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## THE HISTORY OF THE EMERGENCE OF THE SAVROMATO-SARMATIAN TRIBES BASED ON WRITTEN AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA

Abstract

*Sauromats inhabited Western Kazakhstan and the southern part of the Urals, along the Zhayyk and Volga rivers in the VI-V centuries BC. Then, in the IV-III centuries BC, they moved to the northern part of the Caspian Sea. This tribe was originally called Savromat, then renamed Sarmat. Therefore, scientists are divided in opinion: some consider them to be one tribal union, while others consider them to be different tribes. Of course, this is a separate topic for discussion. This article is devoted to the history of the origin of the Savromato-Sarmatian tribe. The history of the emergence of the Sauromato-Sarmatians is one of the urgent problems. In the writings of Herodotus, the mythical side of the origin of the Savromati tribe is mentioned. And also, some scientists, relying on the data of archaeological research, consider the Sauromato-Sarmatians as heirs of the tribes of the Bronze Age. This article examines the origin of the Savromat- Sarmatian tribes based on ancient sources and articles written later.*

**Key words:** *Savromats, Sarmatians, Western Kazakhstan, written data, archaeological data, nomads, burial grounds, barrow, culture.*

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## ЖАЗБА ЖӘНЕ АРХЕОЛОГИЯЛЫҚ ДЕРЕКТЕР НЕГІЗІНДЕ САВРОМАТ-САРМАТ ТАЙПАЛАРЫНЫҢ ШЫҒУ ТЕГІ

Аңдатпа

*Савромат-сармат тайпасы б.з.д. VI-V ғасырларда Орал тауының оңтүстігі, Жайық, Еділ өзендері бойы және Батыс Қазақстан аймағында өмір сүріп, б.з.д. IV-III ғасырларда Каспий теңізінің солтүстігіне қарай қоныс аудара бастаған көшпелі тайпалардың бірі. Тарих кітаптарында аталмыш тайпаның бастапқыда савромат кейін сармат деп аталатындығы айтылады. Сондықтан ғалымдардың кейбірі савроматтар мен сарматтарды бір тайпа десе кейбірлері екеуі екі бөлек тайпа деген пікірді ұстанады. Бұл әрине өз басына бөлек бір мәселе. Біздер бұл мақаланы, савромат-сармат тайпаларының шығу тегін қарастыруға арнап отырмыз. Негізінен*

савромат-сарматтардың шығу тегі мәселесі түйіні шиеленісіп, басы байланған тақырыптардың бірі десек болады. Дегенмен, Геродоттың еңбегінде келтірілген ақпарлар савромат тайпасының тарих сахнасына қалай шыққандығын мифтік тұрғыдан суреттеп береді. Сонымен қатар, бұл мәселенің түйінін шешу үшін ғалымдардың бір қатары археологиялық зерттеулерге сүйене отырып, савромат-сарматтарды қола дәуірінде өмір сүрген тайпалардың мұрагері ретінде қарастырады. Бұл мақалада савромат – сармат тайпаларының шығу тегі антикалық деректер және кейіңгі кезде жазылған мақалалар негізінде қарастырылған.

**Түйін сөздер:** савромат-сарматтар, Батыс Қазақстан, ежелгі жазба деректер, археологиялық деректер, көшпенділер, қорым, оба, мәдениет.

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## ИСТОРИЯ ВОЗНИКНОВЕНИЯ ПЛЕМЕН САВРОМАТО-САРМАТОВ НА ОСНОВЕ ПИСЬМЕННЫХ И АРХЕОЛОГИЧЕСКИХ ДАННЫХ

### Аннотация

Савроматы обитали Западный Казахстан и южную часть Урала, вдоль рек Яйык и Волги в VI-V вв до.н.э. Затем, в IV-III вв д.н.э переселились в северную часть Каспийского моря. Это племя изначально называлась савромат, затем переименовалась в сармат. Поэтому, ученые разделились во мнениях: одни считают их одним племенным союзом, другие же разными племенами. Это, конечно, отдельная тема для обсуждения. Данная статья посвящена истории происхождения племени савромато-сарматов. История возникновения савромато-сарматов является одной из актуальных проблем. В трудах Геродота упоминается мифическое сторона происхождения племени савроматов. А также, некоторые ученые, опираясь на данные археологических исследований рассматривают савромато-сарматов в качестве наследников племен бронзового века. В этой статье рассматривается происхождение савроматско – сарматских племен на основе античных источников и статей, написанных позднее.

**Ключевые слова:** савроматы, сарматы, Западный Казахстан, письменные данные, археологические данные, кочевники, могильники, курган, культура.

### Introduction.

Savromat-Sarmatian tribes inhabited the territory from the Ustirt, Aktobe, Mangistau steppes to western Kazakhstan, (map 1) from the southern Ural region to the northern Black Sea. This tribe lived next door to the Scythians in the West and the Saks in the South. In the western region of Kazakhstan, there are many burial grounds and burial grounds belonging to the savromat-Sarmatian tribes. These mounds are one of the monuments of ancient agriculture, political and economic relations with neighboring countries, material and spiritual culture.



Map 1 - Savromat-territory of the Sarmatian settlement

According to the natural environment in which the savromat-Sarmatian tribes lived, nomadic and semi-nomadic cattle breeding was carried out. The farm raised a lot of sheep and horses. This is stated by S. Zholdasbayuly in his book as following [1, p.68-70]: "it cannot be said that the first savromats and the last Sarmatians, who occupied a large area from the Ural steppes to the Danube, had the same agriculture everywhere."

Savromat-Sarmatian tribes lived in wintering grounds. They lived in houses dug out of the ground and covered with reeds. There were also houses made of reeds and wood. According to the information provided by S. Zholdasbayuly with reference to Strabo, they had a yurt and chariots. This, in turn, indicates the continuity with modern Kazakh culture. Therefore, it is very important to study and study the origin of this tribe.

### The purpose of the article.

The purpose of writing this article is to study the origins of the Savromat-Sarmatian tribes, which played a huge role in the formation of the Kazakh people on the basis of ancient written sources and archaeological materials. In addition, the second purpose of the article is to emphasize the importance of this community in terms of the history of Kazakhstan by comparing the culture of the savromat-sarmatians with the Kazakh culture.

### Research methodology and methods.

For these purposes, resources were collected by visiting the M.Otemisulu University library, the Olketanu Museum in West Kazakhstan and the Margulan Archaeological Institute in Almaty. Archive materials (excavation reports from the Soviet and Independence years) on the excavation of Sarmatian kurgans were provided from the Olketanu Museum of West Kazakhstan and the Margulan Archaeological Institute in Almaty. Books and articles were obtained from the library of Otemisulu University. And also, material was collected from the fund of the central library of Almaty. A comparative analysis and systematization was carried out. A map related to the article was also prepared.

### Research about the topic.

The first information about this tribe is found in the works of such ancient authors as Herodotus, Strabo, Pseudo-Hippocrates, Pseudoscilac, Eudoxus, Heraclid, Pontinsky and Theophrastus. Especially in Herodotus book "History", there are legendary facts about the origin of the Savromat-Sarmatians. This work is the most ancient source for revealing the content of our topic [1, p.68-70].

Research related to Savromat-Sarmatian Archaeology began in the XIX-XX centuries. As a result of excavations in the regions of the northern Black Sea, the Ural region, the northern Caspian Sea and Kazakhstan, archaeologists have differentiated the spiritual and material culture of this tribe, determined the processes and chronology of cultural development. In particular, B. N. Grakov proposed a general four-stage chronology of the Savromat-Sarmatian tribes, based on the specifics of their burial structures, burial traditions and material world:

1. The savromat period or Blumenfeld - VI-IV centuries BC.
2. Savromat-Sarmatian or Prokhorov period-IV-II Centuries BC.
3. The middle Sarmatian period or Suslov - II BC - II Centuries BC.
4. The late Sarmatian period or Shipov – II – IV centuries BC [2, p.104-106].

Since this proposal is generally supported by the majority, this chronology is taken as a basis in the research papers.

As for the excavations in the west of Kazakhstan and the works published on the theme of Savromat-Sarmatian, the first burial mounds in the west of the country were excavated during Russian Kingdom by members of the "Orenburg scientific archival Commission", whose reports are published in certain issues of the Journal "The works of Orenburg scientific archival Commission" [3, 4, 5]. These reports indicate the diameter, height of the burial mounds, how human skeletons were laid, and what was found. However, there are no drawings or drawings about them.

Excavations that began during Russian kingdom continued in the Soviet period. Most of the excavations of this period were carried out mainly in the former Urals and modern West Kazakhstan region by such scientists as P. S. Rykov [6], G. I. Bagrikov [7], G. A. Kushaev and B. F. Zhelezchikov [8].

G. A. Kushaev published brief reports of the mounds he excavated in some issues of the magazine "archaeological discovery". However, the greatest work of G. A. Kushaev was published in 1993 as a result of excavations carried out for twenty years under the Title "Study of the ancient history of the steppe" [9]. In this monograph, the burial mounds excavated in the Ural region are considered in chronological order, providing valuable information about the early Iron Age and the Middle Ages.

One of the scientists who conducted large-scale research in the Ural region was B. F. Zhelezchikov. Together with this scientist V. A. Kriger, in the 1970s and 1980s, he excavated many burial grounds in such burial grounds as Kos-Oba, Belaya Gora, Kysyk-kamys, Novopavlovka, Tau, Zharsuat and Alabastrova. During these years, research work was also carried out in the Lebedevska necropolis by M. G. Moshkova, B. F. Zhelezchikov and V. A. Kriger. The results of the burial mounds of Kos-Oba, Belaya Gora, Kysyk-kamys, Novopavlovka, Tau, Zharsuat and Alabastrova were published by B. F. Zhelezchikov in the work "archaeological monuments of the Ural region" [10], and the results of the burial mounds of Lebedevka were published by B. F. Zhelezchikov, V. M. Klepikov and I. V. Sergatskov in the work "Drevnost of Lebedevka (VI-II centuries BC, he was appointed as the first president of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Both monographs include mounds dating back to the 5th - 3rd centuries BC. From these monographs, you can get information about the features of the structure of Savromat-sarmatian tombs, their distribution and burial customs.

In the early 70s, archaeological research was also carried out in the Aktobe region. It should be noted that M. K. Kadyrbayev and Z.H.Kurmankulov discovered numerous Savromat-sarmatian burial grounds on the Left Bank of the Elek River, such as Sintas, Bes Oba, Zhalgyz Oba and Kumissai.

These mounds are attributed to savromats, some of the results of which were published in the Journal "The past of Kazakhstan on archaeological sources" [12, p.137-156] and "the remoteness of Eurasia in Scypho – Sarmat time" [13, p.84]. In his article, M. K. Kadyrbayev compared the architecture of tombs and objects found in the Sintas and Bes Oba burial mounds. Thus, it is noted that the characteristic structures of these tombs are similar to those of Uygarak in the Aral Sea region and Shilikty burial ground in the East Kazakhstan region. Therefore, these articles allow us to learn about "tombstones like roofs on Earth".

Research work in Aktobe region was carried out in 1986-2000 under the leadership of S. Y. Gutsalov and A. A. Bisembayev in such burial grounds as Zhamankargaly, Shpaki, Shygys Kuraili, Tselinny, Tanabergen and Akzhar. As a result of the study, S. Y. Gutsalov published many articles, as well as the monograph "The Ancient Nomads of the Southern Ural VII – I centuries BC " [14]. In this monograph, a typology of arrows, swords, daggers, mirrors and ceramics was developed, and a general burial tradition was touched upon.

Although archaeological research in western Kazakhstan slowed down by the end of the Soviet era, it began to revive after independence. In 1999, academician Z. Samashev in Atyrau region, with the

support of the administration and oil companies, excavated the araltobe burial ground and published valuable materials. These materials showed that the mound did not belong to an ordinary person, but to the Savromat-sarmatian King. This mound was published by academician Z. Samashev in the work "Treasures of Steppe leaders, Issyk, Berel, Shilikty, Araltobe" [15, p.160-170].

Another of the rich tombs belonging to the Sarmatian culture was excavated and studied by M. N. Sdykov and Ya.A.Lukpanova in the Taksai necropolis, located in the Terekti District of the West Kazakhstan region. Archaeologists have found gold ornaments made in the "animal style" in this burial site, describing it in the work "ancient nomads of western Kazakhstan (on the example of the Taksai I burial complex) [16].

The above information not only explains the unique place of the Savromat-sarmatian tribes in the history of Kazakhstan, but also shows the high potential of the Savromat-sarmatian tribes in the formation of cultural and spiritual values. From this point of view, it is important to consider the origin of these tribes. Therefore, the author set himself the goal of writing this article. As a result, there are two different views on the appearance of this tribe on the stage of history. After that, this topic was systematically discussed in two chapters: "the origin of the Savromat-sarmatian tribes according to written sources" and "the origin of the Savromat-sarmatian tribes according to archaeological sources".

## **Research results**

### **Origin of the Savromat-sarmatian tribes according to written sources**

Research on the origin of the savromat-Sarmatian tribes dates back to the middle of the XIX century, which was mainly studied by Western scientists. Most of the research was collected by the Turkish scientist Ilhami Durmush in his work "Sarmatians". Since it was not possible to access the original, we decided to give a number of the data provided by Ilhami Durmush below. Ilhami Durmush was one of the first Western researchers to mention the Grotto. Grotto's work, published in 1857, described the Sarmatians as a nomadic tribe, saying that "their customs, tactics of war and determination resemble the Scythians. He speaks one dialect of the Scythian language. Women themselves, like men, clash with their enemies. The Sarmatians, as a result of the merger of the Amazons with the Scythians, must have entered the stage of history." In addition, a scientist named Mordman conducted a study on this topic, referring to his work "Amazon", published in 1862, "how long the Amazons lived on the banks of the Don River in the north of the Caucasus Mountains, when exactly they belonged to the stage of history and the way of life is unknown.

However, the Sarmatian women went hunting with the men. They didn't do much household chores. There is not much difference between the peoples living in the Stavropol region and the way of life of the savromats, who previously lived. Therefore, the Nogais may be the heir to the savromats. They are closer to each other in terms of their settled areas than in terms of their way of life, kinship. In connection with the topic raised, Mommsen was quoted as saying: "the opportunities provided by the vast steppe and nature allowed the various tribes that lived here to form nomadic cattle breeding.

The nomads moved to grassland for animal husbandry. These were the ancestors of the modern Kazakh people. The Scythians in this place belong to the Ural Altai group. Traditions and appearance resemble the peoples of modern Siberia. After the Scythians in the Great Steppe, the Sarmatians entered the stage of history and moved from East to West. Although they are considered relatives of the Persians, they are mostly ethnically mixed tribes."Research on the origin of the Sarmatian tribes of savromat continued until the XIX century. Ilhami Durmush mentioned one of the words of Meyer, a researcher of antiquity, about the Sarmatians. "The Sarmatians, who lived between the Don and Danube rivers, should be closer to the Iranian peoples. But judging by the information given by Heradot and Hypocrates, it is clear that the Sarmatians interacted with the Finnish Mongol peoples in terms of Customs and appearance. In addition, the Sarmatians used some words that were not similar to the Iranian language. Therefore, the Sarmatians are called a mixed people." And the scientist named Minns attributed the Sarmatians to the Ural-Altai group, and Krechmer-to the Iranian peoples [23, p.55].

As we have seen above, a number of researchers of the ethnic origin of the Sarmatians attributed to the Ural Altai and a number of Iranian peoples. Some of them even considered the ancestors of the Kazakh people .

If we look at the written sources, it is clear that initially the Savromats and then the Sarmatians appeared on the stage of history. The name Savromat is first found in the book of the famous Greek historian Heradot. The name Sarmatian can be seen in the works of such ancient authors as Strabo, Pseudo-Hippocrates, Polyene, Pseudoscilac, Eudox, Pseudoscilac, Heraclid, Pontinsky and Theophrastus [1, p.68].



In general, a number of scientists try to determine the origin of the Savromat -sarmatians on the basis of information about the Scythians and Amazons, given in the book of Heradot [17, p.110]. Some of them are found in the monuments of the Bronze Age near the southern Urals and the Volga River.

In addition, in connection with the political events of the 5th and 4th centuries BC, it is assumed that new ethnic elements from the east of the Ural mountains and the Aral Sea influenced the savromat tribes living in the southern Urals and on the banks of the Volga river, hence the emergence of the Sarmatian culture [18, p.169]. Below, on the basis of written and archaeological data, we look at how the savromats and then the sarmatians first appeared on the stage of history.

Although there are several opinions in scientific circles about the origin of the Savromat-sarmatians (for example, B. N. Grakov reports that the savromat tribes appeared after the assimilation of the Meots near Azouly by the Scythians), there are two of them. In the course of our article, only two opinions were expressed. According to the first opinion presented on the basis of the book of Heradot, the Greeks who won the Battle of Fermadon captured the Amazons and boarded three ships and went to the open sea. On the way back to Greece, the Amazons freed themselves from captivity and attacked the Greeks themselves, killing them all. The Amazons, who had never sailed before, could not control the ship, but flew away from the land of the Scythians, flying in the direction of the wind. The Amazons, who came ashore, seized a herd of horses and began to engage in piracy in the country of the Scythians. The Scythians do not know their form, their language. During the war, the Scythians, who examined the corpses of fallen enemies, were convinced that they were fighting with female warriors. After that, the Scythians themselves held a meeting and decided that they should no longer kill the Amazons, but marry young Scythians. After that, friendly relations between the Scythians and the Amazons begin to develop. The Scythians, trying to decide this moment for their own benefit, propose to the Amazons to marry them. This proposal was followed by the words: "we cannot sit with the women in your homes, our customs are different from each other. We throw spears, shoot bows, and ride horses, but we don't know what women do. Your women can't do any of what we say. The woman is busy with her work. The woman sits in a chariot, goes hunting and does not go anywhere else. So we can't agree with them. But if you want to marry us, go and take from your fathers the things that belongs to you, and we will live here in our own way»<sup>1</sup> they answered. The Scythian guys, following what they said, moved from the Azauly (Azov) area (map 1) across the Don River and settled in a three-day zone in the East [17, p.110-115]. Scientists note that this area corresponds to the modern southern Urals. In fact, many graves of female warriors were excavated from the 4th century BC in the Volga region and the southern Urals [19, p.119]. A number of scientists who have considered such archaeological and written data in connection with each other say that the savromats came from the marriage of these Scythians and Amazons. Another point to consider in this part is that it arose on the basis of political events mentioned in written sources. This opinion is expressed not about the origin of the savromats, but about the origin of the Sarmatians or how the Sarmatian culture was formed.

Ilhami Durmush, referring to Hypocrates, wrote that " the Scythians who lived near the Azov Sea were called savromat. He said, " the Daughters of savromat ride a horse, shoot a bow, swing a sword on a horse and fight the enemy. Three people don't get married until they kill. According to traditions, she lives in the same house with her husband, sacrificing one animal. After marriage, he stops riding in case of non-martial law. There is no right breast. After all, mothers heat one device made of bronze and press it to their breasts in infancy. Thus, breast maturation is prevented. All the strength is concentrated in the right shoulder and arm. Savromats live in four-or six-wheeled chariots. Some chariots have two rooms, some have three rooms. It is resistant to rain and snow. The carts are filled with children and women. They are fed by two or three pairs of hornless oxen, and horses travel on horseback. When they find grass for their animals somewhere, they settle there, and when the grass is exhausted, they move back. He eats ripe meat and drinks the mare's milk. It is from this milk that the so-called "Hippace" makes cheese."

Ilhami Durmush, calling the information given by Hypocrates valuable, concluded that " the Savromats are similar to the Huns in terms of their nomadic lifestyle, living in felt houses, engaged in horse and sheep farming, archery on horseback, swinging swords, drinking mare's milk."

Another source quoted by hypocrates is that the Sarmatians spend most of their time on horseback and wear trousers. Based on this information, scientists also drew attention to the fact that the savromats were similar to the Huns in terms of clothing culture [23, p.56].

<sup>1</sup>"according to the law of savromat, no girl can marry without killing her enemy, and some women who fail to fulfill such a duty die of old age as a girl."

As we have already mentioned, several political events took place in Eurasia in the 5th and 4th centuries BC. The most important of them is the war between Darius, King of the Achaemenid Empire in 517 BC, and the massagets living near the island. The massagets, who were defeated in this war, migrated to western Kazakhstan [20, p.32]. In particular, this migration affected the savromat culture, which led to the emergence of the Sarmatian culture [16, p.83; 21, p.70]. After this political event, massaget traditions emerged in western Kazakhstan and the southern Urals. For example, directing the heads of the dead to the South, Group burials, and frequent use of wood in the grave [22, p.28-30]. Although these changes in the southern Urals confirm assumptions about the origin of the Sarmatians, the absence of temples, cross-shaped structures and sculptures characteristic of the Aral region indicates that the savromat culture was influenced only to a certain extent by the massagets. The above information allows us to assume that the savromats and sarmatians are one tribe. The fact that the savromats were sarmatians who lived in the following centuries is widely supported in scientific circles also confirms the above assumption [23, p.49].

### **Origin of the Savromat-sarmatian tribes according to archaeological data**

As we have already mentioned, the second opinion is related to archaeological data. According to this view, the savromats, Andron near the southern Urals and along the Volga River as a result of their integration into the history of the culture of the Kimi (one of the cultures of the Bronze Age in the southern regions of Russia) are considered to have entered the stage. This is stated in the works of such scientists as S. Zholdasbayuly [1, p.70], M. Sdykov [16, p.70], K. F. Smirnov [24, p.192] and T. Sulimirsky [21, p.37]. It is written by S. Zholdasbayuly "according to archaeological research, there is an opinion that the origin of the Savromat-sarmatian tribes is a continuation of the tribes of the time of the Andron and Kimi culture." K. F. Smirnov considered this issue on the basis of burial traditions, burial constructions and anthropological data. In particular, pointing to the fact that the orientation of the heads of the dead to the West, which is characteristic of the Bronze Age, the burial of objects such as chalk, realgar, coal, as well as the laying of organic matter under the dead and the construction of wooden structures on top continued by the savromats, he claimed that this tribe originated on the basis of the culture of the Bronze Age [24, p.182-188]. M. Sdykov noted the savromats living in the southern Ural region as the heirs of the Andron and Kimi culture. It is argued that this can be evidenced by the fact that vessels with ohra, limestone and the sign of the fylfot on the surface, which are characteristic of the Bronze Age, were also used in the savromat period. In addition, the use of Bronze Age burial mounds by the savromats as burial sites is associated with kinship, i.e. inheritance [21, p.70].

### **Conclusion**

In general, the value of ancient written sources and archaeological materials to determine the origin of the savromats and sarmatians is not disputed today. When we look at the information left by Herodotus, it is clear that the savromats are descendants of the Scythians and Amazons. But since ancient times, Herodotus has been criticized for his work and his position on each topic. He was even called the "father of lies" as a nickname. Therefore, we believe that the words of Herodotus about the origin of the savromat-sarmatians should be considered critically. However, in the mounds of the Bronze Age, the discovery of additional graves buried on top of or in the layer of graves belonging to the savromats [24, p.75], as well as the laying of ohra, limestone and dishes with the sign of the fylfot on the surface in accordance with the traditions of the Bronze Age, is a very important information.[16, p.70]. Based on the data, it is logical to consider the savromat-sarmatians to be descendants of tribes that lived in the Bronze Age on the banks of the southern Urals and Volga rivers[25].

Although we welcome the idea that the Sarmatians originated as a result of migration, we believe that it should not be justified only by mandatory migration or occupation. In the formation of sarmatian culture, it is necessary to ignore the cultural relations that took place during the savromat period. Judging from the point of view of cultural relations on this issue, we can say that the savromats went through the process of culturization, preserving their culture. If this view is found to be correct, then it is clear that the tribes called sarmatians are one tribe, because of a number of material and spiritual differences between them and the savromats.

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## ҚАЗАҚСТАН РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫНЫҢ СЫРТҚЫ САЯСАТЫ ОТАНДЫҚ ЗЕРТТЕУШІЛЕР ЕҢБЕКТЕРІНДЕ

Аңдатпа

Мақала тәуелсіздік жылдарындағы Қазақстан Республикасының сыртқы саясатын зерделеуге арналған тарихи-саяси іргелі еңбектерді тарихнамалық тұрғыда саралауға арналған. Авторлар осы бағытта жазылған еңбектерді мәні мен мазмұнына қарай шартты түрде бірнеше топқа жіктейді. Сонымен