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SAMSUN BÖLGESİ'NDE KAŞKA (GAŞKA) HİTİT MÜCADELESİ

KAŞKA (GAŞKA) AND HİTTİTE STRUGGLE AROUND SAMSUN REGION

Dursun SAĞDIŞ*

Öz

MÖ II. Binyılın ilk yarısında güçlü bir devlet inşa eden Hititler kuruluşundan itibaren genişlemeye başladı. Orta Anadolu'daki küçük krallıkları bir bir ele geçirdi. Ancak Kuzey Anadolu bölgesine yönelince Kaşkalar sert bir direniş gösterdi. Böylelikle Hititler ile Kaşkalar arasındaki amansız savaşlar başlamış oldu. Kral Hantili Dönemi'nde kült şehri olan Nerik'in (Oymaağaç/Vezirköprü) Kaşkaların eline geçmesi Hititlere büyük bir üzüntü yaşattı. Keza Hititlerin manevi dünyasında Nerik'in özel bir yeri vardı. Hititler Eski Krallık dönemlerinden yıkılış dönemlerine kadar Kaşkalar ile mücadele etti. Özellikle Hitit Kralı II. Murşili Dönemi'nde şiddetli çarpışmalar yaşandı. Ancak Kaşkalardan Nerik'i geri alamadı. Hititler bu savaşlarda çok sayıda koyun ve inek sürüleri elde etti ve birçok Kaşkalıyı da köle yaptı. Ancak Kaşkalara karşı kesin bir üstünlük sağlayamadı. Hatta birleşen Kaška boyları başkent Hattuşa'yı bile kuşattı. Nihayet Kral III. Hattuşili, Kaşkalara karşı kesin bir üstünlük sağladı. Nerik'i geri aldığı gibi Samsun bölgesini tekrar egemenliği altına alarak sınırlarını sahil bölgesine kadar genişletti.

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Hititler, Kaşkalar, Nerik/ Oymaağaç, Samsun Bölgesi, Mücadele

Abstract

Hittites, who built a strong state in the first half of II Millenium BC, started to expand together with its establishment. It occupied small kingdoms in the Central Anatolia, one by one. But, as soon as it headed to the Northern Anatolian Region, Kaškas displayed a harsh resistance. Thus, fierce battles started between the Hittites and the Kaškas. Kaškas' occupation of the cult city Nerik (Oymaağaç/Vezirköprü) during the King Hantili's era, caused a great grief among the Hittites. Because, Nerik had a very special place in the spiritual world of the Hittites. The Hittites struggled with the Kaška, from the Old Kingdom period to their downfall. Fierce battles ensued, especially during the Hittite king Muršili II's reign. But he couldn't reclaim Nerik from the Kaškas. The Hittite gained many flocks of sheep and cattle during these battles, and enslaved many Kaškans. But it could not establish a decisive superiority over the Kaškas. In fact, the united Kaška tribes even sacked the capital Hattuša. Finally, King Hattušili III, secured a certain superiority on the Kaška. He reclaimed Nerik, retook Samsun region under his rule and expanded his borders upto the coast.

Keywords: Hittites, Kaškas, Nerik/ Oymaağaç, Samsun Region, Struggle

The Hittites constructed a very strong state in the middle of II millenium BCE, covering Anatolia. This state, beginning with the founder king Anitta, practiced a spreading policy. At first, it annihilated Hatti lordships one by one. In the following period, the existance of other neighbor states were ended in a short time. But the Hittite spreading policy met a harsh resistance by the Kaška, when it turned to north. The Kaškas started to beat the Hittite borders, like the waves of the Black Sea, in a worry to protect their existance and stay in their own land. This rebellion was perhaps the first resistance against imperialism on earth.

The Kaškas, the timeless enemies and headaches of the Hittites, were the oldest known settlers of Samsun region. Oddly, these hapless people didn't leave any written trace back, to remind them in our day, save couple of pottery. We learn the information about the Kaškas again from the tablets of the Hittites, their enemies. Additionally, the Amarna texts, Egyptian inscriptions and Neo-Assyrian cuneiforms provide information in this matter, more or less.¹

Eventhough it is asserted that the Kaška, who were characterized as “Ga-aš-ga”, “(G)]a-aš-ga”² in the Hittite cuneiforms, spoke a very close lect to that of the Hittite and that even the shephards could communicate fluently,³ we do not have a certain knowledge of their origins and their language. It is not yet clarified that if they were the autochthonous people of

¹ Ünal 2003, 48.

² Murat 2008, 183.

³ Umar 2000, 9.

North Anatolia, or moved there later on.⁴ But the recent researches seem to give a hint in this matter. It is put forward that the Kaška might be a relative of the Hatti, an autochthonous people of Anatolia, moreover one of the owners of the Old Bronze Age cultures.⁵ Some scientific circles qualify the Kaškas as a people that retreated to North Anatolia with the pressure by the Hittite, and see them as the most indigenous people of the region, who live sparsely.⁶ (Figure I).



Figure I: Anatolian Landscape in 2nd Millenium BCE, Meltem Doğan Alparslan, 2007

Scientific circles argue different or similar opinions regarding the area where the Kaška lived and where it covers.⁷ The Kaška center in the Samsun region was, mainly the part between the Kızılırmak (Maraşantiya) and Yeşilirmak (**Kummeşmaha**), Bafra plain and mountain slopes, and the plains of Havza, Vezirköprü and Ladik. The Hittite assaults were usually set from this part.⁸ (Figure II). The Kaška life style without a state structure, caused a good deal of difficulties in determining their political boundaries. Would we try to draw their approximate borders, we may determine a habitat surrounded by Tummanna and Pala, i.e., Kastamonu in the westernmost; Tosya, Osmancık, Gümüşhacıköy, Merzifon, Suluova, Taşova, Erbaa, Niksar, Başçıftlık, Reşadiye in the southern line; Azzi and Hayaşa, i.e., Şebinkarahisar to the east and Giresun border to the north from there. We'd better state that this border line was subject to constant changes in a struggle between the Kaška and the Hittite.⁹ Mahmut Pehlivan indicate about this issue that Kaškas dominated in the North of Anatolia in second thousand B.C completely.¹⁰

⁴ In the researches on the Hittite inscriptions, no information about the Kaškas could be found, which would remind them of their origins except the names of places, persons and cities. Einar von Schuler, *Die Kaškaer, Ein Beitrag zur Ethnographie des Alten Kleinasien*, p. 80-84. For further information regarding the origins of the Kaška, see also. Ünal 2003, 55, 56, 59.

⁵ Murat 2016, 231-232.

⁶ Singer 1981, 123.

⁷ For the geography and proposals where the Kaška lived, see. Murat 2016, 160-161.

⁸ Yakar 2007, 257.

⁹ For the habitat of the Kaška, who were sparsed in the Black sea Region, see. Schuler, 13-14, 41, 62. See also, Dinçol-Yakar 1974, 564.

¹⁰ Pehlivan 1991, 27- 50



Figure II: Kaška Landscape according to Ali M. Dinçol, and Jak Yakar

A political union is out of question among Kaška the, who lived sparsely in the North Anatolian Region. They consisted of many tribes. Each tribe acts independently under its chief. But this fact could change against the Hittite assaults aiming their existence. Tribes living in the same region or close proximity could join their forces in the case of an assault on them.¹¹ We see this fact clearly in a text by Muršili II, where he relates the heroism of his father, Šuppiluliuma I. The text also includes the information that the Kaška consisted of 9 or 12 tribes. The Tablet also contain the information that the Kaška tribes united against the Hittite.

The text goes;

15- 16- *My father encountered the Kaška enemy of twelve tribes, in the land.*

17- *The Gods aided my father. (Thus) he killed the Kaška enemy*

18- *the soldiers of the tribes, wherever they were caught.*¹²

The Hittites showed a special interest in the Black Sea region. For them, this region was a kind of source of richness. The rich pastures, fruitful agriculture lands, dense forests, and the mine beds to be used¹³ made the main inevitable elements of life. Such natural richness was already the main reason for the existing problems between the two parties.

The ruthless wars raging between the Kaška and the Hittite, found a massive place in the complaint prayers offered to the Gods by the Arnuwanda and Ašmunikal couple,¹⁴ in the chronicles of Tuthaliya I, in the inscription relating the heroisms of Šuppiluliuma I, in the chronicles of Muršili II, and in the autobiography of Hattušili III.¹⁵ There are heavy accusations to Kaškas on these tablets. In addition to ascriptions such as thief, wild, plunderer, arsonist, barbarian, aggressive, swineherd, Kaškas are shown as the only responsible party of

¹¹ For detailed information, see. Memiş 2010, 50-60, 61. See also. Ünal 2003, 50-51.

¹² For a detailed translation of the Tablet, see. Güterbock 1956, 65, 67. Also, for the text where the heroisms of Šuppiluliuma I, as related by Muršili II, see. Gavas 2008, 23.

¹³ Ünal 2003, 59.

¹⁴ The Arnuwanda and Ašmunikal couple feel incapable against the Kaška assaults, and sook solution in praying the gods. For the translation of the text, see. Alp 2011, 72-75.

¹⁵ Ünal 2003, 49.

nomadic or semi-nomadic, devoid of civilization. Nomadic or semi-nomadic life style in the Anatolia of the 2nd millennium BCE was absolutely natural. The main matter, here, is that if the Kaškas were wild or devoid of civilization. In our above sentences, we recalled that Hittites plundered the Kaška crop fields and wine-yards, and captured precious mines and animal flocks. When such facts that go in the detail of the tablets are well examined, they give important hints about the Kaška life-style. It is clearly seen that they were involved in agriculture, weaving, and processing mines to give them shapes. In addition to that, they built cities and lived their culture in them.²³ Making important remarks about the Kaška cities, E. von Schuler stated that *“They didn’t have cities encircled by castle walls. So, in case of an assault, they could easily leave their places, and once the assault is gone, they may repair their cities and settle once more.”*²⁴ And Muršili II, gives the account of the cities he burnt down during the battles he fought with the Kaškas:

“That year, I went to Mount Ašharpaia. The Mount Ašharpaia had fallen to Gaška city. It had cut the roads to Pala land off. I fought the Gaška city of the Mount Ašharpaia. I cleared the Mount Ašharpaia from the enemy.”

And he tells his war in another Kaška city:

“The following year I went to Ziharriia land. Mound Tarikarimu, as mentioned during my grandfather’s time was under the Gaska city’s rule, and it was (always) a threat to Hattusa, and they came and hit the Hattusa city. They compressed a lot. My majesty went there. Gaskas were living on the Mount Tarikarimu, and I attacked them... I beat the Gaska city of the Mount Tarikarimu, and I discharged the Mount Tarikarimu. I complete burnt the Ziharriia Land down.”

Again Muršili II tells his assault to Kaška city of Timmahula:

“And when my majesty went to the city of Timmahula, the city of ... continuously hit the Hatti land, didn’t give me soldiers. Timmahula city (is) on top of the mountains. And its roads up are very difficult. I marched forward with my city. When I arrived at Timmahula, they were waiting there, ran away from my front. Since it was winter, I didn’t follow it ... I offered it to the god of Storm, and cleaned the (mountain) (from) the enemy.” Thereafter, Kaška cities of *İstaluppa, Takkuwahina, Kappupa, Gappuppuwa, Tahantattipa* joined, and declared war against Muršili II on a mountain near the city of *Gappuppuwa*.²⁵ Apparently, we may confidently say that the Kaškas had civic culture. Most probably they made wooden houses. Therefore, it might be the reason why their architecture did not reach our time.

Another problem regarding the Kaška is the fact that their remains are not achieved. It is impossible for the Kaška, who struggled against the Hittite for four hundred years, and took many cities, not to have left any trace reminiscent of them. The traces of the Kaška, who held the region extending from Kastamonu to Giresun for a long duration, can be obtained at Dündartepe (Öksürüktepe), Samsun. It is highly probable that this tumulus was a city that belonged to the Kaška. In the excavations done in 1941 by Kılıç Kökten and Tahsin Özgüç in Dündartepe, combat instruments are found outnumbering daily home goods and ornamental items.²⁶ As we know, Kaškas, who used to be quite talented in battling, might be the real owners of these findings. Again, Mehmet Özsait, in the surface researches he conducted in the

²³ Schuler 1965, 75-77.

²⁴ Schuler 1965, 75-76.

²⁵ For the translation of the texts narrating the Muršili II’s attacks on the Kaška cities, see. Murat 1998, 437-441.

²⁶ For detailed information see. Özgüç 1948, 398-399.

Central Black Sea region, made valuable assessments about the Kaška findings. Reminding that the age named as the “Dark Age” in the region, between 12th to 9th centuries, which started along with the collapse of the Hittite Empire, actually belonged to the Early Iron Age; he claims that in 1996 in Boğazköy, 3 consecutive layers were found, dated to Early Iron Age, between the Late Imperial Era (13th century BCE) silo pits and Mid Iron Age (9th-8th centuries) structures; they detected pieces that show similar form and red color decorations with the Early Iron Age ceramics found in the layer in Boğazköy in the studies at, Amasya Cetner, Merzifon, Gümüşhacıköy, Hamamözü, Gövnücek and Suluova, and in more than twenty settlements such as Dericik, Aliğa Pınarı, Oymaağaç, Onhoroz, Onhoroz Pınarı (Alacapınar), Büyük Küllük Tepe, Küçük Küllük Tepe, Karatepe and Yoğurtçubaba; such ceramics might have belonged to the Kaška rather than the local peoples who were under the Hittite cultural influence; he says that this is supported by the findings at Boğazköy.²⁷ Additionally, Dirk Mielke defines the red painted pottery pieces found in the Oymaağaç Nerik excavations as Kaška ceramic.²⁸ (Figure III)



Figure III: Kaška Ceramic, Nerik/ Oymaağaç, Vezirköprü
<http://www.tarihikentlerbirliđi.org/wp-content/uploads/Prof.-Dr.-Rainer-M.-Czichon.pdf>

There is no written text that reached our day from the Kaškas. But there are some clues among the Hittite archives regarding that the Kaška were using script. Many diplomatic meetings were carried out between the Kaška and the Hittite, and agreements were set. The leader Kaška Pihuniya gave a written respond to the letter from Muršili II. It is strongly probable that the Kaška were utilizing Hittite as the diplomatic correspondence language. Similarly, the cultural and correspondence language of the Arzawa land of that time was Hittite.²⁹

Kaška and Hitit struggles in Samsun region started in full rage in the Hantili I era (590-560 BCE). The fact that the Kaškas conquered the holy city of Nerik (Vezirköprü), which belonged to the Hittites, meant the beginning of long lasting years of nightmare from

²⁷ See. Özsait 2003, 132.

²⁸ Czichon 2017, 7.

²⁹ Murat 2016, 263

the Hittite's point of view.³⁰ Nerik was a cult center, which had an important position in the Hittite's spiritual world. Additionally, it is also the cult center of the God of Storm (Tešup'un), the Hittite chief deity.³¹ Oymaağaç/Nerik was also the cult center for the storm god of Kuliwišna city, Kal'i god of Hatinzuva, the gods of Takupša, the gods of Kaštama city, and the other deities Zababa, Telipinu, Zašhapuna, who were considered among the important deities.³² The God of Storm is the main deity of the Hittite Pantheon, and believed to have settled on the hill tops and heavens. It was believed that it occurred in the cases of rain, lightning, and storm. His main task was to give rain to make the land fertile, and thus to increase the welfare in the land. In addition to that, he assumed the protection of the Hittite Kingdom and the Royal family. It was believed that the god of Storm, who was depicted as a Bull, would punish human beings with famine, hunger, natural disasters, and calamities, in case he noticed a lack of respect to him.³³

Nerik.....

“Nerik’s god of Air, come from the nine mountains, come from the Maraššantiia (Red) river and exit from the Nerik fountains, which you love a lot!”³⁴

Sacking of Nerik, for whom poetry and praise are written, by the Kaška, naturally caused disruptions in some religious rituals and celebrations that were obligation towards the god of Storm, even failures. Therefore, the sanctity of Nerik was carried to Hakmiš (Amasya) city, in a close position to it. By means of building a new cult center, feasts started to be observed there, temporarily.³⁵ Nerik's invasion deeply grieved the Hittites. After the Kaška sovereignty in Samsun region, the Hittite retreated South, considered the cult city Nerik³⁶ (Oymaağaç / Vezirköprü) as the border and formed a security line.³⁷ King Hantili, most probably should have felt the worry that the Kaška assaults might reach the capital, he didn't neglect surrounding Hattuša by walls to take it under security. Hantili narrates his acts: *“Nobody in the Hatti Land had built walls around the cities. I, Hantili, made cities protected by the walls in the entire land, and strengthened the city of Hattuša (surrounded by walls).”³⁸* The Kaškas did not only attack from Samsun region. Kaška tribes that lived dispersed along the Black Sea region, left the Hittite armies helpless, dragging them down with the unsystematic but effective assaults. Thereafter almost all the Hittite kings had to struggle with the Kaškas. Taking the Tuthaliya II's (1450-1420 BCE)³⁹ expedition to neighboring countries as an opportunity, the Kaška benefited the military gap and surrounded even the capital Hattuša. Tuthaliya II narrates the events: *“When I Tuthaliya, the Great King, turned my back*

³⁰ We find that the cult city Nerik was first invaded by the Kaška, from the texts that belong to Hattusili III and Tuthaliya IV eras. For further information see, Leyla Murat, “Hitit Dünyası'nda Gaşkalar'ın Yeri,” p.436. Also for the detailed information about the Kaška and Hittite struggle in the Hantili I's era see. Klock – Fontanille 2005, 23.

³¹ Murat 2008, 182. Through a reform in the Hittite pantheon done towards the end of the imperial era, the Hurri influence determined its weight, and the name of the Hittite god of Storm became Tešup, and the name of the Sun Goddess of Arinna became Hepat. Ünsal 2013, 69-70.

³² Monte-Tischler 1978, 286.

³³ Ünsal 2013, 68-69.

³⁴ Czichon-Klinger 2010, 65.

³⁵ Ünal 2003, 91-92.

³⁶ About the Hittite holy city Nerik see. Czichon 2008, 191.

³⁷ Macqueen 2013, 58.

³⁸ We should notify that there is no solid proof that Hantili I built the city walls against the Kaška attacks. For further information and the translation of the inscription see. Akurgal 2007, 62.

³⁹ For datings of eras see. Alp 2011, 178.

to fight in the Assuva Land, the Kaška armies attacked the soil of Hattuša, and ravaged the land.” Leaving the battle with the Assuva land (around Balıkesir, Bursa, Çanakkale), Tuthaliya II marched on to his northern neighbors, the Kaškas, and saved Hattuša. The next year, he marched once more on the Black Sea region, secured a victory against the Kaškas. But such victories weren’t useful in the long term. As soon as the Hittite armies left the capital Hattuša, the opportunist Kaškas didn’t hesitate to come down to south from the Black Sea mountains and plunder everywhere.⁴⁰ After Tuthaliya II, the Hittite throne was succeeded by his son-in-law, Arnuwanda I (1420-1400). During his reign, the Kaškas continued their dense attacks, and secured superiority. Failing to take any result by the military measures, Arnuwanda I and his consort, Queen Ašmunikal prepared a prayer text in order to be offered to the deities, in great surprise. This is the first detailed document that carries the struggle between the Kaškas and the Hittites.⁴¹

This prayer text was a kind of emotional appeal, which cited complaints offered to the deities due to failure in some religious rituals to be conducted in Nerik/Vezirköprü, for that cult city was in the hands of the Kaškas, plundered temples, stolen silver and golden, enslaved clergy, and captured sacrificials of the temples.

The prayer text goes like this!

“His [Majes]ty Great King Arnuwanda and [Great Queen Ašmunikal (says): addressing to the Sun Goddess of Arinna and all the deities. Hear us!] what Arnuwanda and Ašmunikal []

[Yet] The Hatti land is [really a clean] land (for) you gods. Only in Hatti land we [offer] you clean, large, and delicious sacrifices, [and] we respect you gods only in the Hatti land.

You gods would know by your divine sense. Since the old, nobody took care of your temples the way we did.

No one respected your [temple]s like us. Nobody took care of the goods, silver, gold, and animal-formed drinking vessels, (and) clothes of you [gods], the way we did.

Besides, in the silver and golden statues of you gods, (whatever) is missing and the body of any god, what tools of which gods went old, nobody renewed them the way we did.

Also, nobody respected the cleanliness of the sacrifices the way we did. Nobody offered your daily, monthly, and annual (new year’s) sacrifices and holidays (the way we) did.

They crushed the servants and cities of you gods with obligations of grooming and cooperation. They took the male and female servants of you gods, and made them slaves and concubines. [. . .]

I, the Great King Arnuwanda and the Great Queen Ašmunikal [respect]ed [. . . you gods] in all aspects.

[.] . . . you gods know the offerings of sacrificial bread, sacrificial drink by your divine senses.

⁴⁰ Brandau, Schickert 2011, 131-132.

⁴¹ For further information see. Schuler, 29-33.

[We Great kind Arnu]wanda and Great Queen Ašmunikal will offer again fat and good (quality) cattle and sheep, good (quality) sacrificial bread and sacrificial drink [agai]n. [.....]

Take [. . . our side]!

When the enemies [attacked] the Hatti land . . . we will certainly tell you gods of who plundered the land, when they took it, and sue them!

They drove the clergy, who offer sacrificial bread, sacrificial drink to you deities of the Heavens, and who are from the tax paying lands, “deity mothers,” holy priests, ointed (priests), musicians, singers away, and carried the taxes and sacrificial material that belong to you gods away from there.

They took the silver, golden, bronze, copper solar symbols, lunar symbols, fine (quality) dresses, holiday dresses, shirts, robes, sacrificial bread, sacrificial drink, all which belong to the Sun Goddess of Arinna away from there.

They took the sacrificial animals, fattened bulls, fattened cows, fattened sheep, fattened goats away from there.

From the Nerik land, from Huršama, from Kaštama land, from Šeriša land, from Himmuwa land, from Taggašta land, from Kammama land, from Zalpuwa land, from Kapiruha land, from Hura land, from Dankusna land, from Tarugga land, from Ilaluha land, from Zihhana land, from Šipidduwa land, from Wašhaya land, (and) from Patalliya land.

The Gaška knocked your temples in these lands down, and destroyed the statues of you gods.

They looted the silver, the golden, the drink offering containers (and) goblets of silver and golden, the copper and bronze tools (and) your clothes, and shared (among themselves) out.

The shared the priests, the holy priests, “deity mothers”, ointment priests, musicians, singers, cooks, bakers, farmers, and gardeners (among) themselves and made them slaves.

They shared your bulls and your sheep. They shared the fields and properties (that provided) the sacrificial bread, and the wine-yards (that provided) the sacrificial drink, and the Gaškas took them.

Then, nobody in the lands recalls the names of you gods, any more. Nobody offers your monthly and annual (new year's) sacrifices. Nobody celebrates your holidays and sacrificial ceremonies (anymore).

Nobody brings tribute and sacrificial material here to Hatti land, anymore. The priests, holy priests, “deity mothers,” musicians, and singers come from nowhere anymore.

Nobody brings silver, golden, bronze, and copper solar (and) lunar symbols, fine (quality) crystals, festival clothes, shirts, and robes, to you gods, and to Sun goddess of Arinna.

Nobody dispatch sacrificial bread, sacrificial drink, fattened bulls, fattened cows, fattened sheep, fattened goat (as) sacrificial animals to you gods. [.....] [From now on . . . the priests], “deity mothers” we would designa[te].....

.....] we. [...]

We count the blameless lands to y[ou]. [K]aštama, Taggašta, Šerišša, Taštarešša, Tahkupša, Kam[mama], Zalpuwa (and) Nerigga.

[No]w we, Great King Arnuwanda [and] Great Queen Ašmunikal took care of [] you gods, we beg you gods on and on.

Kaškas [.....]came to you g[ods]. Here in Hattuša [they attacked Tuhašuna] [. . . .they at]tacked Tahatariya[. .] . came down to the city gate. Then Hum [.] city [.]

Because we are respectful to the gods, we take care of their holidays. Since the Gaškas took the Nerik land, we send the sacrifices for the Storm God fo Nerik and the deities of Nerik from Hattuša to Hakmiš: the sacrificial bread, sacrificial drink, cattle (and) sheep.

We call the Gaškas, and give them presents. We make them swear: “Meet the sacrifices we send for the Storm God of Nerik (well)! No one shall attack them on the way!” (we say).

They come. They take their gifts. They also swear. When they go back, they violate their oath. They underestimate the words of you gods, and break the seal of the (tablet) that belong to the oath (agreement, sworn in the presence) of the Storm God.

They grasp the gifts in the Hatti land. [They do not give the sac]rificies, sacrificial bread (and) sacrificial [drink] of the Storm God of [Nerik(?)]......”

.....

And then, in the broken portions of the tablet, the names of the Kaška cities and their rulers (participated in the oath ceremony?) are informed.”⁴²

The loser king Arnuwanda I and queen Ašmunikal, in the prayer they offered to the Sun Goddess of Arinna, asked for help by invoking like this, moreover they gathered with the Kaška tribal leaders and made them swear oaths of loyalty.⁴³ But for the Kaškas didn't pay much attention to Hittite deities, left the venue after the oath ceremony, and didn't obey the terms of agreement, as ever.⁴⁴ Because, the Kaškas were in a different manner than the Anatolian folks, who had a common belief system in general. The Hittite deities, cult centers, divine statues didn't mean anything to them. They didn't have an aim to reach a spiritual satisfaction, already. Therefore, the plundered temples, stolen silver and golden, uncounted goods were all made in order to increase the earthly richness.⁴⁵ The futile invocation of help

⁴² Arnuwanda and Ašmunikal couple feel helpless against the Kaška attacks, and seek help in invoking the deities. For the translation of the text, see. Alp 2011, 72-75.

⁴³ Brandau-Schickert 2011, 136-137

⁴⁴ Ünal 2003, 51.

⁴⁵ Brandau-Schickert, 2011, 136

by the Arnuwanda and Ašmunikal couple against the Kaškas didn't produce any solution. As the course of the land went worse, they were exposed to several attacks by the other neighboring countries, as well. King Arnuwanda I had almost come to the point to lose the authority. The situation of the land and the invalid prayers caused a headache for Ašmunikal, the beloved wife of Arnuwanda, among the public. In their point of view, the only responsible of the crisis was the queen. According to the belief, the "Sinister Queen" made false religious tendencies, and made the Storm God angry, and he, naturally, turned his back on the Hittite and sent them his wrath.⁴⁶

One other interesting feature in the prayer text of the couple of Arnuwanda I and his consort Queen Ašmunikal is the list of the cities captured by the Kaškas. The Kaškas, who captured the cities such as Nerik, Huršama, Kaštama, Šeriša, Himuwa, Taggašta, Kamaya, Zalpuwa, Kapiroha, Hurna, Dankuša, Tapašawa, Tarukka, İlaluha, Zihhana, Šipidduwa, Wašhaya, and Patalliya, managed to cut the relation of the Hittites with the coastal parts, by dominating the northern portion of the region named as the "Upper Land."⁴⁷

Later on, Tuthaliya III, the son of Arnuwanda is enthroned. In this period, also, the Kaškas continued their attacks in full rage, they even exceeded Nenašša, which was located to the south of Marašantiya (Kızılırmak), and burnt the capital Hattuša. In a cuneiform tablet, dated to Tuthaliya III's era, the event is narrated: "and the city of Hattuša burnt and only and the Hešti home were left."⁴⁸ Again, a text from the Tuthaliya III era, contains the information: "*The enemy from the Gaška city came. They ruined the Hatti land, and made Nenassa the border.*" Apparently, the Hittites lived quite troubled days in this period, too. Neither the Kaškas stepped back, nor Tuthaliya III gave up making expeditions to the Black Sea region. Both parties could not discourage each other. Even though Tuthaliya III has secured some success in his expeditions to the Black Sea region, he could not manage a permanent solution. As the symptoms of illness occurred on Tuthaliya III later on, due to weariness, he left the initiative to his son, Šuppiluliuma I.⁴⁹

Before Šuppiluliuma I was set on the throne, he as the Crown Prince started to command the Hittite armies, tried to carry the land to its former borders again, by means of the military and political decision he followed. We learn the information about his era from the text titled 'Heroisms of Šuppiluliuma' which his son Muršili II got himself written. According to this text, youth ages of Šuppiluliuma I had passed in struggles against the Kaškas, who settled in the "Upper Land." Dense Kaška assaults themselves in this period again, united Kaška forces consisting of twelve tribes invaded the Hittite soil and posed a great treat. Šuppiluliuma I made a successful defense against these assaults.⁵⁰ This fact is explained in the text written by Muršili II, narrating the heroisms of his father Šuppiluliuma I:

KBo XIV 3 (CTH 40) Vs. III

12 When my father arrived the land

13 Caught the Kaška enemies who had entered the Hatti land (and)

⁴⁶ Brandau-Schickert, 2011, 137-138.

⁴⁷ Schuler 1965, 22-23. Also see. Goetze 1951, 18-25.

⁴⁸ Seeher 2002, 163.

⁴⁹ Brandau-Schickert 2011, 138-140. Also, for the texts information from the Tuthaliya III's era, see. Murat 1998, 437. Also see. Ünsal 2013, 100.

⁵⁰ Gavas 2008, 21-29.

14 treated very badly.

15- 16 My father met the Kaška enemies of the twelve tribes inside the land.

17 Gods helped my father. (Thus) he killed the aforementioned Kaška enemy

18 tribal soldiers wherever he caught them. And

19 whatever they had taken (captured)

20 my father took back from them.

21 (and) gave them back to the Hattis.⁵¹

Piyapili, who partly secured the Kaška political union, met with a very tough resistance, when he was plundering the Hittite soil he invaded with the ten Kaška tribes. Šuppiluliuma I not only repelled the invaders back, he also killed the Kaška leader Piyapili, and recaptured the cities that were lost.⁵² Durmitta region, which is localized in the Havza County in our day, was among the cities saved from the invasion. Thus, the Hittite enlarged their borders a lot towards the northern direction.⁵³ This win against the Kaškas was certainly not an ultimate victory. Therefore, he didn't ignore to take precautions against the probable future Kaška assaults. He formed security lines beginning from Amasya (Hakmiş) to the cult city of Nerik (Veziirköprü), moreover, all the way to Havza. The people who left their region due to Kaška fear in the settlement units to the south of this defense line were resettled again.⁵⁴ Yet, the political disorder in the Hittite land would not come to ease. As Šuppiluliuma I struggled with their neighbor, the Kaškas, he also embarked on a struggle for throne with his brother Tuthaliya the Young. On the soil reminiscent of a fire place, Šuppiluliuma I set on the Hittite throne as the great king, after killing his brother.⁵⁵ The opportunist Kaškas took benefit of the ensuing civil war, and sacked the capital Hattuša once more. We cannot know if the capital was grasped by the Kaška or not. But we may run into the information that the city was burnt down, and heavily damaged among the "Plague Prayers." Establishing the authority, Šuppiluliuma I sets expedition on the Hayaša Kingdom, located in the Yeşilirmak basin. But unexpectedly, as a coincidence, he runs into his eternal enemies, the Kaškas. Hittites won the ensuing fight, and collected many slaves and bounty. Though this success passivized the Kaška power for a while, it could not prevent the never ending Kaška raids.⁵⁶ **KUB XIX 11 (=CTH 40) Vs.**

Tablet No. 1, Muršili II Narrates the event:

1-2 But when my father marched forward,

3 He didn't meet the Hayaša enemy in his land.

4 Thus my father marched once more (against) the Hayaša

⁵¹ Gavas 2008, 23.

⁵² Murat 1998, 437; Dinçol 1982, 37

⁵³ For the detailed information regarding the expeditions of Šuppiluliuma I to the "Upper Land" Central Black Sea region, see. Bryce 1986, 85-102.

⁵⁴ Kaya 2011, 136.

⁵⁵ Gavas 2008, 24

⁵⁶ Memiş 2010, 56-57.

5 enemy. But he couldn't find him again.

6 (But) But he caught the Kaška enemy, [inside the land] whole of (Kaška) tribal

7 warriors. And Gods assisted him, [the Sun Goddess of the Arinna city,]

8 Storm God of the Hatti city, Storm God of the headquarter, Goddess of the steppe

Ištar, and thus many [enemies]

9 died. He also [took] many slaves

10 and took them back to Šamuha city again.

11 Then my father marched forward from Šamuha.

12 [x Land] had been demolished by the enemy.

13 All the enemies were there. (Moreover)

14 the shepherds had come for the help.

15 My father set a trap for them and hit

16 the Kaškas. Whomever

17 came for the help, he hit them similarly, too.

18 -19 Thus, he killed most of the Kaška tribal soldiers and the auxiliary soldiers.⁵⁷

As Šuppiluliuma I died of plague, the relay to struggle with the Kaškas was assumed by his son, Muršili II⁵⁸ (1339-1306).⁵⁹ Muršili II was as extremely religious as he was ruthless. The war strategy practiced in his era is the most imminent proof of this fact. The great hostility with its roots back in the past and the ultimate success that never came were the causes for Muršili II's all fiercest attack on the Kaškas. The Hittites headed to the Black Sea region in this period, burnt the Kaška cities that they ran into, many civilians were murdered,⁶⁰ collected an estimated up to 100,000 slaves and animal flocks and brought them to their land.⁶¹ In this process, some incident happened that surprised Muršili II a lot. As we mentioned in our phrase above, Kaškas who lived as scattered tribes without a political union, for the first time established a unity around Pihhuniya, the leader of the city of Tipiya in the Upper Land.⁶² Muršili II explains the incident as:

“Pihhuniya was not ruling the Kaška way. The rule of a single man was not usual in Kaška land; Pihhuniya suddenly started to rule like a king. Then, my majesty stood against him, sent an envoy, and wrote: ‘Send the ones you drove to Kaška, who are my subject, back to me.’ But Pihhuniya responded me: ‘I won't give you anything. And if you set an expedition

⁵⁷ For the translation of the tablet see. Gavas 2008, 25.

⁵⁸ Ünsal 2013, 103.

⁵⁹ For the dating see. Gurney 2001, 180.

⁶⁰ Murat 1998, 437-441.

⁶¹ Brandau-Schickert, 200.

⁶² It is guessed that the Kaška city Tipiya was around Tokat or along the Kelkit valley. For detailed information and the translation of the tablets see. Schuler 1965, 44.

against me, I will never accept the war in my own soil. I will bind to fight you in your land.” Yet, in spite of such words full of courage, the Kaška king could not stand against the Hittites; was defeated, enslaved and taken to Hattuša. And some portion of the Kaška land was burnt down.⁶³

Actually Muršili II seemed to have missed a historical chance. Though this victory satisfied his desires temporarily, that he enslaved Pihuniya and took to Hattuša meant that the unamenable Kaška tribes would attack in uncontrolled ways as in the past. Rather than struggling with lots of Kaška tribes, the hostile behaviors of a known King could be disposed of within the diplomatic relations and various promises.

The main goal of Muršili II was the cult city of Nerik (Oymağaç, Vezirköprü). The sacred city that remained under the Kaška rule for long years was as dishonoring as a saddening loss. It was seen as a religious must to carry the sacred city back to its spiritual prominence, in relation with the responsibilities of obedience to the Storm god. But, in spite of all enforcements, Muršili II couldn't take Nerik back, though he could reclaimed several lost cities.⁶⁴ The fierce expeditions against the warrior Kaškas on the Black Sea Mountains seemed to be successful. But Muršili II couldn't take a certain result as the kings before him. The Kaška tribes were standing by to set assail as soon as they see a weakening sign within the Hittites.⁶⁵

There is no doubt that the most effective struggle against the Kaškas around the Samsun region was conducted by Prince Hattušili III. Muvatalli II (1306-1282), who ruled after the death of Muršili II, appointed his brother Hattušili III to Hakmiš (Amasya), the center of Upper Land. Therefore, the young prince would be the addressee of the traditionalized Kaška assaults. Ambitious and talented Hattušili III maintained a serious success against the Kaškas; in the military expedition he set to Vezirköprü, he reclaimed the cult city Nerik, which couldn't be taken back that far, back and increased his reputation. Following a different policy after the military victories, delivered territories to the Kaška tribes and managed to bind them to him. Hattušili III was the only ruler of the Black Sea region anymore.⁶⁶ While such incidents are observed then in the Black Sea region, it is seen that Muvatalli II, due to the Kaška fear, hurried to move the capital Hattuša south to Tarhuntašša.⁶⁷ Actually, such act of Muvatalli II could be evaluated as a political maneuver against the successes of his brother, too. The possibility of making a move against Muvatalli II by his quite strengthened brother seems equivalent to the probable future Kaška assaults.

Hattušili III was not satisfied with the victories he won, he prepared warrior units consisting of the Kaškas, thanks to the strong diplomacy and friendship he established with the local Kaška rulers, and took place next to his brother, the Great King Muvatalli II during the Kadesh war with the Egyptians.⁶⁸ Moreover, after his brother Muvatalli II's death, even in the struggle for the throne he embarked with his brother Urhi Tešup (Muršili III), Hattušili III received a great support from the Kaškas.⁶⁹

⁶³ Dinçol 1982, 41.

⁶⁴ Ünsal 2013, 103. Schuler 1965, 48

⁶⁵ Gurney 2001, 38.

⁶⁶ Kaya 2011, 55-56. Also see. Dinçol 1982, 42-43. Schuler 1965, 48.

⁶⁷ Brandau-Schickert 2011, 226. Also see. Desti 2013, 57-58.

⁶⁸ For further information see, Schuler 1965, 92.

⁶⁹ B Brandau-Schickert 2011, 252-253.

After Hattušili III became the great king, some dispersed Kaška tribes acted in disobedience. Particularly the Kaška leader called Hatenzuva, with the support he gained from some other clans, rebelled and objected to the tax to be paid. The reason for the rebellion of the other tribes was this tax that was collected. Hattušili III didn't show tolerance to the rebels. He suppressed the incidents and strengthened his suzerainty in the region once more.⁷⁰

In his autobiography, Hattušili III narrates his struggle with the Kaškas:

45 And I was the king of Hakmiš. With the army and
 46 the chariot warriors []. Since Nerik city
 47 was ruined during the Hantili's time,
 48 I strengthened this city once more. But I made the cities
 49 around Nerik [], Nera and Haštira
 50 the border. I enslaved all of them,
 51 and subjected to tribute. [] I enslaved the whole of Haharwa Mountain Region,
 52-53 Nerik and Marašantiya River Region from Hakmiš.⁷¹

As comprehensible from the text, we may easily claim that Hattušili III has fully conquered Marašantiya (Kızılırmak) Bafra, Alaçam, i. e., the western section of Samsun. Very long years ago, the founder king Anitta and Hattušili I had set their rule over the Bafra region. Hattušili III was the last Hittite king who followed them and took Samsun region under his sovereignty.

We can't know for now, where the cities Nera and Haštira, which were north from Nerik, were located. We may only state that these settlements, according to the written Hittite tablets, used to be located within Samsun geography.

With the Tuthaliya IV era, once more we see the Kaškas on the history stage. The traditional assault occurred particularly during the military mobilization set by the Hittite king to the Assuva region. But, since it was a rickety rebel, it would be disposed in a short while. And since the number of discovered tablets from the era of Arnuwanda III, the son of Tuthaliya IV is very few, we have limited information. In the documents reflection that period, only the information that the northern Kaškas were fought is mentioned.⁷²

In the incidents from then on, unfortunately Black Sea and Samsun region would suffer a misfortune. With the Hittites, who entered the phase of dissolution along with Šuppiluliuma II (1200 BCE), as the result of the Aegean migrations, leaving Çorum and Central Anatolia,⁷³ "Dark Ages" as designated by the historians would commence, information regarding the regional peoples would be completely interrupted. Therefore, the Kaškas who caught the opportunity took the entire Central Anatolia to the north of Kızılırmak

⁷⁰ Schuler 1965, 59.

⁷¹ For the translation of the tablet narrating the biography of Hattušili III, see. Murat 2008, 88. Also for the translation see. Alp 2011, 139.

⁷² Dinçol 1982, 51-52.

⁷³ Memiş 2010, 131-132. Gurney 2001, 42-43. Dinçol 1982, 52-53.

(Maraşantiya), the area left by the Hittites, under their sovereignty.⁷⁴ But this progress was not a real sovereignty, but only the first move to leave the Black Sea region. Just as the Hittites, their eternal enemies had left Hattuša, the Kaškas started to disembark Samsun and the Black Sea region slowly. The researchers relate the reasons of this sudden migration to changes in the climate. The ensuing drought and famine complicated the living conditions, and forwarded the Kaškas to seek for a new land inside Anatolia. From that moment on, we see Kaškas in the further south. They moved as far as Kayseri, Malatya and the banks of Tigris, moreover fought the Assyrians, too.⁷⁵ The Assyrian King Tiglat–Pileser I (1115-1093 BCE) mentions that he was attacked by the Kaška and the Muški tribes in the Upper Tigris region. Again the Assyrian kings Tiglat–Pileser III and Sargon I (722-705 BCE) also fought them. These events make the last information we obtain about the Kaškas. Thenceforth, none of the historical records mention about the Kaškas.⁷⁶

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⁷⁴ Sevin 2014, 194.

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