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**A New Contribution to the Hittite  
Historical Geography: Pertaining to the  
Location of an Important Cult Centre  
Katapa**

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Pertaining to the Location of an Important Cult Centre Katapa**

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**Abstract**

The Hittite kings fulfilled their responsibilities for the gods by visiting their temples, arranging feasts for the gods and goddesses and offering food and drink during these festivities. For this reason the kings would visit their gods' temples in various religious centers during certain festivals organized at certain times of the year. These were known as cult voyages and during these compulsory voyages, the king, in the strictest sense, would visit main city centers in Hatti country. The Hittite kings used to travel to Hattusa and the surrounding cities during some festivals one of which was Katapa, the most important amongst these cult centers.

The documents which dated to the Assyrian trade colonies period prior to the Hittites where the name of Katapa city appears, have an important place in the written documents in both Ancient Hittite and the Imperial period, in researches that were conducted so far. It is stressed that Katapa might be a capital of a state connected to the Hittite central system as well as an important cult center.

Many suggestions have been made up to now in relation to the localization of Katapa, the city where kings used to travel to at the start of the celebrations of the *nuntarriyashas* festival and during the celebrations of AN.TAH.SUM festival. Taking into account the reevaluation of the places where the name of Katapa is mentioned in Hittite cuneiform texts, evaluation of the results of archaeological excavations and topographic research as well as the result of site trips which were carried out with the help of 1/25000 scale maps, this study will try to put forth a new proposition that has not been introduced by any other research, explaining in detail the reasons and justifications.

**Key Words:**

**Corresponding Author:**

## Introduction

The Hittite State which was based in Central Anatolia in 2000 BC was the first centralized state established in Anatolia and with the strategies she adopted in her internal and foreign policies she was able to expand her borders to Egypt in a short period of time. All the philological texts and archeological remains pertaining to the Hittites that have survived to the present enable us to obtain extensive information involving the political, military, religious and social life of the Hittite State. The Hittites who ruled over a vast geography that consisted of Anatolia, Upper Mesopotamia and North Syria after the Period of Šuppiluliuma I – one of the Kings pertaining to the Period of the Hittite Empire - prevailed over the region approximately until 1200 BC. Many names of Hittite settlements are mentioned in Hittite cuneiform texts, but unfortunately only a very few of these names can be linked to their present-day names and locations. There are many extensive researches involving the discovery of Hittite settlements, so much that there are many studies that propose locations for a single settlement; as in that more than one proposition is put forth that remain inconclusive until verified by philological texts; however; even though inconclusive, any research conducted on the subject matter is considered quite significant because they help to establish different perspectives and thus lead to new possibilities that will contribute to future evaluations.

The topic of this research, Katapa city<sup>1</sup> appears as both a significant military garrison town as well as an important cult center in Hittite cuneiform texts. As a city where the Hittite King visited, Katapa must be situated at a location where it acts as a way station and thus the search for the city should be carried out at an area that is both sheltered and strategically positioned.

Compared to Taracha, Katapa is a “*residenzstadt*” capital<sup>2</sup> as it is the place where the king spent his winters; and as it was possible for the king to spend his winter in Katapa, it must have been built on fertile soil that could meet the food and water requirements of the army. The center of the Hittite State, Hattuša and its surrounding region exhibits the characteristics of a continental climate; where the summers are hot and arid while the winter are long and the conditions are harsh. Due to macroclimate conditions, however, there are zones that display a different climatic characteristic than its surrounding area; hence, as microclimate refers to small zones of distinctive atmospheric characteristics that display regional climate differences, Katapa in this respect should be in a belt that was of a mild climate condition where it was possible for the king to spend his winter. Furthermore, considering the other locations the king spent his winter times such as Ankuwa or Šapinuwa, it is clear that such locations were of mild climate and consisted of wetlands that could provide the needs of the king and the army for the winter.

According to Ünal, there is no reason for the locations where the king spent his winter times to be near to the states he was in war with. Spending the

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<sup>1</sup>For the sections of the Hittite Cuneiform text and the passages that refer to the name Katapa in literary sources see Del Monte & Tischler, 1978: 197 vd.; del Monte, 1992: 75.

<sup>2</sup>Taracha, 2005: 97.

winter in an appropriate setting and meeting the needs of the soldiers whose numbers had increased considerably at the end of every warring season as the vassal or auxiliary units were discharged had been an issue. In fact the king had spent his winter in different centers and thus had relieved Hattuša whose population had increased to 15 thousand from a big burden.<sup>1</sup> In this respect we see that the question of whether the king should be at Hattuša or at the Temple of the Storm-God in Aleppo or at Katapa or Ankuwa is being asked in a divination text, and each time the response is negative.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the king being in Katapa throughout the winter might be due to its proximity to the border region of Kaška located to the north of the city or its connection to the other states situated in the region. Here the king would have been able to obtain quick and detailed intelligence on the activities of their enemies and thus would have been able to swiftly act on it. In addition to this, there are accounts that the king had spent his winter in Katapa after the Kaška campaign and the annuals pertaining to the Era of Muršili II, a King during the Era of the Hittite Empire recite the incident as: “*and after I offered the City of Timmuhala to the Storm-God and traveled down to Kašimula. And I came to Katapa and spent the winter*”.<sup>3</sup> From the text we understand that the king had seized the city of Timmuhala which was located to the north of Kaška<sup>4</sup>. The king who accounted to ‘travel down’ was also stated to spent the winter in Katapa. Hence, the city of Katapa must be situated below, slightly towards the south of the border region of Kaška. In addition to this one must ask the question on why would the king spend the winter at a setting which was not protected or easily accessible from Kaška?

On the other hand, the most obvious problem was created when the king spent the winter somewhere other than Hattuša as certain festivals that had to be celebrated in the capital had gone ‘uncelebrated’. A divination text dating to the period of Hattušili III questions the religious negligence that came about as a result of his father Muršili II spending the winter in Ankuwa.<sup>5</sup> In fact, the discarded festivities and religious obligations were perceived as the main cause of all the disasters that had fallen upon the state.

Katapa was considered quite important as it was the starting point of the *nuntarriyašhaš* festival<sup>6</sup> which was celebrated in autumn for 40 days. During the festival the king had set out on a cult voyage<sup>7</sup> to cities which were a maximum of one day’s travel from one another to visit the temple of various different gods and goddesses. The text on the festival accounts the event was described as: “*The king return[ed] from the expedition when he celebrates the*

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<sup>1</sup>Ünal, 1981: 445.

<sup>2</sup>KUB 5 3 Rs. IV 10 vd.; KUB 5 4 Rs. III 1 vd.

<sup>3</sup>KUB 19 37 Vs. II 35-38; Götze, 1933: 10 vd.

<sup>4</sup>While Schuler recommends for it to be searched around Nerik (1965: 36, fn.: 199); Houwink ten Cate, suggests for it to be located on the south of the Gökırmak estuary which is a tributary of the Kızılırmak River (1967: 49).

<sup>5</sup>Ünal, 1981: 446; KUB 18 67 Rs (?) 1-9.

<sup>6</sup>Nakamura, 2002: 11.

<sup>7</sup>For the further information involving the Cult Voyages of the Hittite King see Sir Gavaz, 2012.

*nuntarriyašhaš festival for the gods the great assembly assembles in Katapa on day 1. Next day he goes to the house of gran[dfather] God Zithariya. And the prince goes after (him). And the festival (is celebrated). At the palace however (there) is a 'Cleansing' bathing (ritual). The next day the king holds (celebrations) for the mighty Storm-God. In addition to this: God Zithariya goes to Hakkura city. Later on he also goes to Tatašuna city. However the next day the king enters Tahirpa. When he arrives at Hišurla city, people gather in front of the stream. And the king enters Tahirpa. And the 'great assembly' (assembles) at the house of halentuwa. Day 4. The following day the king goes to Arinna and celebrates the nuntarriyašhaš festival. And in honor of the nuntarriyašhaš festival, he sets down šepitt and the dannaš dough made of fresh honey. And he pours fresh wine (libation). The Queen, however, returns to Tahirpa. And she plans a festivity for the Sun-Goddess of Arinna and Mezulla. Day 5. Next day the king goes to [Hatt u]ša. [Together with?] The queen. The "bathing" (takes place) in Tatišga. [And they] come to Hattuša."<sup>1</sup> Hence the first tour of the festival has been completed. Further down of the text we see that the festivities are continued to be celebrated as the great assembly assembles in the house of halentuwa and as the royal couple visit the temples in Hattuša. The second round of the nuntarriyašhaš festival is described as: "The next day the king comes down from Hattuša (and) (sets out) to [Har]anašši from the entrance of Zippala[nda]. And celebrates [the festival] in Harranašši. However the NIN.DINGIR priestess comes in order to dance at the house of the chariot warriors. In order to eat and drink, the three great houses, that is the great house of Ninašša, the house of T[uwanuwa] and the great house of Hupišna are at his service. Day 12. However the next day the king goes to Zippalanda and (celebrates) its festival. Day 13. The next day yet still the king goes to Katapa and the king sacrifices a brood bull for the Storm-God Nerik. He splits the bread made from šepitt. The great assembly (assembles). Day 14. A day later the king arrives at Tahirpa. The great assembly (assembles). Day 15. The next day the king arrives at Hattuša via Tippuwa. In front of the river in Nirhanta, piles of (wood) are piled for the "Storm-God's men". And the Great assemb[ly] (assembles) in Hattuša. (All of) Hattuša sits. However at the house of the ruler for the gods of the ruler the Nerik road festival is celebrated. Day 16 of the Neri[k] tour."<sup>2</sup> Further down the text it is recorded that after the king visits certain temples in Hattuša, on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the festival he goes to Tawiniya.<sup>3</sup>*

The route the King followed during the *nuntarriyašhaš* festival is as:

First Round of the Festival Tour:

**Katapa (day 1)**→Hakkura (day 3)→Tatašuna (day 3)→Hišurla (day 4)→Tahirpa (day 4)→

<sup>1</sup>KUB 9 16 +IBoT 4 71+Bo 9159 Vs. I 1-29; for its transcription and translation see Nakamura, 2002: 17-19.

<sup>2</sup>KBo 39 63+IBoT 4 81+ KBo 3 25+ KUB 1 48 Vs. II 1-23; for its transcription and translation see Nakamura, 2002: 20.

<sup>3</sup>KUB 55 5+ IBoT 4 70 Rs. 21-24; for its transcription and translation see Nakamura, 2002: 51-53.



Arinna (day 5)→Hattuša

Second Round of the Festival Tour:

Hattuša→Huranašša (day 12)→Zippalanda (day 13)→**Katapa(day 14)**→  
Tahurpa(day 15)→

Tippuwa→ Hattuša (day 16)→Tawiniya (day 20)

As is seen, the starting point of the festival is Katapa City. The king once again goes through Katapa on day 14 of the festival and the festival is celebrated twice in Katapa. Taking into account the geographical setting the King drew a circle around Katapa and the capital Hattuša was located right in the middle of this circle. Then again, as mentioned above the route the King follows to go to Hattuša, he does not return to Katapa, but arrives at Katapa city using a different route. From the itinerary texts on the festival it is understood that Katapa is a maximum of one day's travel from Tahurpa and Zippalanda. Nevertheless, in order to get a better grasp of the distance between Katapa and Zippalanda the text numbered KUB 42 41 (Vs?) 3-14 records that the king went to Zippalanda together with the officials during which time the queen was performing a ritual in Katapa. The location of this text points to the passage of the text where it accounts that while the king is at Arinna during the *nuntarriyašhaš* festival, the queen moved on the Tahurpa but later on the two met at Hattuša.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, the king visited Katapa during the AN.TAH.ŠUM<sup>SAR</sup> festival but had visited most of the locations thus followed a similar route to the one he set out on during the *nuntarriyašhaš* festival.<sup>2</sup>

Another text that entails Katapa city is KUB 21 1 and it recites that name of Katapa city together with the cities of Tahurpa and Ankuwa: “*The Goddess Katahha of Ankuwa City, the Queen of Katapa City, the Goddess Mama of Tahurpa city, the God Hallara of the Dunna City.*” There are already records on the journey from Katapa to Tahurpa, however, as it's mentioned with Ankuwa it raises the possibility of a road which led from Katapa to Ankuwa. From the AN.TAH.ŠUM<sup>SAR</sup> festival it is known that there is a maximum of one day's travelling distance between Zippalanda and Ankuwa.<sup>3</sup> The distance between Zippalanda and Katapa is a maximum of a day's travel as well. Thus, Ankuwa could be reached through a route which leads from Katapa to Zippalanda or that there is a direct shortcut between the two cities.

The list of the women singers in HT 2 relays Katapa as an important center and it refers to it together with the villages located in the region;<sup>4</sup> and it reveals a total number of 25 women singers that pertain to Katapa.<sup>5</sup> Katapa and the

<sup>1</sup>KUB 9 16 +IBoT 4 71+Bo 9159 Vs. I 14-23; for its transcription and translation see Nakamura, 2002: 17-19.

<sup>2</sup>For further information see Alp, 1993: 136 vd.; Güterbock, 1960: 80-89.

<sup>3</sup>KBo 10 20 IV 16-19; for its transcription and translation see Alp, 1993: 136 vd.; Güterbock, 1960: 80 vd.

<sup>4</sup>I, 7-26: *Hatparra (or Ha-at-qa-ra), Ku-up-par-aš (Kupra), Zikkarpišna, Šanida, Hašturiya, Kazkalpaduna, Alanda, Kaš/Pi-pi-ni-ya, Attimiša, Halipzura, Kašparuna, Habinuwa, Lazumiya, Kiluna, Tattaluppa, Antalutta, Zimimpa, Taidanda, Tahariba, Haguhula (or Hamahula).* Forlanini, 2008: 152.

<sup>5</sup>This text catalogues over 150 women from a number of towns and regions in Hatti. Rutherford, 2004: 378; Forlanini, 2008: 152.

villages were observed together in the text numbered KBo 10 10, however, on its own it is referred sequentially with Šapinuwa.<sup>1</sup> A longer list of the villages and Katapa, on the other hand, is barely legible in KBo 49 37, nevertheless, it accounts more names of villages than those listed in HT 2.<sup>2</sup>

In the autobiography of Hattušili III, Kapata City is referred to together with certain cities that are located to the border region of Kaška to the north of the Hittite State: “I rule over all the Išhupitta<sup>3</sup>, Marišta, Hiššašhapa, Katapa, Hanhana<sup>4</sup>, Darahna, Hattena, Durmitta, Pala, Tumana<sup>5</sup> Gaššia and Šappa Countries, over the Country of the Hulana River, over the war chariots and gold miners. The Country of Hakmiš and.” Yet again, the text labeled KBo 4 13 which conveys the Victim lists, Kaštama, Šanahuitta, Hakmiš, Ištahara, Tapigga, Katapa, Zapišhuna and Takkašta<sup>6</sup> are all cited together and thus we clearly see that Katapa is once again mentioned together with cities located on the north of the Hittite States.

Nonetheless, it also appears in the itinerary texts on the Nerik City festivals. According to records, the king travels to Zikmar city and the next day moves on to Katapa<sup>7</sup> and therefore the distance between Katapa and Zikmar is a maximum of a day’s travel. In another text which is in quite poor condition recounts the names <sup>URU</sup>Šanahuitta, <sup>URU</sup>Makkuwaliya, <sup>URU</sup>Katapa, <sup>URU</sup>Tašmaha, <sup>URU</sup>İškamaha and <sup>URU</sup>Kammama.<sup>8</sup> From the Ortaköy texts it is clear that the cities of İškamaha and Kammama are under the administrative district of Šapinuwa and in this context Katapa should be sought at a distant geographical setting from Ortaköy.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore in the text numbered KBo 47 76 Kapata is mentioned together with Zuliya and the cities located in the Zuliya basin. Forlanini states that Katapa should be at least included in a region around the Zuliya basin, indicating to locate Katapa at a region to the east of Boğazkale due to its connection with Ankuwa and Šanahuitta.<sup>10</sup>

Another passage of a text that includes Katapa city recounts of “*Katapa City Forest*.” The Rs. III lines 2-4 of the text numbered KUB 40 106 refer to it as: “and s[etting off] from Nenašhuriya city wears short walking skirts and he surrounds the left part of the Katapa city forest and (inside) from Šamawaya city”.<sup>11</sup> Katapa being located in an area of woodland points to a region of abundant rainfall and water resources as well as indicating that it was located

<sup>1</sup>KBo 10 10 Vs. II 10-12; Vs. IV 16-24.

<sup>2</sup>KBo 49 37 1-15: “[..]ha-ši-i-i[n-..], [ ]x-ú-up-pa, Ha-a-aš-tu-ri-aš, [Kazkal-]pa-tu-na-aš, Pi-i-in-pi-ni-aš, [..-r]i-aš, Kašpuranaš, [L]a-az-z[u]-mi-ya-aš, [ ]x-at-tu-[x?]-]pa-ra-aš, Z[i-mi]-im-pa-aš, T[a-..., Ha-ku-hu-la, 15’ ŠU.NIGIN xx [+...K]a-a-ta-pa.”; Forlanini, 2008: 152 vd.

<sup>3</sup>The Išhupitta city should be sought in an area located between Ortaköy and Maşathöyük. Süel, 2005: 681.

<sup>4</sup>Hanhana=İnandiktepe: For further information on Hanhana see Alp, 1977b: 649-652.

<sup>5</sup>For Pala-Tumana see Ertem, 1980.

<sup>6</sup>Barjamovic, 2011: 270. ; Forlanini, 2007: 260,262; Also see KBo 16 78 +, “Tapigga, Taptiga, Takašta, Katapa and Karahna”; Popko, 1994: 11-12.

<sup>7</sup>Haas, 1970: 256.

<sup>8</sup>KUB 40 99 Vs. 2-8; Forlanini, 1979: 179; Barjamovic, 2011: 290.

<sup>9</sup>Süel, 2005: 681.

<sup>10</sup>Forlanini, 2008:153.

<sup>11</sup>Polit, 1999: 87 vd.

in a region that was on high ground and protected. The difference on how the concept of ‘forest’ was perceived then and now should not be over looked.

Until the present many suggestions have been put forth on the location of Katapa<sup>1</sup>, however, taking into consideration the cuneiform texts that mention Katapa and reconsidering the suggestions offered on the its localization; as previously proposed by Forlanini<sup>2</sup>, Katapa should be sought to the east of the Hittite capital Hattuša, to the south of Ortaköy Şapinuwa but at a region where it was be able to be contact with the northern cities bordering Kaška as well as established on a large and fertile territory consisting of mild climate conditions where the army could spend the winter. In this light:

- Katapa should be sought in the core of the Hittite Region, a maximum of two days’ travel distance from Hattuša.
- As a place where the king spent his winters, Katapa must have many barracks and fortifications. For this reason a dense population should be sought around the area that is suggested to be Katapa.
- It should be easily accessible as well as situated at a stationary post where important roads pass through it.
- It must be a well-protected and easily defended location as it is the place where the king and army spent their winter and that is considered to be an important religious center where the *nuntarriyašhaš* festival celebrations set off.
- It should be situated on fertile wetlands that could meet all the needs of the royal members and the army. For this reason the hinterland of Katapa should be taken into consideration before offering any suggestions on its location.
- The general climate characteristic should be different but should be located within a mild microclimate zone.

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<sup>1</sup>Goetze suggests that the city could be found between Sorgun and Alaca or Mecitözü (Goetze, 1957: 98); Gastrang-Gurney proposes that it is near Küçük Köhne (Gastrang-Gurney, 1959: 13); Schuler, that it is between Alaca and Mecitözü (Schuler, 1965: 28); Cornelius, considered it to be located on Kerkenes Mountain (Cornelius, 1967: 72); while Ünal, suggests it to be between Çekerek and Ortaköy (Ünal, 1974: 195-196 fn.: 73); subsequently Popko (Popko, 1995: 258) and Polit (Polit, 1999: 8) suggest the search should be undertaken between Çorum and Sungurlu; whereas Karasu suggest it should be sought around Köseadağ or Uğurludağ (Karasu, 1988: 378); Singer proposes that it should be sought to the north or northeast of Hattuša (Singer, 1984: A: 121); Forlanini, that it is to the southeast of Boğazkale, a two day’s distance travel from Boğazkale (Forlanini, 1977: 210); furthermore, in another one of his research Forlanini suggests it to be on the southwest of Yozgat at the environs of Çamurlu or Babalı Mountain near Alişar (Forlanini & Marazzi, 1986:4.3. ; 1980: 81). In a subsequent research, however, he proposes that it is to the east of Boğazkale, at Sorgun, a province of Yozgat (Forlanini, 1992: 291); he finally suggests that the city be sought to the south of Ortaköy at the Çekerek=Zuliya basin (Forlanini, 2008: 152). Gorny, on the other hand, has identified Salur Höyük as Katapa (Gorny, 2006: 11).

<sup>2</sup>Forlanini, 2008: 151 vd.

- It is described to be located in the Kaška or mentioned together with cities that had contact with Kaška in Hittite Cuneiform Texts, Katapa should be searched to the north of Hattuša.
- As it is also mentioned together with cities located in the administration center of Šapinuwa in some passages of the texts, it should also be situated near Šapinuwa.
- Taking into consideration the cult voyages of the king, Katapa should be positioned to the northeast of Hattuša and south of Šapinuwa.

In this framework; located 12 km to the southeast of Alaca, a district of Çorum, the road at Akören plain branches into two, going left and right, along the wide valleys found on both sides of the mountains extending towards Sorgun, Yozgat. The road which leads towards southeast, along Akören-Bolatçık<sup>1</sup>-Tutaş-Gazipaşa and branches into two approximately after 2 km from Gazipaşa; the one on the right leads to Aslantaş while the one on the left leads to Belpınar. It is strategically located at an important transit point of Mercantepe Höyük and citadel established on the plains on the top of the crests the village was based on. The citadel was of great significance in respect to controlling the valley located towards the direction of Alaca. The Höyük had assumed on the role of a gate that opened to Alaca plain from the highlands towards Sorgun.<sup>2</sup> Mercantepe Höyük can be characterized as a garrison city with its strategic position and appropriate geographical setting.

Nevertheless, a höyük situated on high ground, widespread and very important for the region of Tumbul Höyük was found in Killik Village is discovered as a result of topographic research conducted in the settlements of Gazipaşa located on the left side of the road that leads to Belpınar and on the right side to Killik. The existence of settlements pertaining to 3000, 2000 and 1000 BC was discovered in Tumbul Höyük. The Höyük at the same time seemed to be a central settlement of the region due to physical structure and position<sup>3</sup>. The Höyük which is located 700 m northwest to the Killik Village is situated on a steep mound with a height of 23 m and an axis length of 110 m. The southeast section being rocky, streams flowed on both sides. Furthermore, a bull head was discovered by the guard of the orchard around the höyük during the topographic research that was conducted in the region in 1988.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, with its fertile wetlands, being located on high grounds and consisting of a sheltered geographical structure and wooded area extending towards the direction of Sorgun, the village had presented an organized and immaculate scenery pointing to a fortified settlement. Then again, the woody area that starts from the Tutaş village and becomes dense towards the settlements Gazipaşa and Killik brings the words “*Katapa City Forest*”

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<sup>1</sup>Bolatçık Höyük is proximately 8 km from Akören, located along the direction of Sorgun. Süel, 1990:344.

<sup>2</sup>Süel, 1990: 342; Sipahi & Yıldırım, 2010: 450.

<sup>3</sup>Sipahi & Yıldırım, 2010: 451.

<sup>4</sup>Süel, 1990: 344 vd.

mentioned in Hittite Cuneiform texts to mind. We believe that Killik and Gazipaşa as well as Belpınar settlements are suitable for Kapata City and other minor cult and garrison towns connected to Katapa State. In fact the settlement density observed especially in Gazipaşa and Killik indicated to a large state center in the region.

In conclusion; Katapa had been both a military garrison center as well as an important cult center that the king started off the celebrations of one of the longest festivals and then had once again revisited. In the light of cuneiform texts, archeological excavations and site trips which were performed with the help of 1/25000 scale maps we believe that Tumbul Höyük which has not been suggested by any other researcher up till now is the most suitable location for Katapa. We believe that future archeological studies that will be conducted in this area will provide productive and positive results, however, historical geographical studies can be as difficult as well as misleading as putting together pieces of a puzzle. For this reason, until proven the opposite, we believe that this proposal will greatly contribute to and benefit those working in this field of study.

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