel swords; these are assigned to the Sarmatians and were used from the 1st to the beginning of the 3rd century CE.

Source: Claus von Carnap-Bornheim, S. 358

In her treatise "Sarmatische Einflüsse in Südschweden?" (Sarmatian Influences in Southern Scandinavia?) The author Ulla Lund writes:

The distance between southern Scandinavia and the areas where Sarmatians lived was long, but not bigger than, for example, between southern

Scandinavia and southern Gaul.

Against the background of this huge distance, the question arises how and why sarmatian influences in Northern Europe and Southern Scandinavia were able to assert themselves. If one

considers that southern Scandinavia, for example, had Roman imports from Italy and southern Gaul, this spatial distance was not an obstacle to close connections.



In order to pursue this question further, two interesting find groups can be analyzed in southern Scandinavia: weapon-sacrifice finds and grave finds, both from a period from the middle of the 2nd to the 4th century. Within these find groups, several object groups have parallels in Southeast Europe. [...] They are jewelry, weapons and equestrian equipment and piston-shaped gold arm rings (the earliest examples of which are Sarmatian; weapons - especially ring pommel swords (here, too, the earliest are Sarmatian; chain armor (the earliest are known from Southeast Europe; [...] ... means that some southern Scandinavian finds such as piston arm rings, ring pommel swords and maybe even chain armor could be interpreted as traces of a Sarmatian influence on men's equipment, it also means that a number of other objects - in this case only such from the women's outfit - show connections with the northeastern region of the Sarmatians.

Translated from Claus von Carnap-Bornheim, p. 356-369

As far as I know, there are no studies on the possible effects of the Sarmatians or their culture on the population of southern Scandinavia.

Illustration: Sarmatian ring pommel sword

Source: Auf Anfrage als Emailanhang bekommen von AncientWeaponry

Loki: Sarmatian origin?

The French linguist, historian of religion and anthropologist Georges Dumézil (1898–1986) was best known for his analyzes of Indo-European societies and religions. It was this well-known researcher who saw a connection between the Nordse god Loki and Syrdon from the Nart myths of the Ossetians, see above.

Dumézil sees in the devious Syrdon (also: Sirdon) a progenitor of the tricky Loki from Norse mythology. For example, both have in common that they can transform into animals and other 'human figures'. And he also sees a parallel between Syrdon and Soslan on the one hand and Loki and Balder on the other - Syrdon causes Soslan's death, Loki den Balders.

For decades, Dumézil's view has been accepted almost without reservation, but several critical voices have since arisen.

In the following, some who are familiar with Norse mythology may see parallels with the Nart myths ... and may then decide for themselves whether they follow Dumézil here or rather his critics.

Soslan was as a boy at the request of his mother hardened in milkweed by the sky smith; wherever the milkweed had touched him, he was invulnerable. But because Syrdon's trickery made Soslan's cradle too small, he had to bend his knees and they stayed above the poured milkweed and only at these points did Soslan remain vulnerable.

Syrdon was the son of a Nart woman and a 'master of the rivers' and is despised by the others as a bastard. Still, they often follow his advice. Syrdon, however, is often hostile to even criminal against other Narts.



Sirdon grew up to be a cunning and devious man. He often cheated and lied to the Narts. It thus happened that he lived with them in constant quarrels and wrangle. The Narts hated his duplicity and devious nature, but they soon got used to him, so they soon found it unusual not to have him around. Sirdon avoided difficult work. He much preferred to lie on his back and let the sun shine on his belly or walking around and listen to the conversations of the Narts. He watched her doing their day's work and soon knew everyone's weaknesses and fault

Translated from André Sikojev, p. 250

Illustration: The Nart Soslan

Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Soslan.jpg>

Sirdon and Soslan were enemies, this is how that happened:

One day Sirdon led his son to the Narts and said: "He should serve you as a target for your arrows - shoot at

him with your bows. If anyone succeeds in striking him - well, it should be my fate. But if you cannot wound him, each of you must pay me a bull from his farm as a price!" Sirdon was a man full of greed. Nothing was too bad for him to get some extra property. The Nartian youths agreed and started shooting arrows at Sirdon's son. From morning to night, day after day, they tried to strike him, but not a single arrow touched the boy. So many days passed. Sirdon laughed at the Narts and began to lead the won bulls from the farms.

But then Soslan suddenly returned from a long march. When the Nartian youths found out, they went to Soslan and told him what game Sirdon had imposed on them. Soslan also wanted to take part in the shooting. The Nartian youths surrounded Soslan so that Sirdon could not recognize him, and they approached the son of Sirdon together at the distance of an archery shot. Soslan shot only one arrow at the boy and - that's how it should be for all of you damned !! - the boy fell dead to the ground. But Sirdon took his son in his arms, carried him out of the crowd, built a grave for him, and buried him.

Since that day, Soslan and Sirdon have been bitter enemies.

Translated from André Sikojev, p. 94

Sirdon makes a significant contribution to Soslan's death, but Soslan has already gotten himself into it. The daughter of the "Mighty One of Heaven", Balsag, is in love with Soslan, comes down from the sky and begs Soslan to marry her. But he pushes her back with the roughest words, like:

"If I married all homeless girls, I would soon have no place in my house myself!"

And:

"I have seen a lot and know that the pigs also love to wallow in the mud. If Soslan would have made them all his wives, his bright steel would have turned into black iron a long time ago!"

Translated from André Sikojev, p. 130

The girl's father is very angry when he hears what has happened and sends his Magic Wheel, a heavenly power, out to kill Soslan. However, this fails several times until Sirdon leads the Wheel and Soslan gets his legs cut off at the knees and dies.

The British historian Raymond Ian Page (1924-2012) expresses his clear criticism of Dumézil in the following words:

.... he tends to ignore aspects of a myth (or perhaps a story about a myth) that do not support his claims about it. He highlights details that go beyond their natural meaning and draws a general conclusion from a single example. And he is not always competent or perhaps not willing to distinguish between a presumption and a fact that has been secured. All of this seems - for his opponents, of course - a lighthearted way to handle evidence.

Translated from Yvonne S. Bonnetain, p. 122

This criticism certainly also refers to the Loki-Syrdon comparison.

Finally: Some concluding notes

Much has been written about the history of Europe during the centuries around the start of the Common Era, and separated emphasized topics easily fill each an entire book. Even in a somewhat longer article like this, all of this can only be mentioned briefly, some things not at all. For example, there would be to tell a lot more about the ethnogenesis and captivating development of peoples such as the Thuringians, Alemanni etc. and their contacts among each other.

Corresponding extremely shortened comments on comprehensive processes often lead to distortions. This is usually unavoidable, and should therefore be reason enough to find out more and not just stick with what is said here. The short literature list below is a good start.

The migration of the Sarmatians from east to west is today considered a historical fact. The basis of this thesis is complicated: The Iranian connection of all those populations on the northeastern edge of the ancient world is too weak to conclude from this that the existence of an ancient ethnos ... No ancient text tells the story of a contemporary Sarmatian mass resettlement.

Anca Dan, p. 97–134

In fact, it seems that only relatively small groups of Sarmatians have settled in Central- and Western-Europe; strong enough to defend itself effectively, i.e. to be able to exist, but not so big that they completely ousted other ethnic groups. Small is meant relatively, it may have been many hundreds to several thousands per group. The impetus for this may have come mainly from the Roman army. From a military point of view, they would probably have been able to control the immediate surroundings of their settlements, but they do not seem to have wanted and done this - being surrounded by enemies makes permanent settlements too dangerous in the long run. Instead, they seem to have been accepted in their environment and ultimately have intermixed with them, and this may indicate good contacts and exchange.

There are no reasons in the historical sources to assume a mass migration of Sarmatian peoples to Central and Western Europe; So nothing in the size of the Vandal migration or the settlement of the Thuringians. That means no permanent Sarmatian people in these areas - after a few generations the descendants were Gauls or Germans with a Sarmatian migration background. Nothing more.

The language of the Sarmatian peoples is classified into the Iranian language group, but ... *However, even the linguists who have tried to give the most advanced and coherent reconstructions of the Sarmatian language or languages have had to admit that no certain distinction can be made today between the different languages of the ancient Eurasian steppe; we can only guess the*

mixture of Iranian and other Indo-European, Finno-Ugric, or Turkic elements in the linguistic haze of northern Eurasia during the first millennium BC and the first millennium AD.

Anca Dan p. 101, 102

There are Germanic personal names that show traces of Sarmatian influence and, to a small extent, there is also a linguistic influence of Sarmatian in loan words. In this area there is still plenty of scope for further investigations. So far there are no reports on the effects of this influence.

The Swiss historian Urs Müller concludes in his dissertation "Der Einfluss der Sarmaten auf die Germanen" (The influence of the Sarmatians on the Germans):

There have been evidenced contacts between Sarmatians and Germanic tribes. This was the prerequisite for a possible influence, which also took place. [...] The influence was probably greatest in the military field, followed by that of the handicrafts.

Translated from Urs Müller, p. 162

Mixed marriages should be added to this; understandably, only those of which are documented at the highest princely level, but many others have certainly followed this example. However, the influence associated with this is not measurable, there are no studies available. In general, Katharine Reynolds Brown e.a. in the subchapter on Germanic kingdoms in the 5th century in "From Attila to Charlemagne" write:“:

The continuity of provincial populations and institutions in the West during this movement of peoples differed from area to area, and depended on the numbers as well as the willingness of the newcomers to assimilate. These included groups of Eurasian origin, such as Huns, Sarmatians, and Alans. Primarily, however, they were groups of Germanic origin.

Reynolds Brown, Katharine e.a., p. 44

The conclusion at the end of this article can only be sobering:

Even if all the speculations mentioned above were correct, there is hardly any measurable evidence of a Sarmatian influence on Germanic peoples. Sarmatians may have brought part of their culture and war tradition to the Gauls and Germanic tribes, but it is not possible to determine, except in the conduct of the war and perhaps in the arts and crafts, exactly what consequences this influence had.



Illustration: Eagle brooch. Found at Oßmannstedt (a village northeast of Weimar in Thuringia) in the grave of a Gothic noblewoman. (5th century CE).

Source: Jan Bemann, p. 26

An example of the influence of handicrafts is the eagle brooch in the picture shown here. In addition, the Museum of Prehistory and Early History of Thuringia provides the information that Eastern Goths had adopted this eagle motif from the 'Scythian' Sarmatians.

In their new Gallic or Germanic homelands, the many Sarmatians must have assimilated to the people around them and not vice versa. In the process, they will probably have left a 'genetic imprint' through mixed marriages, which also does not (yet?) seem to be measurable.

What was the everyday life of an Alemannic, Thuringian, Frankish, etc. 'average family' in Late Antiquity? And how that of a Sarmatian family? And how was this 'Germanic' everyday life like with more intensive social interactions with the Sarmatian family? Were there any changes? Unfortunately, we cannot answer any of these questions, although especially that would give the title of this article even more content. Hence, we have to leave that to the novelists.

There is no doubt that many uncertainties and views were not mentioned and many questions remain that the author could not answer immediately, if at all. For example, he cannot answer the question of whether Sarmatians can also be substantiated in Lower Saxony or whether there is at least some evidence to support this.

Although in this article the possible influences of Sarmatian peoples on Germanic peoples was the topic, a large part of the article provides the history, probable history and presumed history of the expiring Antiquity and Late Antiquity of Europe, and especially that of Central and Western Europe; that was inevitable. For more of this kind of regional history, the author recommends his book "At Elder Shrines".

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