Notes on the Scythians in Athens in the Archaic period.

Among the most interesting and particularly heated discussions about the relations between Athens and the Black Sea region, the relationship between the Scythians and archaic Athens occupies a considerable space.

Starting from the study of some arcaich-Attic vase painting dating from a period from the mid-sixth century to the early decades of the fifth a.C.- some scholars have conjectured a connection between Athens and the Scythians as early as the sixth century BC.

Especially more recently, there is another hypothesis: Scythian warriors represented on Attic vases are simply warriors dressed in the manner of barbarians.

Added to this, there is another interesting issue, concerning the presence of Scythian archers in the Athenian police force, a debate not finally solved.

With this paper I would then focus again on these questions, highlighting the political and social consequences of a possible relationship between the Scythians and Athens in archaic period.

Some scholars argue that the evidence we have is not consistent to believe a Scythian presence in Athens in the sixth century. It is also true that an Athenian interest in the Pontic region is already testified in the sixth century by archaeological evidence in the area, as we will analyze, and that the trade with the Black Sea region from Athens was already thick from the colonization of Thracian Chersonese by Miltiades.

Who are therefore the warriors represented on the attic vases: Scythians or generically barbarians?