

The archaeology of the Kaška

Jak Yakar

Tel Aviv

Hittite sources referring to the Kaška provide certain geographic details of their habitats and the nature of their society. Among these sources, a passage in the "Annals" of Tudhaliya (I) describes this king's hot pursuit after the "Kaška enemy into their forested mountainous territory dotted with strongholds difficult to approach" (CTH 142/KUB XXIII: 11, 12). In the "Annals" of Muršili II (CTH 61), there is a description of this king's encounter with the Kaška in the 15th year of his reign. This confrontation took place in an isolated mountainous territory apparently containing no significant settlements. In the accounts of the 16th year of his reign, in the same "Annals", Muršili provides a rather similar description, this time concerning the Pala territory. Most likely located southwest of the Kaška Land, the territory of Pala is described as "a country without defences; having no fortified towns or sites on which one could fall back at all. It is a country (rather) in its natural state. Hutupiyanza, its ruler, having no army at his disposal to protect this country, built hideouts in the mountains, and with a small number of men he recruited managed not surrender any territory of Pala to the enemy (meaning the Kaška)" (Garstang & Gurney, *The Geography*, p. 30). This description suggests that the physical geography of Pala was similar to the topography of the Kaška occupied territory. Therefore, we may assume that the second millennium settlement pattern, particularly in the LBA, in these two mountainous regions could not have been very different (Yakar, *MDOG* 112 (1980); *Ethnoarchaeology* (2000), pp. 283-285). Regarding the structure of the Kaška society, the "Deeds" of Šuppiliuma provide a number of references as to its tribal nature¹.

Landscapes that fit such geographical descriptions north of Hatti proper exist in the central Black Sea region, from Sinop to as far as Ordu in the east. In the long conflict years with the Hittite state, the Black Sea Mountains with their dense forests no doubt offered the autonomy seeking Kaška groups, and their warriors in particular, long-term refuge from capture and destruction at the hands of Hittite troops. Despite the fact that the number of sites yielding second millennium material in the provinces of Çankırı, Kastamonu, Sinop, Samsun, Ordu, Amasya and Tokat have increased considerably in recent years, the geographical borders of the "Kaška Land" remain unsolved due to the elusive nature of their material culture remains.

On the other hand, areas that were the scenes of armed confrontations are far easier identified when identifying the possible causes of destruction with information derived from local literary sources. For instance, at Maşat Höyük the texts describe an aggravated conflict situation that developed in the proximity of a border area between the Hittites and the Kaška.

¹ Abbreviations: AM = A. Götze, *Die Annalen des Mursilis*. MVAG 39. Leipzig 1933; CTH = E. Laroche, *Catalogue des textes hittites*. Paris 1971; KUB = Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi. Berlin; KBo = Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi. Leipzig and Berlin. For the "Deeds" see, Güterbock, *JCS* 10 (1956); For an indepth study on the Kaška see von Schuler, *Die Kaškaer*.

In this case it seems that the Kaška were advancing across the Kelkit (Kummešmaha) and threatening the Hittite settlements².

In the early seventies, members of the Samsun Expedition investigated certain districts in this vast mountainous territory crossed by rivers and dotted by relatively isolated intermountain plains. The search for sites that might have been the location of Hittite towns and cult centers such as Nerik, Hanhana, Tanzilia, Aštigurka, Talmaliya, Zihhana, and so on, revealed an interesting distribution pattern of second millennium BC settlements in areas conceded *de facto* to the Kaška due to the absence of effective Hittite control. These investigations, and others more recent, remain inconclusive, because in areas that particular landmarks seem to recall the geographical details of town locations mentioned in Hittite texts, no LBA settlement could be identified except for those along or in the proximity of the main routes of communication.

The most striking example is the survey Ali Dinçol and I carried out in the triangle of Durağan-Kargı-Osmancık over 30 years ago. In the area of Kargı, the Kızılırmak flowing in a westerly direction turns northeast towards the Black Sea, creating a sharp bend. Güterbock in a review article published 44 years ago (1961) suggested that Nerik, a very important Hittite cult center that fall into the Kaška hands, might have been located near this sharp bend of the river. His proposal was based on a passage in a Hittite document (KUB XXXVI, 89:12-14) that read: "The River *Maraššanta* previously flew in another course, but the Weather God turned him and let him flow to the Sun God of the Gods. He let him flow near the city of Nerik." The field survey indeed revealed a mound (Cin Tepe III) situated ca 400 m north of the Devrez – Kızılırmak junction, and ca 10 km west of Kargı (Dinçol & Yakar, *Belleten* 152 (1974), p. 577; Yakar and Dinçol, *Tel Aviv* 2 (1974). However, despite this promising location, the fact remains that among the predominantly EBA surface pottery, no MBA or LBA pieces could be identified.

In recent years, the geographical scope of archaeological surveys in the Black Sea region expanded considerably to include territories presumably occupied by the western Kaška tribes, and parts of the Land of Pala and Tummanna. Project Paphlagonia headed by R. Matthews investigated the history of settlement in some areas of west-central Black Sea region, which may have been part of the territory of Pala, and perhaps that of Tummanna. The archaeological surveys concentrated in the districts of Merkez, Kızılırmak, Eldivan, Yapraklı, Korgun, Şabanözü, Bayramören and Atkaracalar in the Çankırı province, and in the districts of Eskipazar and Ovacık in Karabük. In the course of these investigations, well over 200 sites, spread over an area of ca 8,500 km², were recorded (Matthews, *An Ar* 4 (1998); Mathews, *Proceedings*). Of the total number, ca. 30 sites are said to have been occupied in the LBA. It is not surprising that these mound settlements spaced out in the undulated countryside are situated in locations with easy access to water, arable land, and along natural routes of communication. According to the preliminary survey reports, there appears to be a marked increase in the scale and intensity of settlement in the LBA, but certainly not in militarily untenable isolated habitats.

² In his instructions to local officials Tudhaliya II/III particularly refer to military measures against the Kaška raiding parties endangering the farming communities (see Alp 1991; Klinger 1995). Bryce is in the opinion that the Mašat archive documents could be dated to the reigns of Tudhaliya I/II and Arnuwanda I (1998: 137, n. 20).

In the context of recent archaeological explorations in the north-central periphery of Hatti, one should mention the field surveys of M. Özşait in the Amasya province. He succeeded in recording previously unnoticed pre-Classical sites, some of which bear signs of second millennium BC occupation³.

However, despite these field investigations short of excavations, the exact dating, nature, and distribution pattern of second millennium sites remain largely inconclusive.

Despite Hittite references to the Kaška communities, the absence of LBA pottery in the surface collections at a large number of mounds in the Samsun province is confusing. The current archaeological picture could indicate a change in the settlement pattern in the aftermath of the Assyrian Colony Period. At İkiztepe too, although the excavations revealed traces of MBA settlement, discontinuity in occupation in the LBA is puzzling. The MBA pottery and metal assemblages suggest that the inhabitants of İkiztepe, and many other contemporary communities in the Bafra plain, maintained regular contact with Central Anatolian settlements, perhaps even with centers that played a key role in the organized interregional trade during the Assyrian Colony period. Even prior to that, the change from a regional handmade pottery tradition to Central Anatolian wheel-made ceramics observed at İkiztepe at the end of the third millennium BC corroborates the view that the Black Sea region was well incorporated within the north-central Anatolian culture zone during the early centuries of the second millennium BC. Therefore, it is logical to assume that with the formation of the Hittite Kingdom in the 17th century BC, the village and town communities in this region, perhaps despite their political aspirations for autonomy, were formally Hittite subjects.

As already pointed out, the absence of LBA occupation at İkiztepe, and many other sites in the Bafra and Çarşamba plains requires a historical explanation. Could it be that events that sealed the fate of major commercial towns and certain capitals of principalities in central Anatolia following the end of this prosperous era created a political vacuum in this region too? One cannot entirely rule out this possibility. However, since these were mostly rural communities, additional or other factors could have instigated a change in the settlement pattern. For instance, a shift to a more pastoral subsistence economy could have dictated a semi-sedentary or semi-nomadic settlement pattern in the early second quarter of the second millennium BC. Considering that no major environmental change affected the region at this time, it is likely that the change in the settlement pattern was related to the Kaška-Hittite conflict. Although, there are no clear references to hostilities at this time in the Hittite sources, the presence of the Kaška in parts of the Black Sea region, already in the days of the Old Hittite Kingdom, can be also inferred from the treaty document of Hattušili III with Tiliura (KUB XXI, 29/ CTH 89; Garstang and Gurney, *The Geography*, pp. 119-120).

During the reign of Hantili (II?), probably the son of Alluwamna, the Kaška groups made history by capturing Nerik. (Houwink ten Cate, *Florilegium Anatolicum*, pp. 160-161)⁴.

³ For details see, Özşait, *An Ar* XV (2002).

⁴ This dramatic event is referred to both by Hattušili III in his "Apology" (CTH 81) 10b, III 46-49, and by his son Tudhaliya IV (KUB XXV 21, 2-5). For discussions leading to the current dating of this

Tiliura, probably situated in the general area of the Kelkit and Yeşilırmak junction was also abandoned at this time (KUB XXI 29, I 11-12/CTH 89).

This king's effort to fortify Hattuša (CTH 11) might have been in connection with the threat the Kaška posed to the heartland centers of the Hittite Kingdom.

However, considering that the Kaška were by the end of the sixteenth or early fifteenth century BC strong enough to wrestle away the much revered cult place of the Hittite Weather god, as well as Tiliura and additional settlements, could indicate that they had already become a foe to be reckon with. In the mid-sixteenth century BC, the military campaign carried out by Ammuna son of Zidanta I, to Tipiya in the northern territory, may have aimed at curtailing the gradually increasing power of the Kaška in the region⁵.

Nevertheless, the situation could not have reached an irreversible crisis situation since Telepinu was able to visit towns close to Nerik alluded in the Annals of Muršili II (CTH 6).

The treaty document with Tiliura describes attempts made by Muršili to reconstruct and repopulate some of the long abandoned settlements in the frontier zone. In Hattušili's words, the resettlement efforts made by his father Muršili did not yield lasting results. This because, rather than returning the former population to the region, he chose to settle civilian captives rounded up during his military campaigns (KUB XXI, 29; CTH 89; Garstang and Gurney, *The Geography*, pp. 119-120).

Going back to the archaeology of the Kaška, field investigations have to take into consideration not only the topography of the land or the organic character of the traditional Black Sea architecture, but also the LBA historical picture of this region. In other words, according to known historical sources, major disturbances in the settlement pattern could have hardly occurred prior to the fifteenth century BC. In instances of settlement abandonment in the course of the MBA, the causes should perhaps be sought in the local conflicts perhaps involving the Kaška, and not necessarily in the Hittite-Kaška encounters.

The Kaška taking advantage of the high relief and compartmental topography of the Black Sea region, and the tribal nature of their society could have gradually organized an effective opposition to the Hittites, perhaps starting as early as in the later part of the 16th century BC. In the process, they may have interfered with the economic activity of the local farmers, disrupting the development and continuity of sedentary communities in the more secluded habitats of the Black Sea. It is highly doubtful that any of the Hittite kings could have achieved long-term success in re-establishing lasting state authority and security necessary for the pursuit of large-scale farming in this fertile region.

The absence of culturally identifiable dense presence of the Kaška in the plains of Bafra or Çarşamba, leads to the following assumption:

In order to defend themselves against the Hittite army incursions, the majority of Kaška communities could have preferred the live in the small and dispersed mountain hamlets. Living in the indefensible open permanent villages in the Bafra and Çarşamba

event see: von Schuler, *Die Kaškäer*, pp. 24-27; Klinger, *ZA* (1995), p. 84; Freu, *Congresso*, p. 135; Bryce, *The Kingdom*, p. 121, n. 68.

⁵ This town is included in the list of various campaigns carried out by this king in the "Chronicle of Ammuna" (CTH 18). It must be pointed out that Klinger, *ZA* (1995), p. 90 does not entirely agree with the dating of this document. See also, Bryce, *The Kingdom*, p. 109, n. 29.

plains would have increased the risk of decimation and capture of non-combatant Kaška folks by Hittite troops.

Once in the mountains, they could have subsisted on semi-nomadic economic activities involving herding, horticulture, hunting, and foraging. This does not mean that the Kaška tribes were not involved in agriculture, or that the only Kaška farmers were those settled in Hittite controlled districts as in the case of Tiliura. In the "Treaty of Hattušili with Tiliura", the Hittite king remarks that "the towns which the governor of the land govern is inhabited by both the Hittites and Kaška-men" (KUB 21:2,9: I, 6-12; Garstang and Gurney, *The Geography*, pp. 119-120).

Like most semi-nomadic tribes in antiquity, the Kaška communities too could have consisted of pastoral and agricultural segments that interacted socio-economically. The farmers among them could have inhabited villages concealed in the countryside of Vezirköprü, Havza and Ladik plain. In times of conflicts with the Hittites, or regardless, these farmers too could have pursued vertical transhumance spending the spring and summer months in the Black Sea mountains. Such assumed mobility in the settlement pattern, most likely with variable migration paths and summer site locations in the mountains, would hardly produce the kind of archaeological records we expect to find in permanent Hittite settlements.

We may assume that prominent landmarks would have constituted the borders of the Kaška with the Hittite Upper Land, Pala and Tummanna. The eastern Kaška territory could have included the Çarşamba plain, the lower Yeşilırmak and the Kelkit valleys. The Bafra plain including the lower Kızılırmak valley, the districts of Durağan, Kargı, could have constituted the central Kaška region. The Sinop and Kastamonu provinces including the area south of the Ilgaz Mountains could have been territories inhabited not only by the western Kaska tribes, but also by farmers of Dahara River Land, identified with the eastern Gökırmak valley, as well as communities of Tummanna and Pala.

Not only its fertile habitats, location of cult centers, security considerations, but also its mineral resources may have convinced the Hittites that the central Black Sea region was an important asset worth to hold on. Among the mineral resources, the Murgul and Küre copper deposits, the copper, lead and silver deposits between Ünye and Fatsa seem to have been exploited in antiquity. Moreover, the copper deposits in Merzifon-Tavşan Mountain, and the Kozlu mines were most likely exploited since the EBA. About 5 km west of Gümüşhacıköy, there is an important silver mine with old workings. Together with the Derealan copper deposits further north, they might have been exploited in the LBA.

Assuming that the province of Tokat could have been a part of the Hittite Upper Land, which bordered on the eastern Kaška territory in the north, the Kelkit river could have constituted a natural border between the Hittites and the Kaška established already in the Old Hittite Kingdom. Along this valley, Untepe situated ca 9 km west of Erbaa was inhabited in the second millennium BC. Another mound with similar material is located 15 km west of Niksar on the Niksar-Gökçeli road. It is important to note that both of these sites are located south of the river. Tümbü Tepe on the eastern bank of Yeşilırmak near Ayvacık is one of the few second millennium BC sites in the Çarşamba plain. One cannot exclude the possibility that similar small hillside villages existed in the densely wooded territory north of the Kelkit valley presumed to be part of the eastern Kaska territory. Pihuniya, the eastern

Kaska tribal leader from Tipiya, could have attacked the Upper Land descending from this area (AM 86-91).

Going back to the Samsun-Çorum road, which was the main artery linking the central Black Sea region to Hatti proper, it must have been of strategic importance to the Hittites. The fact that a number of settlements along this route carry LBA material seems to confirm this assumption⁶.

North of Çorum, the western branch of this road leads first to Osmancık, and then turning eastwards to Gümüşhacıköy and Merzifon linking up with the Amasya-Havza road. As for the eastern branch, it directly connects to Merzifon. At the Havza junction, the western road reaches the Bafra plain via Vezirköprü and Alaçam, and the other to the Black Sea coast via Kavak. At Kavak this route follows a path west of the Murat stream reaching the Black Sea coast near Dündartepe in Samsun. Along the path of this route, and beyond towards the Yeşilırmak valley, there are a number of second millennium settlements such as Kaleyeri Tepesi, Çamlık, Bağ Tepesi, Dedeüstü Tepesi. Such locations would have been ideal to establish Hittite outposts to secure this line of communication. Northwest of Vezirköprü, the mound of Oymağaç (Höyük Tepe) did produce both pottery and architectural evidence pointing to the presence of a relatively large and fortified Hittite settlement. In fact, this settlement could have controlled the southern approaches of a mountain road connecting the area of Vezirköprü, southeast of the Kızılırmak, with Alaçam-Sivritepe, northeast of the Soluk Mountains, part of the Isfendiya range, and the Black Sea coast. Sivritepe is a relatively large and perhaps fortified Bronze Age settlement situated on a high hill overlooking both the coastal plain, and the valley south of Alaçam. However, without excavations it is difficult to establish whether it was inhabited in the mid-second millennium BC, or later. This impressive mound may well have been an important settlement or even a cult center, like Nerik for instance, conceded to the Kaška during the reign of Hantili. One of the most impressive second millennium BC sites in the Black Sea region is Salur Höyük (Yüktepe), which is located south of the Karadağ Pass. Its geographical position would have allowed the control of an important road junction connecting the settlements in the Merzifon, Amasya, Ladik and Taşova with those in the Samsun province.

Relying on the identification of the Kelkit with the Kummesmaha, it could be proposed that LBA sites south of the river, including those in the Erbaa plain, Taşova, and to a certain extent in Ladik could have been border settlements inhabited by integrated ethnic Kaška and Hittite farmers. In the "Treaty", the clause that no armed Kaška person will enter Tiliura suggests that the Kummešmaha river divided a territory whose southern and/or western areas were inhabited by Hittite subjects that included pacified Kaška communities living in small villages and towns, and its eastern and/or northern areas remaining the domain of the eastern Kaška tribes. In Muršili's account of the northwestern campaign, there is reference to Kaška groups residing in Hatti. However, these having joined a rebellion were now trying to go back to Kaška (KBo 14:20, 1 = KUB 34: 33; Houwink ten Cate, *Anatolica* 1 (1967), p. 53).

⁶ In fact, principal mounds that produced evidence for second millennium BC occupation are mostly located along the main communication routes between Hatti proper, and the Black Sea region.

Such brief remarks suggest that even when integrated, the Kaška did not give up on their political aspirations, therefore probably considered by Hittite kings hardly trustworthy as Hittite subjects.

In conclusion, the combined evaluation of the archaeological data and pertinent Hittite texts could lead to the following tentative assessment:

The paucity of LBA settlements in the Samsun and Sinop provinces suggest that Hittites could not fully control regions inhabited by the troublesome Kaska tribes. Passages in the "Deeds of Šuppilulima" as in: (12) "... [my] father (Muršili II referring to Šuppilulima I) had built fortifications behind empty towns of the whole country, which had been emptied by the enemy...." or in connection to Masa and Kammalla (E7): "While my grandfather[was] in the Land of Kammalla,... in the rear, the Kaška enemy took weapons again, and,...again destroyed the empty towns which [my father] had built fortifications", seem to confirm this assessment (Güterbock, *JCS* 10 (1956), pp. 41-68, 75-98, 101-130).

In the Narrative of Accession ii, 3 ff., (Sturtevant and Bechtel 1935), Hattušili III describes to the revolt of the Kaška and their allies during the reign of Muwattalli: "During his absence they took away the land of La[nda](?), and the land Marišta, and the fortified cities. The enemy crossed the Marašantiya and began to attack... the land of Kaneš, and Kuruštama and Gaziura revolted, and they began to attack the ruined cities of Hatti." Such recurrent armed conflicts resulting in destroyed settlements could not have encouraged displaced farmers return to their land.

The Kaška had the tactical advantage of mobility against the large Hittite army formations. It allowed them to break contact, evade the enemy, and regroup in well-hidden mountain villages. Their ability to organize in large tribal confederations, or occasionally enter into alliances with other Hittite enemies posed a serious threat to northern Hittite districts. Passages in the "Deeds" of Šuppilulima, such as: "The [Kaška] assembled nine tribal groups....", or "When [the king] arrived in the country [he found that] the Kaška enemy whom [the king] met inside the country consisted of twelve tribes", and a further passage "and all the Kaška troops who had come to help Kathariya..." lend support to this assumption.

The settlement pattern along the lower Yeşilırmak and the Kelkit, where second millennium settlements are mainly found to the south of the Kelkit and west of the lower Yeşilırmak fits rather well with the description of the Kummešmaha region in the Hittite source. Tiliura could perhaps be identified with the mound situated near Niksar or that near Untepe in Erbaa. The Kelkit and the lower Yeşilırmak may have been defensible border demarcations respected by both parties.

Despite various Hittite measures to contain them in their restricted mountain habitats, the Kaska tribes enjoyed a rarely challenged freedom of movement which allowed them to raid Hittite settlements (KUB 23:11-12, Rev. 15-23; "Annals" of Muršili, year 15).

Measures the Hittites took to curb their offensive actions included:

1) The fortification of border settlements and the repopulation of abandoned villages, including the building of outposts and strongholds in areas that the Kaška raids on Hittite

territory originated⁷. In the archaeology of the Kaška, evidence corroborating such actions on the part of the Hittite kings should be preferably sought in mound settlements spread along the principal routes linking Hatti proper to the Black Sea region. Potential sites can be found in Alaçam (e.g. Sivritepe), Samsun (e.g. Dündartepe, which was excavated in the past), Kavak (e.g. Kaledoruğu), north of Ladik (e.g. Salur Höyük), Vezirköprü (e.g. Höyüktepe, Oymağaç) (Yakar, *MDOG* 112 (1980)). Traces of fortifications and pottery of the LBA II period in these and similarly located additional sites could then substantiate the veracity of Hittite claims.

2) The control of major and secondary routes to the north in order to maintain communications with the settlements and outposts checking on hostile deployments⁸.

3) Securing political and military alliances in the northern region⁹.

4) Forced settlement of the Kaška in border districts populated by Hittite subjects and allies¹⁰.

Considering the economic interaction that must have existed between the Kaška and Hittite farmers in border districts, there is no reason to assume that the elusive Kaška pottery would look unlike the central Anatolian ceramics of the Hittite period. A hypothetical Kaška pottery produced in the local EBA tradition, perceived by some cannot be corroborated in the field. At Maşat for instance, situated in the close proximity of the Kaška territory, no such hypothetical ware group has been recognized in the published LBA pottery assemblage. Moreover, mostly locally produced tin-bronzes in the Samsun Museum collection, strengthen the view that the central Black Sea region in the LBA largely adhered to central Anatolian weapons technology and typology¹¹.

This being the case, there is no reason to hypothesize that the Kaška potters would have developed their particular brand of pottery, much inferior in fabric and technology compared to the basic central Anatolian products.

The Kaška Land should not be perceived as a broad territorial mass. Perhaps centered in the east-central Black Sea region, it seems to have consisted of bulging pockets of land inhabited by a population with a Kaška majority. These pockets expanded or shrunk in size according to the scope of Hittite success in ending or curtailing the hostile activities of the Kaška tribes. Therefore, we may assume that during and following the reign of Hantili, the Kaška territory would have been much larger than say in the reigns of Tudhaliya I/II, Tudhaliya III, Šuppiluliuma I, Muršili II or even Hattušili III¹¹.

⁷ The existence of such a policy could be inferred from KUB 21:2 II, 1-5, "Annals" of Muršili, years 5 and 16; "Deeds" of Šuppiluliuma, Fragment 3: KUB 21:29:1, 7-19.

⁸ See the relevant Maşat Letters; the "Annals" of Muršili, year 5; the "Treaty of Hattusili with Tiliura."

⁹ The "Annals" of Muršili, year 16, and the "Treaty of Hattušili with Tiliura" imply the existence of such a "national security policy"!

¹⁰ See KUB XXI:29: I, 6-12; KUB XXXIV:33 = KBo 14:20, 1. 11 The variety of MBA and LBA weapons suggest the inhabitants were adequately armed, in a way in the tradition well known in the second half of the third millennium BC. See also, Bilgi, *Metallurgists*.

¹¹ It is difficult to estimate to what extent the success of the military campaigns conducted by Tudhaliya I/II (CTH 142) against the Kaška had a lasting effect. This king may have stopped their raids but it is doubtful that he regained any substantial territory lost to the Kingdom. However, a

Finally, it could be postulated that a number of abandoned settlements in the Samsun province, among them İkiztepe, could have been transformed by the pastoralist segments of the semi-nomadic Kaška, into winter sites. The largely organic nature of Bronze Age architectural remains at İkiztepe and the surviving examples of traditional village architecture in the Bafra plain could explain the reason why Kaška villages in the Black Sea Mountains and valleys have so far evaded detection. Spread out wooden houses constructed without plastered floors, walls or mud brick built-in installations such as platforms, benches and ovens would be hardly visible without the protective cover of later periods.

Such spaced out and thinly exposed layers become fast eroded, especially in cultivated soils¹².

The systematic excavations at Oymağaç at Vezirköprü could in the near future enlighten us whether some MBA ceramic forms of domestic use remained in use in the Black Sea beyond the 18th or 17th centuries BC.

The survival of basic MBA forms well into the mid/late second millennium BC would go a long way in solving the puzzle of the evasiveness of the Kaška in the archaeological records of the Black Sea region.

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small measure of political stability might have been briefly obtained during the time of Arnuwanda I. A number of texts give the impression that this king was not sparing diplomatic efforts to stabilize the situation with the Kaška. The "Prayer of Arnuwanda and Ašmunikkal" (CTH 375) mentions the loyalty oaths taken by the Kaška tribal leaders; as for the "Oracle" (CTH 137) and "Treaties" (CTH 138-140), they refer to agreements with them.

¹² Architectural remains stand a better chance of survival when sealed between occupation layers, which for the second millennium BC is not always the case at İkiztepe. Under the thin soil cover close to mound surfaces, at best they only leave traces of log impressions. Naturally plastered floors and built in installations survive much better.

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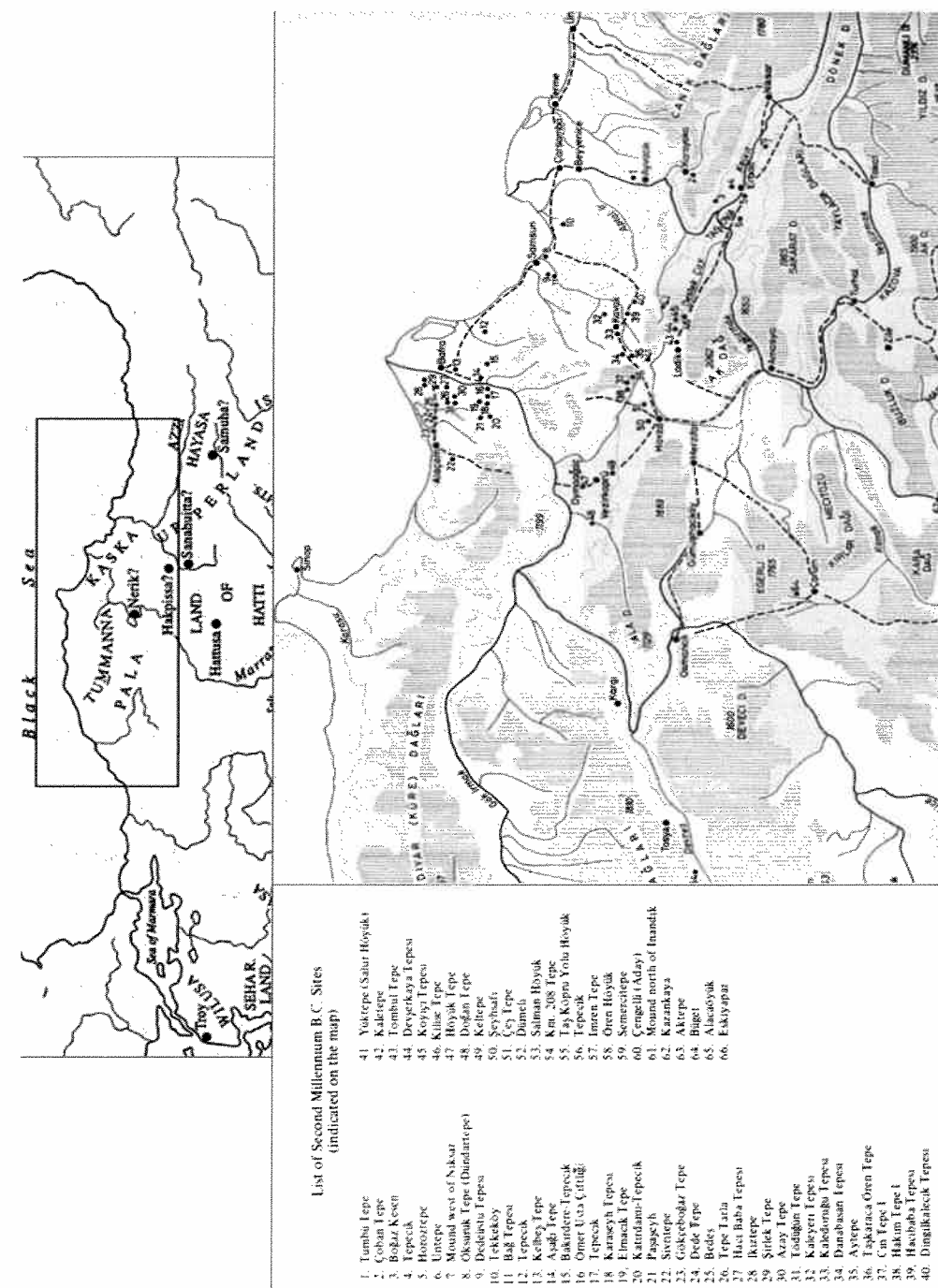


Fig. 1: Distribution of second millennium BC sites in the Central Black Sea region, and presumed location of the Kaška Land, and the provinces of Pala and Tummanna