technically known as the “ snathe,” “ sned ” or “ snead ” *(snoedan* to cut, cf. Ger. *schneiden).* The word in O.E. is *side* or *sipe* M.E. *sithe;* the mis-spelling “ scythe ” is paralleled by “ scent,” and is possibly due to the Fr. *scier,* saw; the word means “ an instrument for cutting,” and is derived from the root *sak-,* seen in Lat. *secare,* to cut, “ saw ” and “ sickle,” the oldest of reaping implements, with deep curved blade and short handle. The same root is seen in the “ sedge,” *i.e.* cutting or sword-grass, strictly applied to plants of the genus *Carex,* but loosely used of flags, rushes and other grasses growing in marshy places (see Reaping).

SCYTHIA (Gr. ∑κυ‰), originally *(e.g* in Herodotus iv. 1-142), the country of the Scythae or the country over which the nomad Scythae were lords, that is, the steppe from the Carpathians to the Don. With the disappearance of the Scythae as an ethnic and political entity, the name of Scythia gives place in its original seat to that of Sarmatia, and is artificially applied by geographers, on the one hand, to the Dobrudzha, the lesser Scythia of Strabo, where it remained in official use until Byzantine times; on the other, to the unknown regions of northern Asia, the Eastern Scythia of Strabo, the “ Scythia intra et extra Imaum ” of Ptolemy; but throughout classical literature Scythia generally meant all regions to the north and north-east of the Black Sea, and a Scythian *(Scythes)* any barbarian coming from those parts. Herodotus *(l.c.),* to whom with Hippocrates *(De aere,* &c. 24, sqq.) we owe our earliest knowledge (Homer, *Il.* xiii. 5, speaks of “ mare-milkers,” and Hesiod, *ap.* Strabo vii. 3 (7) mentions Scythae) of the land and its inhabitants, tries to restrict this merely geographical usage and to confine the word Scyth to a certain race or at any rate to that race and its subjects, but even he seems to slip back into the wider use. Hence there is much doubt as to his exact meaning.

His account of the geography falls into two irreconcilable parts; one (iv. 99 sqq.), in connexion with the tale of the invasion of Darius, makes of Scythia a kind of chessboard 4000 stades square on which the combatants can make their moves quite unhindered by the great rivers: the other (16-20), founded on what he learned from Greeks of Olbia and supplemented by the tales of the 7th century traveller Aristeas of Proconnesus, is not very far removed from first-hand information and can be made more or less to tally with the lie of the land. In accordance with this we can give the relative positions of the various tribes, and an excursus on the rivers (47-57) lets us define their actual seats. In western Scythia, starting from Olbia and going north­wards, we have Callippidae on the lower Hypanis (Bug), Alazones where the Tyras (Dniester) and Hypanis come near each other in their middle courses, and Aroteres (“ Ploughmen ’’) above them. These tribes raised wheat, presumably in the river valleys, and sold it for export; in the eastern half from west to east were Georgi (perhaps the same as Aroteres) between the Ingul and the Borysthenes (Dnieper), nomad Scyths and Royal Scyths between the Borysthenes and the Tánais (Don). Above all these stretched a row of non-Scythian tribes from west to east: on the Maris (Maros) in Transylvania the Agathyrsi; Neuri in Podolia and Kiev, Androphagi and Melanchlaeni in Poltava, (Ryazan) and Tambov. On the lower Don and Volga we have the Sauromatae, and on the middle course of the Volga the Budini with the great wooden town of Gelonus and its semi-Greek inhabitants. From this region started an important trade route eastward by the Thyssagetae among the southern Urals, the Iyrcae on the Tobol and Irtysh to the Kirgiz steppe, where dwelt other Scyths, regarded as colonists of those in Europe: then by the Argippaei in the Altai and the Issedones in the Tarym basin, to the one-eyed Arimaspi on the borders of China, who stole their gold from the watchful griffins, and who marched with goat-footed men and Hyperboreans reaching to the sea. To the south of Scythia the Crimean mountains were inhabited by a non-Sythic race, the Tauri. (See also articles on these tribes.)

*Ethnology.—*Herodotus expressly divides the Scythians into the Agriculturists, Callipidae, Alazones, Aroteres and Georgi in the western part of the country, and the Nomads with the

Royal Scyths to the east. The latter claimed dominion over all the rest. The question arises whether we have to do with the various tribes of one race in different stages of civilization, or with a mixed population called by foreigners after the ruling tribe. The latter seems by far the more probable. The affinities of this tribe have been sought in various directions, and the evidence suggests that it was itself of mixed blood. We know that in the 2nd century a.d., when the steppes were dominated by the Sarmatae *(q.v.),* the majority of the barbarian names in the inscriptions of Olbia, Tanais, and Panticapaeum were Iranian, and can infer that the Sarmatae spoke an Iranian language. Pliny speaks of their descent from the Medes. Now the Sarmatae are represented as half-caste Scyths speaking a corrupt variety of Scythian. Presumably, therefore, the Scyths also spoke an Iranian dialect. But of the Scythic words preserved by Herodotus some are Iranian, others, especially the names of deities, have found no satisfactory explanation in any Indo-European language. Indeed they rather suggest a Ugrian origin. Nevertheless, the general opinion has been that the Scyths were Iranian. The present writer believes that they were a horde which came down from upper Asia, conquered an Iranian-speaking people, and in time adopted the speech of its subjects. The settled Scythians would be the remains of this Iranian population, or the different tribes of them may have been connected with their neighbours beyond Scythian dominion—Thracian Getae and Arimaspi, Slavonic Neuri, Finnish Androphagi and such like. The Cimmerians who preceded the Scythians used Iranian proper names, and probably represented this Iranian element in greater purity. Herodotus gives three legends of the origin of the Scyths (iv. 5-12); these, though they contradict each other, can be reconciled with the view stated above. Two of them seem to be the same story; one is very strongly Hellenized, the other, in more or less native shape, is shortly this. The tribe is autochthonous, claiming descent from a son of the river Borysthenes Targitaos, who lived a thousand years before. Of his three sons the youngest Colaxais is preferred by an ordeal of picking up certain objects which fell from heaven,—a plough, a yoke, an axe and a cup,—and becomes the ancestor of the ruling clan of Paralatae; from the other sons, Lipoxais and Harpoxais, are descended minor clans, and the name of the whole people is Scoloti, not Scythae, which is used by the Greeks alone. In this story the names make sense in Iranian, the tribes are not again mentioned except when this passage is copied, the objects are hardly such as would be held sacred by nomads, the form of ordeal is to be paralleled in Iranian legends, and the people say themselves that they are not really Scythae. Surely this is the national legend of the agricultural Scythians about Olbia, and the name Scoloti, by which careful modern writers designate the Royal Scyths, is the true designation of the subject race. The royal line of these is quite distinct from the true Royal Scyths, who, like most nomad conquerors, allowed their subjects to preserve their own organizations.

The third account fails chiefly in being too plausible, but there seems no reason to reject it as an artificial combination of unconnected facts. According to it the Scyths dwell in Asia, and were forced by the Massagetae over the Araxes (Volga ?) into the land of the Cimmerians. Aristeas says that the first impulse came from the Arimaspi, who displaced the Issedones, who in turn fell upon the Scyths. This comes to much the same thing, as the Massagetae seem to have contained an element which had come in from the land of the Issedones. The Scyths having fallen upon them from the north-east, the Cimmerians appear to have given way in two directions, towards the south- west, where the tombs of their kings were shown on the Tyras (Dniester) and one body joined with the Treres of Thrace in invading Asia Minor by the Hellespont; and towards the south-east where another body threatened the Assyrians, who called them Gimirrai (Hebrew Gomer; Gen. xi.). They were followed by the Scyths (Ashguzai, Heb. Ashkenaz) whom the Assyrians welcomed as allies and used against the Cimmerians, against the Medes and even against Egypt. Hence the references to the Scyths in the Hebrew prophets (Jer. iv. 3, vi. 7). This