



Review Paper

Luristan during the first Millennium B.C.

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Abstract: Luristan is located in the Central Zagros Chains and it plays an important role in the events of the first millennium BC. Therefore, archeological and historical studies of this region lead to a better understanding of the events and the role of Lorestan in this period. The purpose of this research is to investigate the role of Lorestan in the first millennium BC based on historical and archeological sources. This research was done with a descriptive-analytical method with a historical approach. The Results show According to the Assyrian documents, Greek and Roman sources an ethnic group lived in the Zagros Mountains. Their land more probably was bigger than the administrative borders of Lruistan. Presumably, it should be somewhere between the Greater Media and Susa or Chaospes River. Luri is the common language of these peoples in this area.

Keywords: *Luristan, First Millennium B.C, Assyrian Text, Inscription, Annals.*

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Introduction

Luristan Province, also written Lorestan, is a province of western Iran in the Central Zagros Mountains. The name is Luristan means “land of the Lurs”. It covers an area of 28,392 km. The major cities in this province are Khorramabad, Borujerd, Dorud, Aligudarz, Kuhdasht, Azna, Selseleh, Delfan, Dowreh and Pol-e Dokhtar. Khorramabad is the capital city of the province. Luristan is bordered to the north by Markazi and Hamedan provinces, to the south by Khuzestan province, to the east by Isfahan and Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari provinces and to the west by Kermanshah and Ilam provinces (Fig. 1).

The terrain consists chiefly of mountains, with numerous ranges, part of the Zagros chain, running northwest to southeast. The central range has many summits that almost reach the line of perpetual snow, rising to 4000 m and more. Climatically, the province can be divided into three parts: the mountainous regions, such as Boroujerd, Doroud, Azna, Selseleh and Delfan experience cold winters and moderate summers. In the central region, the spring season begins from mid-February and lasts till mid-May. The township of Khorramabad is in this realm. However, southern areas such as Pol-e-Dokhtar and Papi are under the influence of the warm air currents of Khuzestan, have hot summers and relatively moderate winters.

The Zagros Mountains are among the most striking features on the landscape of the Near East. Its range begins in north-western Iran and roughly follows Iran's western border while covering much of south-eastern Turkey and north-eastern Iraq (fig 2). From this border region, the range roughly follows Iran's coast on the Persian Gulf and ending at the Strait of Hormuz. As such, the Zagros occupies a strategic position in the international affairs of this region with the lowlands of Mesopotamia on the west and the Iranian plateau on the east; these mountains serve as one of the great natural boundaries in this part of the world (see Levine 1973). The Zagros Mountains have a total length of 1,600 km (990 miles). It is only with the central parts of this great sweep that the present study deals, as it was only here that the Assyrians texts mentioned several times.

In this work, we have limited the genres of texts used for the location of ancient toponyms. The most important genre is that which actually describes the route of military campaigns; especially those of Assyrian kings and later Alexander campaign. However, there is some scatter information in relation to battles during Achaemenid Empire and later Seleucid period.



Fig 1. Luristan Map

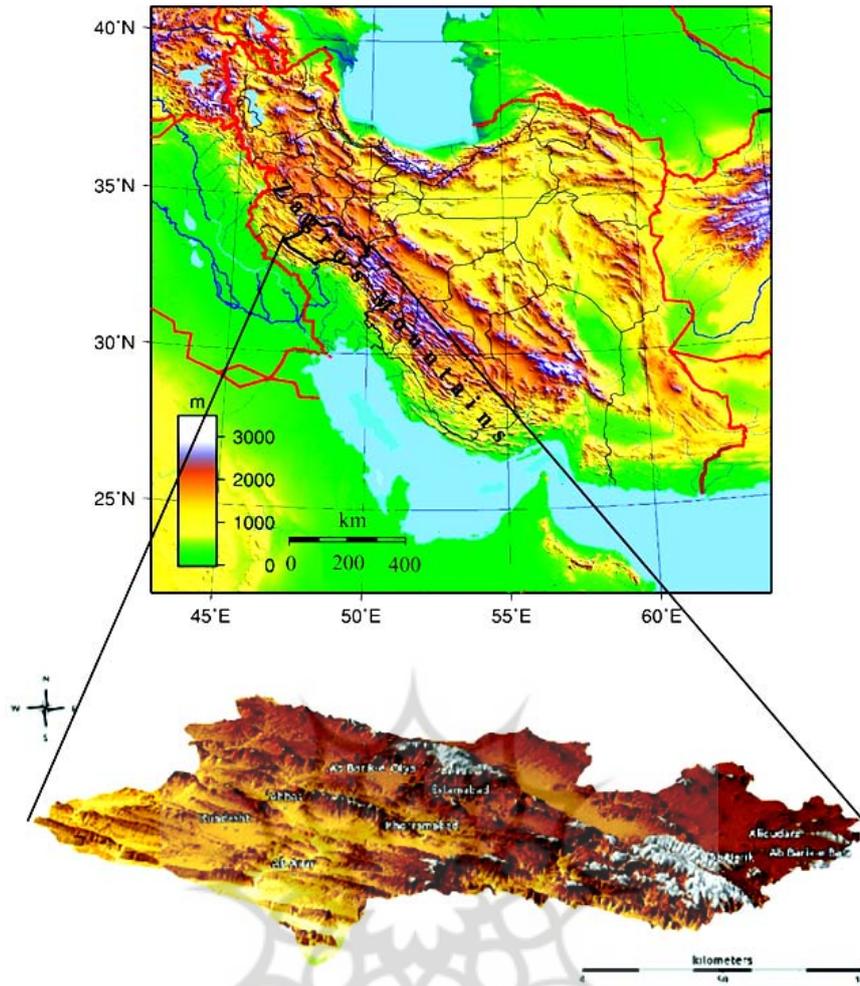


Fig 2. Luristan in Central Zagros Chains

Research Methodology

This research was done with a descriptive-analytical method with a historical approach. Therefore, was studied Assyrian texts, inscriptions and annals, Greco-Roman sources, and archaeological studies

Luristan inhabitants in Assyrian documents

Although scatter references to the people of the Central Zagros, Luristan region, are available for almost the whole first millennium B.C., the Neo-Assyrian documents indicate the source of information concerning the Zagros Mountain and the inhabitants of Zagros Mountain during the first millennium B.C. Within the general scheme that we propose here, we have set ourselves two further points. Firstly, we have not attempted to deal with all of the Zagros place names. Only those about which something definite can be said using the method described have been treated. Secondly, there has been no attempt to locate specific sites and tie them to places named in the historical records. Indeed, our understanding is as yet so primitive that even names of regions and large political units can only be placed in approximate settings. Annals and royal inscriptions introduced us at least two different groups of inhabitants, Ellipi and Kassite, in central Zagros. All we have regarding Ellipian is Assyrian texts and some scatter Archaeological evidence. Although the sources for the reconstruction of Ellipi's position are almost exclusively royal inscriptions, Ellipi is also mentioned in letters, vassal treaties, and oracle

texts, but for the most part, these are of too general nature to be useful for purposes of historical geography (Levine 1974: 104). The Ancient Toponyms Ellipi “the land of Ellipi” is mentioned in the cuneiform sources from the time of Ashurnasirpal II to Esarhaddon (866- 639 B.C.). Assur Nasirpal II in his 18th year (866 B.C) named Ellipi for the first time (King & Litt, 1915: 6- 5). However, although references cover almost the entire span of the neo-Assyrian empire, the bulk of the material about Ellipi comes from the reign of Sargon II, when Ellipi attained prominence and became a significant factor in Assyria's military policy as it affected the east. We postulate for the sake of the argument, that the order of places mentioned in the account of a campaign reflects the true course of that campaign. Where this assumption can be tested it has generally proven true (Levine 1973: 2). Assyrian texts repeatedly referred to the borders of Ellipi with Elam (Luckenbill, 1927:52 – 51). Sargon's inscriptions help us to identify the position of Ellipi, because he repeatedly described the same passage in several inscriptions: “KUR mādāi rūqūti ša pāt šad bikni adi KUR ellipi Kur rāši ša itē elamtu.....” As can be noticed, the crucial point is Ellipi is said to have bordered Elam. Probably Assyrian in their campaigns to Elam passed from Posht-e- Kouh (Mollazadeh & Goudarzi 2016: 87). According to Ashurpanipal's inscription two Elamite cities, Madakto and Hamano were the northern cities of Elam (De Miroschedji 1986 & Vallat 1993). New studies suggest northwest of Karkheh River for Madakto and Hamano (Potts, 2001: 24); the mentioned area is southern parts of Luristan and Elam. On the other hand, in the mid-first millennium B.C., there were Elamite-speakers, with Elamite personal names, using Neo-Elamite, around Pol-e Dokhtar in southern Luristan (Potts 2006: 114).

Neo-Elamite inscriptions c.6th century B.C. on some objects found in the Kalmakareh Cave near Pol-e Dokhtarare testified the presence of a group or groups with Elamite names (Vallat 1996; Mahboubian 1995). Some of these inscriptions are similar and refer to the king of Samati/ Samatura (Valleat 1996). Moreover, Kialan Mountain in Pol-e Dokhtar creates a natural barrier and border between Luristan and south. In accordance with archaeological and linguistic evidence, inscriptions and the topography of the area, Probably, Roumeshkan- Pol-e Dokhtar strait was a political and cultural border with Elam. But it is not clear if Ellipi territory was stretched close to the border of Elam.

The position for Ellipi is further reinforced by one of Shalmaneser III's campaigns. In the year 843 B.C. Shalmaneser ended his campaign by collecting tribute from the king of Ellipi in the passes of Tugliyash (WO I/6 (1952), p. 472, 11. 21-22). Tugliyash has been located at the area round Eshnunna on the Diyala, perhaps extending as far south as Der (Iran XI, p. 23, n. 109.), and the mountainous region of Tugliyash must be the Zagros area to the east. Thus, we would expect Ellipi to lie in the Zagros to the east of Tugliyash, in northwestern Luristan (Levine 1974: 106).¹

Assyrian document recorded Ellipi was the neighbour of Harhar in the north (Knudtzon 1893: 183 – 181). According to neo-Assyrian stelae from Kangavar Sargon II 716 B.C. conquered Harhar and changed to an Assyrian province (Levine 1972: 25). For the location of Harhar province, Levine suggests Great Khorasan Road Basin in the east of Mahidasht (Levine 1974: 117), but recent research suggests Kangavar for the location of Harhar (Daems 2005: 82; Medvedskaya 1999: 55).

Sennacherib's reign (704-681 B.C) is characterized by a remarkable decline in Assyrian military activities in the Zagros. In 702 B.C, he led Assyrian troops against Ellipi. The reason for further Assyrian inventions against Ellipi was their alliance with Elam against Assyrian. After defeating the dangerous enemy alliance, Sennacherib punished Ispabara by destroying many Ellipian towns and finally seizing Bît-Barrû, an Ellipian town, to the territory of Assyria (Grayson & Novotny, 2012, Sn.3: 27-31). Bît-Barrû can be located northeast of the central core of Ellipi,

1. Since Ellipi is never invaded by Shalmaneser III, the tribute mentioned is likely to have been brought in a successful attempt to forestall such an invasion by the Assyrians. If this were the case, then Tugliyash and Ellipi would have had to be neighbouring territories



on the border of the Assyrian province of Harhar (Maniori 2008: 254-256). For the location of Bît-Barrû, Overlaet suggests Nihavand in the north of Luristan (Overlaet, 2013: 384). In addition, Ellipi was the neighbour of Bît- Hamban, in Mahidasht, in the north (Medvedskaya 1999:59-60; Wilson 1962: 113).

Garrin Mountain is considered a natural boundary between the north of Luristan and south of Hamedan (Nihavand). The “Luristan Genre” pottery is characterized as the “Pottery of Ellipi”. This pottery has not been discovered beyond the Garrin Mountain and Delfan District (Goff 1968; Garazhian 2001). It should be noted that the distribution of “Luristan Genre” pottery has been disappeared near to Bît- Hamban. This kind of pottery was identified by Goff as “Luristan Genre” (fig. 3). She discovered Luristan Genre during the excavation of Baba Jan Tepe in Nourabad (Delfan), north of Luristan in Pish-Kouh. Later Hasanpour found the same pottery in Baba Jilan graveyard west of Nourabad (Hasanpour 2012, Hasanpour et al 2015). The repertoire of designs of this pottery was limited. The three most often occurring are the line of “kites ”, often combined with the Kassite cross, rosette; the pendant triangle (Goff 1968: 119).

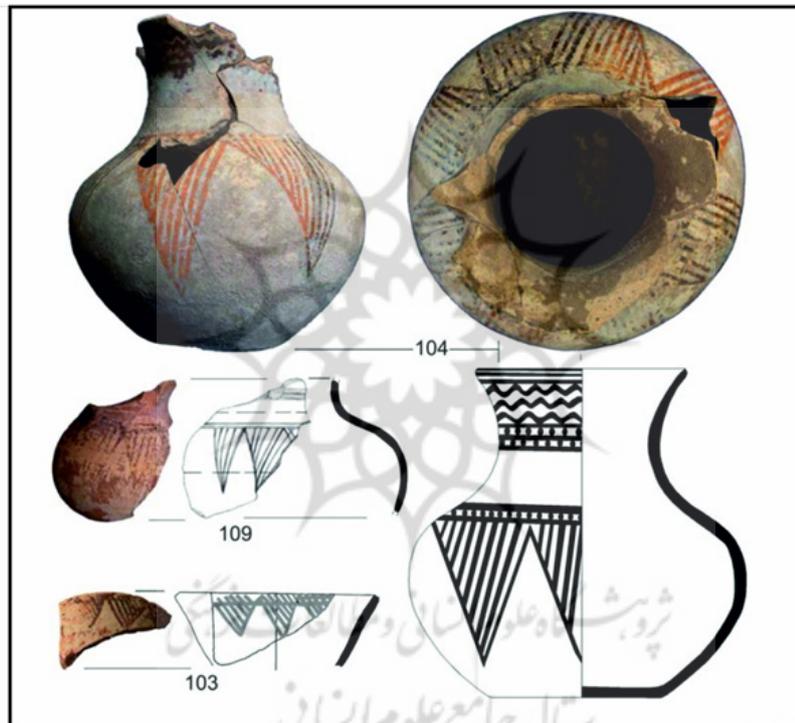


Fig 3. Painted ware “Luristan Genre” from Baba Jilan graveyard (Hasanpour et al 2015: 209)

Only a few episodes related to the western broder of Ellipi are mentioned in Assyrian document that cannot be useful. In accordance with geographical and archaeological evidence Kabir Kouh was the approximate western border of Ellipi (Mollazadeh & Goudarzi 2015: 89). Kabir Kouh stretched from northwest to southeast. It divided Luristan into two parts so-called Pish-Kouh (Land in front of the mountain) and Posht-kouh (Land behind of the mountain). Luristan is situated in frontier land and Ilam is situated in posterior land. Kabir Kouh was a natural barrier for Luristan in the west. It separated Luristan from Posht-Kouh and Mesopotamia. Probably it can explain why the potteries, settlements patterns and metal objects were found in Pish-Kouh are differ from Posht-kouh materials (Overlaet 2013: 382). Furthermore, Shikaft-i Gulgul and Mishkhas Assyrian rock reliefs demonstrated Assyrian military campaigns passed from Posht-Kouh (Reade 1977; Alibaigi et al. 2012).

Silakhor Plain is the widest plain in Luritsan. It situated behind the Garrin Mountain in the

northeast of Luristan. The plain divided into Western and Eastern parts. Archaeological excavation and survey reports indicate the lack of cultural materials from Ellipi in Silakhor Plain (Parviz 2006; Moghdas & Sharifi 1996& Young 1966). On the other hand, the presence of Median materials was reported from Silakhor Plain can refer the Median settlements in this area (Parviz 2006). Furthermore, Pa Tepe (Gounespan) Site near Boroujerd city, in Silakhor Plain, is another important Median site (Malekzadeh & Naseri 2014: 108). Probably western part of Silakhor Plain was Median. Archaeological evidence from the Eastern part of Silkhor Plain represented the Iron Age III materials and Median remains (Abdolahi & Sardari 2012; Abdolahi et al., 2014: 72). Consequently, it can suggest Silakhor Plain was a part of Median territory.

In summary, Ellipi occupied a position intermediate between the Elamite and the Assyrian spheres of influence in the western Zagros (fig. 4). Indications at present are that Pish-Kouh, northern Luristan, is the area which best fits the evidence for Ellipi. The mountains in Luristan as a natural border separated Ellipi territory.² Perhaps the southern border of Ellipi lay somewhere in the parallel valleys of the Zagros closes to Seymareh River Basin near to Roumeshkan-Pol-e Dokhtar. To the north and northeast, it bordered Harhar, which was located on the Great Khorasan Road; Garrin Mountain lay in north and northeast of Ellipi, behind of this Mountain Median settlements were discovered. The Shalmaneser reference seems to indicate that Ellipi's western border lay along the modern Iraq-Iran frontier, where the mountains of Luristan blend into the lowlands; Kabir Kouh was as a natural border for Ellipi in this area (Levine 1974; Mollazadeh & Goudarzi 2015).

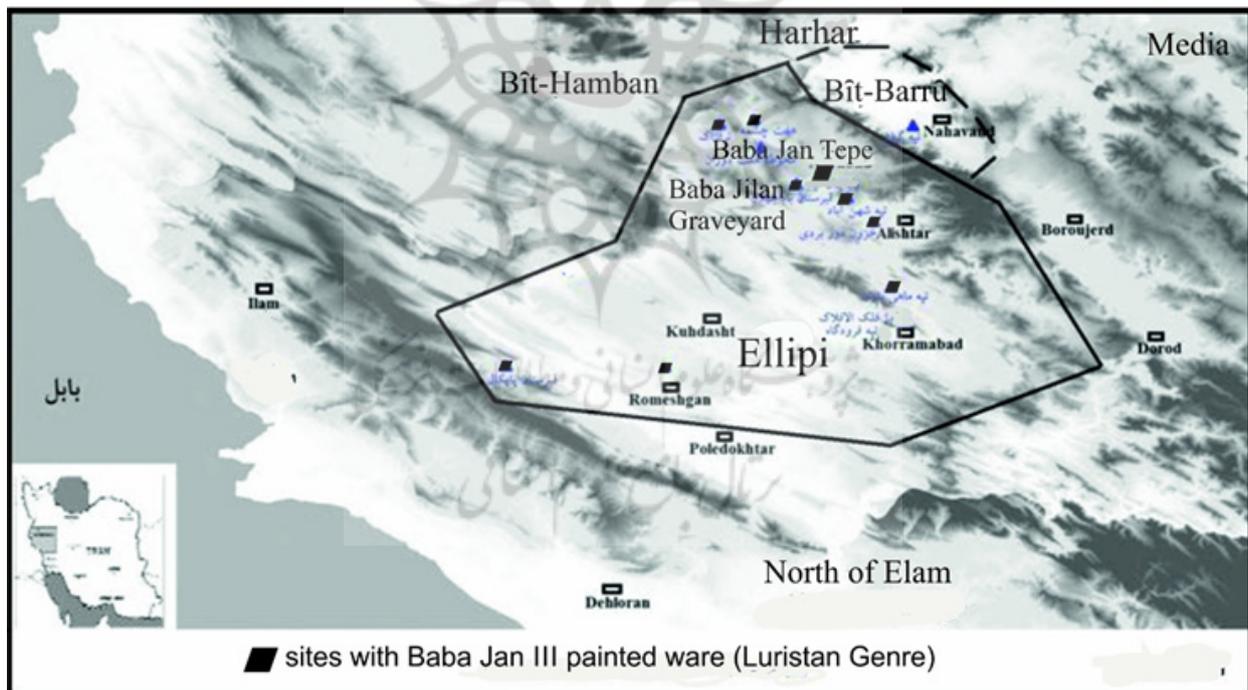


Fig 4. Distribution of Luristan Genre pottery and approximate territory of Ellipi (Mollazadeh & Goudarzi 2016: 90)

Kassite, Cissian

In Assyrian documents, we encounter another group of people so-called “Kassite” who lived in the Zagros Mountains and seem not far from the Land of Ellipi. The origins of Kassites, who first appear around the eighteenth century, are unclear. Kassites ruled Babylonia almost continuously from the seventeenth or sixteenth century about 1155 B.C., and individual Kassites occupied

2. Even nowadays the mountains of Luristan are nearly the borders of this province

important positions in the kingdom of Babylonia or rather Karduniash (Brinkman 1968; Brinkman 1976). The Elamites conquered Babylonia in the 12th century B.C, thus ending the Kassite state. For over a century scholars on Kassite origins has tended to target the Zagros Mountains as their original homeland (Potts 2006: 113). Eilers, for example, noting that the name of one of the tributaries of the Seimareh River, the Kashkan River, can be etymologized as “Kassite River,” (Eilers 1982: 37) and Sommerfeld suggested that the Kassites emigrated from Iran over the Zagros Mountains into Babylonia. Their original home and the route they took are unknown to us, however (Sommerfeld 1995: 917).” Levine suggested that the Kassites of this time were located closer to the eastern borderlands of Babylonia, on the eastern side of the Lower Zab (Levine 1973: 22). Zadok has undertaken an exhaustive study of the personal names in Neo-Assyrian sources associated with the toponyms of the western Zagros and found that Kassite names constitute the second largest group after Iranian ones in what might be called “greater Media” (Zodak 2002: 70). Thus, it is possible that in the first millennium there were Kassite-speaking communities in the western Zagros.

The Kassite language, to the extent that it is known from Kassite personal names, is distinct from Elamite and unrelated to any other known language family—the geographical proximity of the Kassites and Elamites, well documented in the post-Kassite era and hypothesized for the earlier periods, has rarely been commented upon. The location of at least some Kassites in the southern and perhaps central Zagros suggests that the two groups may well have had close ties for centuries. Considering the fact that in the mid-first millennium B.C. there were Elamite-speakers, with Elamite personal names, using Neo-Elamite, around Pol-e Dokhtar in southern Luristan, it may be justifiable to characterize the southern Zagros as a “contact zone” between Elamites and Kassites (Potts 2006: 114).

Moreover, Neo-Assyrian sources confirm that Kassites were living in the western Zagros during that period. In Sennacherib's second campaign, after concluding his business in the land of the Kassites and Yasubigalli, he turned to Ellipi (Grayson & Novotny3, 2012, Sn.3: 20-26). While the text does not specify that Ellipi, Kassites and Yasubigalli were contiguous to each other. If the campaign followed a logical progression we can locate Ellipi, Kassites and Yasubigalli as neighbouring countries.

Luristan in Greek and Roman Sources (Kassites and Cissians)

Although the original homeland of the Kassites is not well-known, we considered Kassites as a distinct ethnic group living in the Zagros Mountains. Later in Greek and Roman sources, we meet another group named “Cissian” who has been located in the Zagros Mountains, as well.

The Cissians have frequently been identified with the Kassites (Kaššu). It should be noticed Greek -i- sometimes became Akkadian -a- (e.g. Gr. Laodike Akk. Ludake). Hence, Gr. Cissia may correspond, if it reproduces an Akkadian name or a name transmitted via Akkadian, to Kaššu, the Akkadian term for the Kassites (Lehmann 1892: 333). Furthermore, it has been said the name of the Kaššu (Kassite) is preserved in the name of the “Kashkan River” or “Kashko; Kashku” in Lori dialect, in Luristan. Overflowing of Kashkan River left many damages every year during the heavy rainy seasons. The River is considered as the most devastating river in Luristan.

It is better to have a glance at the meaning of Kaššu: Kaššu, generally, has been translated as massive and strong and for the rivers is applied as flood-waters, destructive flooding, massive, strong and powerful (Black et al. 2000: 152-3; Gleb et al. 1964: 158); the explanations remind us Kashkan River. Accordingly, it is plausible to consider two different ideas. First, if we accept the Kassites turn back to the Zagros Mountains in Luristan region long after they lost Babylonia.



They might have been preserved their name and perhaps they transferred their name to the region they settled. If they chose the bank of Kashkan River to live, therefore, it is feasible the name of River drove from Kassite. Second, Kaššu, on the whole, was a term which was applied to identify “massive, strong and powerful” human, geographical matters, or events. As a consequence, the name of Kashkan was a significant feature of the river. Obviously, in the latter case, the Kassites and their location could not be in relation to the Kashkan River. Back to Cissians who were mentioned by several Greek authors; the earliest of whom Aeschylus was after him, Herodotus provided many details on the Cissians. Furthermore, Diodorus, Strabo and Polybius sometimes referred to the region of Cissians.

The Cissians and the toponym Cissia are attested several more times in Herodotus. He speaks of ‘Susa and the other Cissian’s land. In the tribute list from the reign of Darius I “Susa and the other parts of Cissia” are identified as the eighth nomós, which paid 300 talents of silver each year:

[...] The Sattagydae, Gandarii, Dadicae, and Aparytae paid together an hundred and seventy talents; this was the seventh province; the eighth was Susa and the rest of the Cissian (Κισσίων) country, paying three hundred talents (Herod.3. 91).

It can be implying two different significances, “Susa and the rest of Cissian” perhaps Susa and Cissian can be considered as a single satrapy or Susa was a part of Cissian. But what is certain Susa and Cissian could not be the same place because he made a distinction between Susa and Cissians.

But another passage of Herodotus speaks about the distance of some places. He clearly separates the land of Cissians from Susa by the Choaspes River.

[...] When this country is passed, the road is in the Cissian (Κισσίην) land, where are eleven stages and forty two and a half parasangs , as far as yet another navigable river, the Choaspes, whereon stands the city of Susa [...] (Herod.5.52).

These references make it clear that while Susa lay in Choaspes, Cissia was not coterminous with Susiana but began well north of it in the mountains of Luristan (Nöldeke 1874: 174).

Herodotus clearly assigning Susa and the river Choaspes on which it lay to Cissian territory, furthermore he too says us the location of Cissian:

[...] Next to the Cilicians, here are the Armenians, another people rich in flocks, and after the Armenians the Matieni, whose country I show you; and you see the Cissian land adjoining theirs; therein, on the Choaspes (yonder it is), lies that Susa where lives the great king, and there are the storehouses of his wealth[...](Herod.5.49)

In describing the Royal Road, he notes that after entering Cissia, on the bank the Choaspes of which the city of Susa is built:

[...] When this country is passed, the road is in the Cissian land, where are eleven stages and forty two and a half parasangs³, as far as yet another navigable river, the Choaspes, whereon stands the city of Susa (Herod.5.52).

As it passed between the Cissians’s land and Susa lay the Choaspes River. The river now is called “Karkheh”. The Karkheh or Choaspes has two upper courses, called “Kashkan” and “Seymareh”, which come together near Pol-e Dokhtar in the south of Luristan. Hence, Cissians have

3. Parasang is an ancient Persian unit of distance, equal to about 3.5 miles (5.6 km).

been located somewhere north of Choaspes in Luristan area.

Almost all of our knowledge concerning Cissian comes from the battles they took apart. Their manner of fighting made them famous warlike people. Herodotus of the battle of Doriscus lists a people called the Cissians among the army of Xerxes. Cissian cavalry wore the same dress and equipment as the Persians, except for a fillet (mítra) instead of the Persians' felt cap:

[...]The Cissians in the army were equipped like the Persians, but they wore turbans and not caps. Their commander was Anaphes son of Otanes (Herod.7.62).

Herodotus was not the only historian wrote about Cissians; Diodorus at the battle of Thermopylae mentioned the Cissians among the army of Xerxes:

[...] But since the Greeks were superior in valour and in the great size of their shields, the Medes gradually gave way; for many of them were slain and not a few wounded. The place of the Medes in the battle was taken by Cissians and Sacae, selected for their valour, who had been stationed to support them; and joining the struggle fresh as they were against men who were worn out they withstood the hazard of combat for a short while, before as they were slain and pressed upon by the soldiers of Leonidas, they gave way (Diod.11.7.1).

Strabo narrated 'the Susians are also called Cissians':

[...] and the Susians are also called Cissians; and Aeschylus calls the mother of Memnon Cissia (Strab.Geog.15.3.2).

Presumably, it was an error from Strabo explained Susiana was called Cissia, as well. It may refer to the Herodotus passage; when he comprised Susa and Cissia as a single satrapy in the tribute list of Darius says: 'Susa and the other parts of Cissia' (Herod. 3.89).

During the Seleucid period, we too hear "Cissians" from Plutarch during Molon's rebel and Raphia Battle. Both events happen during the reign of Antiochus III. According to Polybius, a Cissian contingent was present, along with Persian, Karmanians, Cadusians and Medes, among the 'subjects' who fought on Antiochus III's side at the battle of Raphia in 217 B.C. at which Ptolemaeus IV defeated Antiochus III during the Fourth Syrian War (Bar-Kochva 1976: 50).

[...] There were Agrianian and Persian bowmen and slingers to the number of two thousand, and with them two thousand Thracians, all under the command of Menedemus of Alabanda. Aspasianus the Mede had under him a force of about five thousand Medes, Cissians (Κισσίων), Cadusians, and Carmanians [...] (Polyb.5.79).

A passage of Polybius is the only post-Alexander reference to Cissians which does not go back to Herodotus:

[...] On his (Antiochus) extreme left wing he posted two thousand horse under the command of Themison, next these the Gardacian and Lydian javelineers, then three thousand light-armed troops under Menedemus, after these the Cissians (Κισσίους), Medes, and Carmanians, and finally, in contact with the phalanx, the Arabs and neighbouring tribes. His remaining elephants he placed in front of his left wing under the command of Myiscus, one of the young men who had been brought up at court (Polyb.5. 82. 9- 12)

Polybius named the Cissaious or Cassious during the rebel of Molon:

[...] range which has an ascent of a hundred stades, and consisting as it does of different branches meeting at various points, contains in the intervals depressions and deep valleys inhabited by the

Cossaei, Corbrenae, Carchi and other barbarous tribes with a high reputation for their warlike qualities [...] (Polyb.5.44.7).

By this passage, Nöldeke considered Cissian and Cossaeans as two different variants of one and the same name. Here he dismissed Antiochus' Cissians as an error for Cossaeans (Nöldeke 1874: 178).

Luristan in Greek and Roman Sources (Cossaeans)

We generally realized, as it passed, Kassites and later Cissians were warrior peoples. Their land was somewhere north of Choaspes River in Zagros Mountain (in Luristan). During the Alexander conquest, we encounter another group of people from this area so-called Cossaeans. They such as Kassites and Cissians had a great ability to battle. Perhaps the Cossaeans of Greek and Roman sources were the Cissians who have frequently been identified with the Kassites (Kaššu). Cossaeans lived in the Zagros Mountains during the Persian Empire. Their Empire included many areas inhabited by mountainous tribes, which frequently controlled important mountain crossing, especially in the Zagros Mountains. According to ancient writers Cossaeans' land can embrace within the Central Zagros Mountains Chains between Media on the north and Susiana in the south. Several ancient Greek and Roman sources such as Herodotus (Histories), Diodorus of Sicily's (Literary of History Book 17), Quintus Curtius Rufus (History of Alexander the Great), Arrian of Nicomedia (Anabasis of Alexander and Indica), Plutarch (Life of Alexander 7), Strabo (Geography books 15-18), Pliny (Natural History 6) and Polybius (The Histories 5) recall several names, Cissia, Cossaeans, Kossaeans, Cossaea, Cossiae and Cossaei, of such inhabitants and their territories. Although Cossaeans are frequently mentioned in classical sources, ancient ethnographers, geographers, and historians had only a limited knowledge of their land, customs, lifestyle, and culture.

Cossaeans' land

Where was located the Cossaeans' Land: Strabo gives us some scatter information. He, relying on Nearchus, enumerates several predatory tribes of southwest Persia:

[...] Nearchus says that there were four predatory tribes and that of these the Mardi were situated next to the Persians; the Uxii and Elymaei next to the Mardi and the Susians; and the Cossaei next to the Medians; and that whereas all four exacted tribute from the kings, the Cossaei also received gifts at the times when the king, after spending the summer in Ecbatana, went down into Babylonia (Strab.Geog.11.13. 6).

He also mentioned:

[...] Greater Media is bounded on the east by Parthia and the mountains of the Cossaei (Strabo. Geog.11.13.6).

[...] After the Zagrus there follows, above Babylonia, the mountainous country of the Elymaei and that of the Paraetaceni, and also, above Media, that of the Cossaei [...] (Strab.Geog.11.12.4).

In another segment of the Geography, Strabo informs us of another borderline for Cossaeans' land:

[...] Now Carmania is encircled on the north by Persis, which is a large country; and bordering on this country are Paraetaceni and Cossaea as far as the Caspian Gates, which is inhabited by mountainous and predatory tribes. And bordering on Susis is Elymaïs, most of which is rugged and inhabited by brigands (Strab.Geog.16.1.17).

Arrian in his *Anabasis* and *Indica* referred to the land of Cossaeans:

[...] he [Alexander] made an expedition against the Cossaeans, a warlike race bordering on the territory of the Uxians. [...] (Arr. Anab. 7.15).

[...] I have already stated that the next neighbours to the Susians are the Uxians, just as the Mardians, who are a set of robbers, are neighbours to the Persians, and the Cossaeans to the Medes [...] (Arr. Ind. 40.6-8).

Pliny concerning the Cossaeans' land mentioned:

[...] The nearest people to the Susiani on the east side are the Cossiaei, and beyond the Cossiaei to the north is Massabatene, lying below Mount Cambalidus, which is a spur of the Caucasus range; from this point is the easiest route across to the country of the Bactri. [...] (Pliny. 6.31. 134)

Polybius is another historian referred to Cossaeans mentioned. But his narrates do not come back to Alexander's campaigns. He mentioned Cossaeans during Molon's rebel:

[...] Its (Media) southern portion extends as far as Mesopotamia and the territory of Apollonia and borders on Persia, from which it is protected by Mount Sagrus, a range which has an ascent of a hundred stades, and consisting as it does of different branches meeting at various points, contains in the intervals depressions and deep valleys inhabited by the Cossaei (Κοσσαῖοι), Corbrenae, Carchi and other barbarous tribes with a high reputation for their warlike qualities [...] (Polyb.5.44.6-7).

However, according to Greek and Roman historians, the Cossaeans' land should be in Central Zagros Mountains. This perfectly illustrates the boundaries between tribal and ethnic identities may be hazy at times. Cassaeans' land can embrace within the Central Zagros Mountains Chains. It was bordered to the north by Media, to the south by Uxians, Susians and later Elymaeains, to the east probably by Paraetacenê; all indicated the Cossaeans were the inhabitants of Zagros Mountains in Luristan, between Media on the north and Susiana in the south. Therefore, their land must thus have been situated along the route. Perhaps the term "Cossaeon" can be considered as of the single ethical group. We should highlight that the Cossaeans were speaking approximately the same language, with but slight variations.

It is somehow similar to Lurs who are an ethnic group residing in the central and southern Zagros. They speak Luri, a language closely related to Persian and Kurdish, (Curtis and Hooglund 2008: 94) but with some differentiation in dialect. Their distribution covers south of Hamedan, Malayer, the whole Luristan, north of Khuzestan, Andimeshk and Dezful and south and southeast of Ilam as Abdanan, Dehloran and Darreh Shahr. In addition, I prefer to use of the term "tribe" for Cossaeans. Because we, the Zagros inhabitants, have a tribal life even nowadays and we use the term "tribe" for identification each other. Each tribe has a function as "Tribal or Ethnic Tree", with a large number of branches. Sometimes the branches of a tribe distributed from the north to the south of Lur area.⁴

The situation of their land and their lifestyle is another subject to discuss. Strabo gives us some information:

[...] Now the Cossaeans (Κοσσαῖοι), like the neighbouring mountaineers, are for the most part bow-

4. It should be noticed what we are concerning is the "Lur-e-Kuchik" (Lesser Lur). Their language (called Luri or Lurish language) is closely related to Persian, and there are two distinct dialects. "Lur-e-Bozourg" (Greater Lur) is spoken by the Bakhtiaris, and "Lur-e-Kuchik" (Lesser Lur), spoken by the Lurs themselves. People in Borujerd speak in Borujerdi Dialect, a local Lori Persian dialect extracted from Luri. Northwest of Lorestan Province is dominated by Laki speakers. Professor Richard N. Frye wrote that "the Lurs and their dialects are closely related to the Persians of Fars province, and naturally belong to the southwestern branch of the Iranian peoples (Frye, Richard N. (1983). *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*, Part 3, Volume 7. Beck. p. 29).



men, and are always out of foraging expeditions; for they have a country that is small and barren, so that they must live at the expense of the other tribes. And they are of necessity a powerful people, for they are all fighters [...] (Strab.Geog.16.1.18).

Arrian also mentioned these people:

[...] he [Alexander] made an expedition against the Cossaeans, a warlike race bordering on the territory of the Uxians. They are mountaineers, inhabiting strong positions in separate villages. [...] (Arr. Anab. 7.15).

[...] This is a people outstanding in valour which occupied the mountains of Media; and relying upon the ruggedness of their country and their ability in war, they had never accepted a foreign master [...] Diod.17.111.4

According to Strabo, Arrian and Diodorus, Cossaeans were powerful with great ability in war that lived in the mountains.

Strabo gave us another hint to know the land of Cossaeans. In a part of Geography he explained Alexander attempt to build the boats:

[...] from the cypress trees in the groves and the parks; for there is a scarcity of timber in Babylonia, although there is a moderately good supply of timber in the countries of the Cossaei (Κοσσαίους) and certain other tribes (Strab.Geog.16.1.11).

The Zagros Mountains are covered deeply with oak trees. It is interesting to point Luristan is naming "the Land of Oaks". This area is heavily covered by the oak trees. What made it more notable was a passage of Diodorus:

[...] These men (Cossaeans), who have been independent from ancient times, live in caves, eating acorns and mushrooms, and also the smoked flesh of wild beasts (Diod.19.19.3).

According to Napier many parts of Iran suffered famine during World War I. in that condition; bread made from acorns of the scrub oak was the principal food of the villagers' in Luristan (Napier 1919).

Alexander Campaigning against Cossaeans

Arrian's Indica and Strabo's Geography referred to the inhabitants of Zagros and their situation during the Persian Empire.

[...] Nearchus says that there were four predatory tribes and that of these the Mardi were situated next to the Persians; the Uxii and Elymaei next to the Mardi and the Susians; and the Cossaei next to the Medians; and that whereas all four exacted tribute from the kings, the Cossaei also received gifts at the times when the king, after spending the summer in Ecbatana, went down into Babylonia; but that Alexander put an end to their great audacity when he attacked them in the winter time (Strab. Geog.11.13.6).

Diodorus reports the same event:

[...] Alexander launched a campaign with a mobile force against the Cossaeans (Κοσσαίων), for they would not submit to him. This is a people outstanding in valour which occupied the mountains of Media; and relying upon the ruggedness of their country and their ability in war, they had never accepted a foreign master, but had remained unconquered throughout the whole period of the Persian kingdom, and now they were too proudly self-confident to be terrified of the Macedonian arms.

The king, nevertheless, seized the routes of access into their country before they were aware of it, lay waste most of Cossaea (Κοσσαίας), was superior in every engagement, and both slew many of the Cossaeans (Κοσσαίοι) and captured many times more[...] (Diod.17.111.4-5).

Strabo and Diodorus point out a similar narrative. Cossaeans⁵ asked for tribute from the kings as Mardians and Uxians; Cossaeans received another kind of tribute or maybe we can call it "Safe road tax" when the Persian kings from Ecbatana went down into Babylonia.

Persian kings know well their lands and their peoples. Perhaps they ruled on each area according to the lifestyle of their inhabitants. It appears that the relationship of the Persian court with various mountain peoples in the empire must have been more of a balance between autonomy and oversight (Brunner 2006: 331). In practice, there must have occurred a process of mutual accommodation by the royal and tribal parties, with either side having its own perception of the ultimate status of the people concerned. Whatever status terms were used; they did not preclude the practice of gift giving by either side (Marciak 2017: 243). On the one hand, mountainous peoples enjoyed a great deal of autonomy and received occasional gifts from the Persian court, on the other hand, they acknowledged the authority of the Persian kings by paying tributes and enlisting in military service (Briant 2002 730-731). Diodorus enlisted Cossaeans in the military service of the Persian king on the occasion of the battle of Gaugamela in 331 BC, in which the Persian Empire fell to Alexander the Great:

[...] The cavalry first joined battle, and as the Macedonians were on the right wing, Dareius, who commanded his own left, led his kinsman cavalry against them. These were men chosen for courage and for loyalty, the whole thousand included in one squadron. Knowing that the king was watching their behaviour, they cheerfully faced all of the missiles which were cast in his direction. With them were engaged the Apple Bearers, brave and numerous, and in addition to these Mardi and Cossaei, who were admired for their strength and daring, as well as all the household troops belonging to the palace and the best fighters among the Indians. They all raised a loud battle cry and, attacking, engaged the enemy valiantly and pressed hard upon the Macedonians because of their superior numbers (Diod.17.59.3).

However, when Alexander arrived in this area he could not accept the way of their life. In the winter of 324-323 B.C. he and his army left Ecbatana (fig. 5). The campaigning happened after, Alexander's closest friend, Hephaestion, died. Plutarch can represent the episode as mass slaughter, a blood offering at the tomb of Hephaestion, and the campaign is described as a royal hunt, with human quarry:

[...] making war a solace for his grief, he (Alexander) went forth to hunt and track down men, as it were, and overwhelmed the nation of the Cossaeans, slaughtering them all from the youth upwards. This was called an offering to the shade of Hephaestion [...] (Plut.7.72.4).

what he believed is a rhetorical exaggeration, but there can be little doubt that the invasion was costly in Cossaeon lives. However, for the historians of Alexander, the killing had ample justification (Bosworth 1996, 147).

Alexander was civilizing the Cossaeans, making honest agriculturalists and city-dwellers out of shiftless nomads, and the campaign was a reprisal for their earlier brigandage (Bosworth 1996, 147). Arrian and Diodorus reported the event as follows:

[...] I have already stated that the next neighbours to the Susians are the Uxians, just as the Mardians, who are a set of robbers, are neighbours to the Persians, and the Cossaeans to the Medes. and all of these tribes Alexander subdued, falling upon them in the winter, when they considered their

5. This tribe was called Cossaeans by Ptolemy using the Greek spelling (Yenne 181 :2010).

dominions were inaccessible; and he founded cities with a view to mean them from roving habits and attract them to the plough and agricultural life, and put rulers over them to deter them from inflicting injuries on each other [...] (Arr. Ind. 40.6-8).

In Indica, he gives us the same scene:

[...] he made an expedition against the Cossaeans (Κοσσαίους), a warlike race bordering on the territory of the Uxians. They are mountaineers, inhabiting strong positions in separate villages. Whenever a force approached them, they were in the habit of retiring to the summits of their mountains, either in a body or separately as each man found it practicable; and thus they escaped, making it difficult for those who attacked them with their forces to come near them. After the enemy's departure, they used to turn themselves again to marauding, by which occupation they supported themselves. But Alexander subdued this race, though he marched against them in the winter [...] (Arr.Anab. 7.15).

Diodorus says that Alexander completed his conquest of the Cossaeans in forty days; moreover, the city foundations are also attested by him, as well:

[...] So the Cossaeans (Κοσσαίοι) were utterly defeated, and, distressed at the number of their captives, were constrained to buy their recovery at the price of national submission. They placed themselves in Alexander's hands and were granted peace on condition that they should do his bidding. In forty days at most, he had conquered these people. He founded strong cities at strategic points and rested his army (Diod.17.111.4-6).

As Arrian and Diodorus narrated, after a campaign lasting 40 days, the Cossaeans were forced to submit to Alexander. The terms of surrender were that they give up their nomadic way of life and settle in the cities Alexander had founded at strategic points within their territory.⁶ They were now to become farmers instead of brigands.



Fig 5. Alexander's March (Roisman and Worthington 2011: XXII- XXIII)

6. If he established the cities, they had a short life. However, we do not have found the remains of the cities he founded for Cossaeans, if he constructed the cities more archaeological excavations can bright it to light in future.

In about October of 324 B.C., Alexander led his reconfigured army east-ward from Opis to spend a few weeks in the wealthy city of Ecbatana before continuing to Babylon. He visited a place in the route where there were many thousands of horses. Perhaps the trip involved logistical planning for future military campaigns (Yenne 2010: 181). Alexander was determined to break the tribe's resistance and end its continual brigandage. It is also quite possible that he held the tribesmen responsible for the massive theft of Darius' Nesaean horse herd, whose numbers had diminished from the 150000 known to have existed during Darius' reign to only 50000 during Alexander's (Ashley 2004: 355).

It seems the Nissaeen Plain was neighboring the Cossaeen's land, which is what makes the recent hypothesis more probable. Information regarding the plain can give us some direction.

In two episodes, Herodotus pointed to the Median horse called Nissaeen breed:

[...]In India, which, as I observed lately, is the furthest region of the inhabited world towards the east, all the four-footed beasts and the birds are very much bigger than those found elsewhere, except only the horses, which are surpassed by the Median breed called the Nissaeen [...] (Herod.3. 106).

[...] In front of the king went first a thousand horsemen, picked men of the Persian nation – then spearmen a thousand, likewise chosen troops, with their spearheads pointing towards the ground - next ten of the sacred horses called Nissaeen, all daintily caparisoned. Now, these horses are called Nissaeen, because they come from the Nissaeen plain, a vast flat in Media, producing horses of unusual size [...] (Herod.7. 40).

Arrian narrated the situation of Nissaeen Plain as follows:

[...] In this journey (the march from Opis to Media) Alexander is said to have seen the plain which was devoted to the royal mares. Herodotus says that the plain itself was named Nissaeen, and that the mares were called Nissaeen; adding that in olden times there were 150,000 of these horses. But at this time Alexander found not many above 50,000; for most of them had been carried off by robbers [...] (Arr. Anab.7.13.2-3).

[...] The country (Armenia) is so very good for "horse-pasturing," not even inferior to Media, that the Nesaean horses, which were used by the Persian kings, are also bred there [...] (Strab.Geog.11.14.9)

Diodorus reported us concerning Nissaeen Plain, however, more in details:

[...] After a stay of some days he resumed his march at length and diverging from the main road for the purpose of sight-seeing he entered the region called Bagistanê, a magnificent country covered with fruit trees and rich in everything which makes for good living. Next, he came to a land which could support enormous herds of horses, where of old they say that there were one hundred and sixty thousand horses grazing, but at the time of Alexander's visit there were counted only sixty thousand. After a stay of thirty days he resumed the march and on the seventh day came to Ecbatana of Media [...] (Diod.17.110.5-6)

All four historians provide interesting details about the location of Nissaeen Plain. According to the historians, it seems not to have been difficult to identify the Nissaeen Plain. Nissaeen Plain should be in an area between Mesopotamia and Media, on the way of Alexander. Moreover, Diodorus mentioned the location of Nissaeen Plain after Baghestan (Bisotoun in Kermanshah) and before Media. For the localization of Nissaeen Plain, we have to keep in mind in north of Garrin and Oshtoran Kouh Mountains, two high mountains on the north and east of Luristan, there are main plains of Nahavand and Silakhor which thus stretch in a continuous line from one

point to another along the southern frontiers of Media. Alexander probably visited the westernmost of these pastures which stretch from Bisotoun to Esfahan along with the mountain range; that is exactly north, northeast and east of Luristan.

The Cossaeans appeared a while after Cossaeon subjugation and in relation to Peucestas's Persian army. Peucestas was a trusted candidate of Alexander for the satrap of Persis (Wiesehofer 1994, 45-49). Alexander appointed him as the "viceroy of Persis". He probably was the most powerful satrap in Iran. He gained the support of native Iranian populations. Ostentatiously supported by the king, Peucestas quickly won recognition among the Persians for holding their tradition above Macedonian ones. He learned to speak Persian, wore Persian dress, and in all matters followed Persians ways' (Arr. Anab. 6.30.3; 7.6.3; Diod. 19.14.5).

A passage of Anabasis of Arrian follows the Cossaeans presence among the Persian army as:⁷

When Alexander returned to Babylon(after Cossaeans' subjugation) he found that Peucestas had arrived from Persis, bringing with him 20,000 Persians, as well as many Cossaeans⁸ and Tapuri-ans, because these races were reported to be the most warlike of those bordering on Persis [...] (Arr. Anab.7.23.)

Diodorus gives us the same narrative, but he did not mention Cossaeans among the Peucestas' Persian army:

In this year Alexander secured replacements from the Persians equal to the number of these soldiers whom he had release, and assigned a thousand of them to the bodyguards. Stationed at the court. In all respects, he showed the same confidence in them as in the Macedonians. At this time Peucestas arrived with twenty thousand Persian bowmen and slingers [...] (Diod.17.110.2).

But Both Arrian and Diodorus agree in distributing the Persian soldiers by Alexander:

According to Diodorus:

[...] Alexander placed these in units with his other soldiers, and by the novelty of this innovation created a force blended and adjusted to his own idea [...] (Diod.17.110.2).

Relying on Arrian if Cossaeans, indeed, were among the Peucestas' army, Alexander distributed them among the Macedonian ranks, and he paid them as soldiers.

[...] He (Alexander) distributed these foreign soldiers among the Macedonian ranks in the following way. Each company was led by a Macedonian decurion, and next to him was a Macedonian receiving double pay for distinguished valour; and then came one who received ten staters, who was so named from the pay he received, being less than that received by the man with double pay, but more than that of the men who were serving as soldiers without holding a position of honour. Next to these came twelve Persians⁹, and last in the company another Macedonian, who also received the pay of ten

7. Recruiting Persians by Alexander may be in relation to Greek and Macedonian veterans and mercenaries who were returning to their homes in 324 and 323 B.C (Thompson 1984). It is probable that he decided to use of Persian in his army for his new military expedition. Obviously, he must have selected the most Iranian tribes with a high reputation for their warlike qualities, such as Cossaeans. According to Diodorus, Alexander in forty days at most had conquered Cossaeans. This is probable that he saw the ability of Cossaeans for war, so he accepted them as his new soldiers in his army when Peucestas with Cossaeans arrived in Babylonia in the early of 323 B.C.

8. According to Nearchus the Cossaeans were capable of mobilizing a force up to about 13000 archers (Nearchus. FGH 133 F 1c).

9. Clandestine excavation is the biggest problem of Luristan's archaeology. Many arrested people, who found and sold the coins of Alexander, claimed they smuggled Alexander's stater, tetradrachms and even decadrachm (personal communication with Luristan Cultural Heritage Organization). Unfortunately, proving the presence of such Alexander's in Luristan is not simple. We, except several tetradrachms, do not have any stater or decadrachm of

staters; so that in each company there were twelve Persians and four Macedonians three of whom received higher pay, and the fourth was in command of the company. The Macedonians were armed in their hereditary manner; but of the Persians some were archers, while others had javelins furnished with straps, by which they were held [...] (Arr.Anab.7.23.).

We do not know if Cossaeans remained in Macedonian army after the death of Alexander or not; and if they remained in the army how long did they participate in Macedonian military? And under the order of which diadochi did, they obey?

After the death of Alexander the Great in June 323 B.C., his generals and member of his royal family fought for several decades in order to acquire control of Alexander's empire. Alexander forced Cossaeans to submit several months before his death. The subjugation of Alexander, however, was not well received by the Cossaeans. Their dissatisfaction was still evident when Antigonus entered the area in 317 B.C. As a matter of fact, we do not hear about Cossaeans until Antigonus met them. It was exactly during the Battle of Gabiene we observe the Cossaeans appeared again.

After the murder of Perdiccas in 321 B.C., the regent of Alexander, a conflict broke out between Antigonus and Eumenes of Cardia. Eumenes, as Perdiccas, followed the unity of Empire under the legitimate king Philip III; while Antigonus supported the idea of the tripartition of Empire (Anson 2015).

In 316 B.C., Antigonus who had the support of Peithon and Seleucus, the satrap of Media and Babylonia, conquered Susa and proceeded toward Persis. However, the march of his army was stopped by Eumenes and Antigonus was forced to retreat; then he decided move to Ecbatana in Media.

It was exactly less than 10 years later the Cossaeans subjugation by Alexander we again encounter with Cossaeans when Antigonus decided to proceed north of Ecbatana. There were two routes from his current location to his destination. One route was along a royal road, but was a forty-day journey through the hot plain; the other was short and cool, but mountainous and through territory occupied by the hostile Cossaeans. Antigonus choose the more direct route through the mountains. It was not easy for an army to proceed, however, without the consent of the Cossaeans (Diod.19.19.3). In continue Diodorus explained the events during the Battles with Cossaeans:

[...] As for the troops led by Antigonus, whenever they came to these difficult passes, they fell into dangers in which no aid could reach them. For the natives, who were familiar with the region and had occupied the heights in advance, kept rolling great rocks in quick succession upon the marching troops; and at the same time, sending arrows thick and fast, they wounded men who were able neither to turn aside the missiles nor to avoid them because of the difficulties of the terrain. Since the road was precipitous and nearly impassable, the elephants, the cavalry, and even the heavy armed soldiers found themselves forced at the same time to face death and to toil hard, without being able to help them. Caught in such toils, Antigonus regretted that he had not heeded Pithon when he advised him to purchase the right of passage with money; nevertheless, after losing many men and endangering the entire undertaking, he came with difficulty on the ninth day safe into the settled part of Media (Diod.19.19.6- 8).

Although Seleucus, Alexander's general, in 312 B.C. create an empire extended from most of the Near Eastern to the Asian territories of the Persian Empire, we do not hear Cossaeans during his reign. He took control over the Persis and Media. Thus, by taking the control of the west of Iran,

Alexander at the collection of Falak-ol-Aflak Museum.

Seleucus extend his authority on the Zagros Mountains region and its inhabitants. Seleucus too gained military and political success. One of the main reasons for the military and political success of Seleucus was his ability to find common ground with the native populations in Babylonia and Iran (Olbrycht 2013: 168). It was the western Iranians who made up the core of Seleucus' troops and enabled him to dislodge Antigonus' and Demetrius' armies from Babylonia- one of the most unexpected victories of the period. It can be safely assumed that Seleucus could recruit at least 35000 western Iranians, including superior cavalry, excellent light infantry (archers and slingers), and pantodapoi (phalanx soldiers) (Olbrycht 2013: 169). In 311 B.C., during Antigonus' invasion to Babylonia, Seleucus may have received help from Cossaeans, whose ancestors were the ancient Kassites (Grainger 2014). However, it did not register in historical books.

Throughout the Seleucid period, there are only two episodes regarding Cossaeans (Cissians). Both episodes were occurred during the reign of Antiochus III. The first when Antiochus III faced to the revolt of Molo, satrap of Media. We know little in detail about the principality Molon organized (c.222 B.C), as our sources are Mediterranean-centered, and therefore less cognizant of or concerned with the regions further east. The Median and Persian lands sustained this rebel. Control of this country gave Molon plenty of supplies to support the considerable army he had brought out of Media. The soldier-settlers of Media, presumably bolstered by those of Persia, gave him something of a phalanx, and his Iranian subjects provided numbers of the best horsemen (Roberts & Bennett 2012).

Polybius narrated the Cissaious or Cassious during the rebel of Molon:

[...] range which has an ascent of a hundred stades, and consisting as it does of different branches meeting at various points, contains in the intervals depressions and deep valleys inhabited by the Cossaei, Corbrenae, Carchi and other barbarous tribes with a high reputation for their warlike qualities [...] (Polyb.5.44.7).

As Molon crossed the Zagros he also recruited the savage tribesman of these rugged mountains. The Cossaeans, who has troubled both Alexander and Antigonus the one-eyed in their time, the Corbrenae and the Carchi were some of these; all of whom are known as exceptional warriors with such martial resources and his enemies handing him the initiative, Molon took the advantage, moving towards the eastern capital of the Seleucid kingdom (Roberts and Bennett 2012).

Polybius in another part of his Histories two times mentioned Cossaeans (Cissians) among the army of Antiochus III during the battle of Raphia:

[...] There were Agrianian and Persian bowmen and slingers to the number of two thousand and with the two thousand Thracians, all under the command of Menedemus of Alabanda. Aspasianus the Mede had under him a force of about five thousand Medes, Cissians (Κισσίων), Cadusians, and Carmanians [...] (Polyb.5.79).

A passage of Polybius is the only post-Alexander reference to Cissians which does not go back to Herodotus. These narrate were the last hints which referred to The Cossaeans (Cissians):

[...] On his (Antiochus) extreme left wing he posted two thousand horse under the command of Themison, next to these the Gardacian and Lydian javelineers, then three thousand light-armed troops under Menedemus, after these the Cissians (Κισσίους), Medes, and Carmanians, and finally, in contact with the phalanx, the Arabs and neighbouring tribes (Polyb.5. 82. 9- 12).

Conclusion

According to the Assyrian documents, Greek and Roman sources an ethnic group lived in the Zagros Mountains. Their land more probable was bigger than the administrative borders of Luristan. Presumably, it should be somewhere between the Greater Media and Susa or Chaspes River. Luri is the common language of these peoples in this area.

Although due to the lack of information it is hard to say Kassites were the Cissians and Cossaeans, no archaeological evidence has appeared to inform this view. Their ability to war and the same area they inhabited persuade us to consider us at least as an ethnic group who lived for a very long period in Central Zagros Mountains.

Assyrian documents refer to the Kassites during their campaigns in at the same time they turned to the country of Ellipi. It seems both, Kassites and Ellipi lived in Central Zagros Mountains. Ellipi occupied a position intermediate between the Elamite and the Assyrian indications at present are that Pish-Kouh, northern Luristan, is the area which best fits the evidence for Ellipi.

Nearchus was the first Greek who provide first-hand knowledge of Cossaeans, the territory of the Cossaeans neighbored that of the Medes and neighbours of the Uxians. They inhabited in depressions and deep valleys' of Mount Zagros with a high reputation for their warlike qualities. Presumably, during the later Achaemenid period, the Kassites, referred to as Cossaeans who lived in the mountains to the east of Media and were one of several "predatory" mountain tribes that regularly extracted "gifts" from the Achaemenid Persians. Furthermore, the Persian kings, in travelling from his winter capital of Susa to his summer capital at Ecbatana, had to cross the country of the Cossaeans. The Cossaeans received gifts from the Persian kings when they passed from their land. They were subjugated by Alexander the Great but it seems it does not take much time and less than 10 years later Antigonos, had to laboriously fight his way through the land of the Cossaeans when going from Susiana to Ecbatana.

Perhaps we should treat Kassites, Cissians and Cossaeans as the same people with several different variants of one and the same name from different periods. Kassites (17th- 8th B.C.) in Assyrian documents, Cissian (c. 5th century B.C) was used by Herodotus and Cossaeans (c. 4th-3th century B.C) by the Historian of Alexander the Great. Kassites, Cissian and Cossaeans reflect the pronunciation of quite different periods. No one of Alexander's historians referred to the Cissians who Herodotus neither mentioned nor used of his passages. If we accept the Cissians and Cossaeans were the same; they were the famous tribe who had a great ability to war. They appeared whenever a battle was. They also received gifts from the Persian kings for the safe route and at the same time, they were among the Persian kings' army during the battles as Thermopylae¹⁰ and Gaugamela¹¹. Later they joined to Alexander army and perhaps Seleucus' army and finally, they were a part of Antiochus III's army in Raphia Battle.

10. At Thermopylae Cissians fought alongside the Medes against the Spartans (Herod.7.210; Diod.11.7.2).

11. Darius III's army at Gaugamela included 'those who dwelt in the mountains of the Cossaei' [Curtius, IV.12.10] and these are undoubtedly the Cossaeans.



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