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A Review on the Term of Hearth in Hittite Mythological Documents: Anatolian Hearth Belief*

*Hitit Mitolojik Belgelerinde Ocak Kavramı Üzerine Bir Deęerlendirme:
Anadolu Ocak İnanç*

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Abstract

In order to find out how the concept of “hearth” has come to Anatolia, it is inevitable to travel in time towards the prehistoric ages. It would not be wrong to indicate that the most important period of this journey has been the period of Hittite State. With their cuneiform documents, Hittites, who have the first Anatolian written documents, provide the earliest records of Anatolian cultural history. In these records, various rituals such as sacrificial rites, festivals, sorcery and fortune telling carried out around the hearth were depicted in detail. It is simply understood that the Hittites have highly valued the concept of hearth. Hittite mythological documents, which consist of a substantial part of these records, reflect the religious beliefs of Hittites. These documents point out that with its various new meanings, the term of hearth which has been considered very important since the settled life in Anatolia, becomes the inseparable part of Hittite religion. These documents that reflect the belief system including the fears, angers and hopes of the Hittites are regarded as the first records of Anatolian mythology related to the term of hearth. Among the studies on mythological documents of Hittites, there is a scarcity of the ones related to the hearth term. The lack of the studies carried out on the hearth term in mythological texts has been the reason of this study. This study aims to identify the hearth in Hittite mythological documents and to determine the relationship between this identification and Anatolian hearth belief.

Keywords: Hittite Myths, Hearth, Family, Anatolian Hearth Cult

Öz

“Ocak” kavramının Anadolu’ya nasıl geldiğini anlamak için tarih öncesi dönemlere doğru bir yolculuk yapmak kaçınılmazdır. Günümüz Anadolusunda hâlen kullanılmaya devam eden ocak teriminin tarihî yolculuğunun en önemli evresi Hitit Devleti dönemidir demek yanlış olmayacaktır. Nitekim Anadolu’nun ilk yazılı belgelerine sahip olan Hititler, çivi yazılı belgeleri ile Anadolu kültür tarihinin en erken kayıtlarını sunmaktadır. Bu yazılı kayıtlarda, ocak etrafında yapılan kurban ve bayram törenleri, büyü ve fal gibi çeşitli ritüeller çivi yazılı belgelerde detaylı bir şekilde tasvir edilmektedir. Bu belgelerdeki ocak kavramı üzerine yapılmış çalışmaların sayısı oldukça fazladır. Bu çalışmalardan, Hititlerin ocak kavramına vermiş oldukları değer açıkça anlaşılmaktadır. Yazılı kayıtların önemli bir kısmını oluşturan Hitit mitolojik belgeleri ise Hititlerin dini inanışlarını detaylı bir şekilde yansıtmaktadır. Bu belgeler, yerleşik hayata geçişten itibaren Anadolu’da önemli sayılan ocak kavramının elde ettiği yeni anlamlarla birlikte Hitit dinî hayatının ayrılmaz bir parçası olduğuna işaret etmektedir. Hititlerin korkuları, öfkeleri ve umutlarını içeren inanç sistemini yansıtan bu belgeler, Anadolu mitolojisinin ocak terimi ile ilgili ilk belgeleri sayılmaktadırlar. Bu denli önemli görevlere sahip olan bu belgeler üzerinde yapılan çalışmaların arasında ocak kavramı üzerine olanların azlığı bu çalışmanın ortaya çıkış sebebi olmuştur. Bu çalışma, Hitit mitolojik belgelerinde geçen ocak kavramını tanımlamak ve bu tanımın Anadolu ocak inancı ile ilişkisini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hitit Mitleri, Ocak, Aile, Anadolu Ocak Kültü

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INTRODUCTION

The term of hearth had a very important place until Hittite state was founded. In the permanent settlement in Anatolia that started within Neolithic Age, the hearth represented not only heating and nutrition but also it began to symbolize the offering place for the gods. With this property, the hearth became sacred and it appeared to be a cult (Mellart, 2003: 12-13; Hodder, 2006: 109; Kvæstad, 2010: 85-86; Çevik & Vuruşkan, 2015: 593; Duru, 1993: 148; Duru & Umurtak, 2005: 12-13; Özdoğan, Schwazberg & Özdoğan, 2008: 44-45). In Chalcolithic Age, when the settlements became developed and metal industry became vital, cult hearths were improved in respect to their shapes (Duru, 1996: 2-19; Mellaart, 1970: 55-67; Özdoğan, Karul & Ayhan, 1999: 143-144; Koşay, 1976: 77-80; Ceylan, 2001: fig. 9-12; Işıklı, 2005: Plt.21; Sagona, Erkmén, Sagona & Thoma, 1996: 43; Hood, 1951: 139; Takaoğlu, 2000: 13). Early Bronze Age kept the tradition of the schematic hearth and not only the usage of hearths but also the importance of them increased (Lamb, 1956: 89-91; Macqueen, 2013: 128, fig.100-101; Şahoğlu, 2008: 489; Özcan, 1993: 379; Takaoğlu, 2000: fig. 2a). By Middle Bronze Age, also known as Assyrian Trade Colonies Period, the Hittite state was founded and the first written records came in view.

Hittite documents were about ritual sacrifices, festivals, sorcery and fortune telling. The term hearth which appeared in the documents of sacrificial rites and festivals was sacred as it represented the offering place for the gods. It was considered holy in sorcery and fortune telling documents, as it was the mean to reach the gods. That is, the hearth was believed to be the agent between the human and the gods Taş (2011: 7-18).

The hearth which took such an important place in Hittite society naturally appeared in the mythological documents, as well. The documents that reflected the public belief system were the written records of the myths that were about Hittite deities and their power, fears, hopes and angers.

In Hittite state and empire, religion had a very important place and this importance reflected to the mythological texts. However, the fact that there were not enough studies on the place of hearth in the Hittite mythological documents has been the main reason of our study. Accordingly, in this study, firstly, Hittite mythological texts and documents will be examined and then the meanings of the hearth and fire terms will be tried to be explained. The main purpose of our study is to evaluate the relationship between the Hittite hearth concept and Anatolian hearth belief in the light of mythological documents and myths and thus to contribute to the the further studies related to the topic.

Hittite Myths

Hittite myths are very important sources of information about the Hittite religion, the gods and goddesses. They are considered as the mixture of their own beliefs, the beliefs before them and the beliefs of their neighbors. They are closely related to the cult and rituals. Anatolian myths were formed from the myths depending on the ritual procedures and the order in the religious ceremony. The purpose of the rituals in myths was to restore the stability of the deteriorating daily life. Thus, myths reflected the religious beliefs, fears, angers, hopes and common senses of the Hittites (Eyüpoğlu, 2007: 37-41).

Hoffner (1998) categorizes them as Old Anatolian Myths (1-13), Hurrian Myths (14-18), Tales Involving Deities and Mortals (19-22) and Canaanite Myth (23). The first two categories contain the Old and New Hittite periods. The third category provides legendary narratives where both gods and mortals play important roles. The last category presents the Hittite version of a Canaanite myth whose main outline is familiar from the texts of the Baal cycle of myths found in the city of Ugarit.

Old Anatolian myths are believed to be very simple stories adopted from the Hattians. Although the versions of these myths are believed to be available during Old Hittite period, there are no extant copies. Yet, Hurrian myths have been translated into Hittite, and probably adapted from Hurrian versions. Moreover, they have more linguistic structure. The Anatolian myths are likely to serve the interests of the cult itself. The Illuyanka stories (Text 1) forms the cult legend of the Purulli Festival. The stories of Telipinu (Texts 2-5, 7-9, and 13) and other vanishing deities are associated with the rituals to persuade the offended deities to return in solicitude to their land and people (Hoffner, 1998: 9-10, Arkan, 1998: 166).

Hearth in Mythological Documents

The term of hearth is often used with similar purposes. According to Ardzinba, it is used as an altar or sometimes a shrine (2010: 23, 56). As CHD (2019: 555) argues that the term hearth is *hassa-GUNNI* in Hittite documents KBo 13. 213 I 8-11 (NS); KBo 30.59 ii 3-7 (NS); KUB 2.4 iv 5-8; KUB

11.35 ii 23-25 (OH/NS) and *hassi* in the documents KUB 1.17. iii 32-39; KUB 44.15 i 9-10 (Ardzinba, 2010: 294; Marcuson & Hout, 2015: 154). Some modern documents argue that the god of hearth is named as *hashas* (Eyüpoğlu, 2007: 17; Yıldırım, 2014: 39) or *hassa* (Taş, 2011: 8).

The term hearth is frequently used in Old Hittite myths. Old Hittite myths are generally related to the vanishing deities that become alienated from the land and people. The effects of their departure upon gods, humans, animals, and plants are depicted in detail. The Telipinu myth is the best preserved and most familiar of this type (Hoffner, 1998: 14). Telipinu is the son of the great Storm God. In an old Anatolian myth, the disappearance of Telipinu, the furious God Telipinu leaves the country and he takes along the abundance and wealth. Thus, all the gods unite to find him and bring him back to the country. The main goal is to make the nature gain its old power (Arıkan, 1998: 165-166; Eyüpoğlu, 2007: 195-198; Ardzinba, 2010: 106-107).

In version 1 of the myth, Hittite cuneiform text KUB XVII 10 I 5-9 (CTH 324-2) shows that the disappearance of Telipinu and the disasters in the country are associated with the hearth cult and the term fireplace is used as the hearth: "Mist seized the windows. Smoke seized the house. In the fireplace the logs were stifled. [At the altars] the gods were stifled. In the sheep pen the sheep were stifled. In the cattle barn the cattle were stifled. The mother sheep rejected her lamb. The cow rejected her calf. Barley (and) wheat no longer ripen. Cattle, sheep, and humans no longer become pregnant. And those (already) pregnant cannot give birth. The mountains and the trees dried up, so that the shoots do not come (forth). The pastures and the springs dried up, thus famine broke out in the land. Humans and gods are dying of hunger. The Great Sun God made a feast and invited the Thousand Gods. They ate but couldn't get enough. They drank but couldn't quench their thirst." (Hoffner, 1998: 15).

The disappearance of the god makes all disasters come out. The disasters first start with the mist and smoke coming into the houses. The stifling of the logs refers a negative meaning here. The hearth is out of order now and the fire in it is no longer burning. The fact that the fire in the hearth dies down means that the family or the unity living here does not live together anymore. They are separated so the unity of the family is disrupted. Here in this text, the term fireplace refers to home and family. The myth ends with Telepinu's returning to his country. In the same version, the term fireplace appears again in the document KUB XXXIII. 3 IV (CTH 324): "Telipinu came back home to his house and took account of his land. The mist released the windows. The smoke released the house. The altars were in harmony again with the gods. The fireplace released the log. In the sheepfold, he released the sheep. In the cattle barn, he released the cattle. Then the mother looked after her child. The sheep looked after her lamb. The cow looked after her calf. And Telipinu looked after the king and queen and took account of them in respect to life, vigor, and longevity." (Hoffner, 1998: 17-18).

In this part of the related text, by Telepinu's coming, the disasters disappear and everything turns back to the original form. For instance, the god leaves a log in the hearth and the fire in the hearth revives again. The family of the house and the unity of the country refresh and the harmony and the order of the nature revert again. Among the vanishing god myths, perhaps the most well-known one is the Disappearance of the Storm God. The theme and the structure of the myth is the same as in the Disappearance of Telipinu. In the text CTH 325-3, the term hearth is used with the same reference as in the Telipinu Myth: "Mist seized the windows. Smoke seized the house. In the hearth, the logs were stifled. At the altars, the gods were stifled. In the sheepfold, the sheep were stifled. In the cattle barn, the cattle were stifled. The ewe rejected her lamb. The cow rejected her calf." (Hoffner, 1998: 21). The disappearance of the Storm God, whose father is Telipinu and who is the chief god of Hittites negatively affects the flow of the life and the house. In the hearth, there is no longer fire and the life has stopped at home. The term hearth refers to the same thing: family and unity.

In the text 326-5a, the Myths of Lost Storm Gods, the Personal God of Queen Asmunikal is very angry before she vanishes, so everything in the house and the nature again deteriorates. The term hearth refers to the same meaning as in the other myths: "[The Storm God of] Queen Asmunikal became angry. [He drew his . . . backward, and drew] his [. . .] forward. [He put his right] shoe on his left foot. He turned himself around and [went] forth. Mist seized the windows. Smoke [seized] the roof beams. [. . .] became stifled at the altars; [. . .] became stifled [at the . . . ; the . . .] became stifled [at the . . .]. [The . . . s] turned [. . .] the hearth [. . .] upon it the logs [were stifled]. In the courtyard, the sheep [were stifled]. In the cattle barn, the cattle [were stifled]. They eat, but they [do] not [become satisfied. They drink, but do not] quench their thirst." (Hoffner, 1998: 24-25).

After returning of the appeased god, everything becomes right again: “[. . .] sat down on a wooden. . . The altar [became right again; above it] the gods became right again. [. . .] On the hearth, the logs [became right again. In the sheep pen] the sheep became right again. [In] the cattle barn, [the cattle became right again]. They eat and [become satisfied]. They drink again [and quench their thirst].” (Hoffner, 1998: 25).

In the text CTH 327-5b, the returning of Storm God of Queen Harapsili makes the nature be in the harmony including the house, the animals, and hearth cult: “[The Storm God of Queen Harapsili(?)] sat down on a wooden sarpas-chair. [...] . The mist released [the window]. [The smoke] released [the house]. The altar was in harmony again. [Above it] the gods were in harmony. [The hearth was in harmony]. Upon it the logs were in harmony. In the courtyard, the sheep were in harmony. [In the] cattle [barn] the oxen were in harmony. They ate and once more had enough. They drank and once more had enough [...]” (Hoffner, 1998: 25).

In the text CTH 334-8a, the Disappearance of Hannahanna, the term hearth is referred as the same meaning: “Hannahanna [went off, and mist held] the windows. Smoke held the house. In the hearth, the logs were stifled.] At the altars [the gods] were stifled.” (Hoffner, 1998: 25). After the appeasement of the Goddess, in the text CTH 334-8b, the fire in the hearth begins to light again: “[Hapantali brought] karsani-wood from the mountain, and set fire to it in the hearth.” (Hoffner, 1998: 30).

In a Hurrian myth, The Song of Release, the text KBo 32.19, Tessup wants the city Ebla to constitute a debt remission otherwise there will be some drastic judgement. Therefore, Tessup explains his plans about the city, threatens the king and addresses the public. Here, he uses the term hearth: “[...] [I will move] the [h]earth of the lower [wall] down to the river [...], and [I will] pour out the hearth of the upper w[all] down on [the lowe]r wall.” (Hoffner, 1998: 76-77). Here, Tessup prefers to use the term hearth as a threat. Moving and pouring out the hearth means making the unity and harmony vanished. The unity of the city will be disappeared and the harmony of the families will no longer last.

Anatolian Hearth Belief

Hittite myths of vanishing deities are believed to belong to the local people of Anatolia: Hattis. These myths symbolize the death and reborn of the nature. The disappearance of the god means famine although reappearing him or her means the spring coming, abundance and the time of health (Özdemir, 2019: 700). In the myths, it is clearly pointed out that there is a strong link between family and the hearth. For this reason, hearth is sacred as it symbolizes family, unity, and harmony of the city or the country. These symbols dates back to the Neolithic Age (Taş, 2011: 12).

In the first settlements of Anatolia, the house has been both a place for social life and ancestor cult. Especially in Çatalhöyük and Aşıklıhöyük it is believed that the houses are considered as a living entity, and as its inhabitants go through several transitional phases during their life, the house itself takes part in a similar process. That is, it is becoming part of a transformational process. As an inhabitant's life circle, the life of house is marked by construction, maintenance, and destruction, as well. The rebirth; the act of rebuilding the structure could relate to the ancestors as a symbol of fertility. The previous structure of the house becomes a part of the new house, just as the ancestor becomes a part of the family. The hearth is generally located in the centre of the household. The concept of the hearth refers to fertility, transformation, and nourishment (Kvæstad, 2010: 85-86).

In Bronze Age, it is seen that there is a continuation of household shrines. The household hearths are an important part of religious life as observed on the Kusura horns and Kültepe hearth structures (Lamb 1956: fig 1; 89-91), and the ones in Beycesultan (Macqueen, 1998: 128). In Pulur, Güzelova, and Karaz höyük, the hearth serves to the religious functions rather than daily use. Especially the ones in Güzelova may be linked to the ancestral cult. The personified hearth in Cinistepe may be served as a cultic-ritual function. It is reasonable to infer that the Bronze Age hearths are among the basic elements of the house structures that had their own personalities, often deified (Takaoğlu, 2000: 13).

Hittite cuneiform documents show that the hearth is closely related to the dead and the ancestral cult. According to this cult, the souls of the kings help and preserve their families and their societies even after they die. In a ritual text KBo XVII 105 (CTH 433), the relationship between the ancestral cult and the hearth is clearly seen: “[...] You, the hearth, you embrace a dead person, then the gods will embrace you, as anyone [...] You, the hearth, embrace and preserve the princes, the nephews and the grandsons of the kings and the queens. Clear their ways!” (Taş, 2011: 11).

As seen in the text above, the hearth is an object that the royal family is interested in. The members of the family may be probably asked to gather around the hearth and this is the symbol of the family union. The protectiveness of the hearth means the preserving of the gods. On the contrary, for example, dying out of the hearth or destroying it means the wrath of the gods. If it happens, the gods tend to leave the family. Since the family hearth is regarded as the hearth of the god, the disrupting or extinguishing of it were the worst thing ever. It is clear that when the hearth in a house dies out, the family becomes extinct (Taş, 2011: 12).

In the Hittite literary evidence, the hearth is an important cult-object in their belief system where a deity often manifests itself in the form of a person and could take up temporary residence in the ritual object. The hearth is clearly personified and closely identified with the force of nature. The essence of deities is believed to be the power or force behind the manifestation. The hearth is served as a means of communicating with the gods. It also serves additional roles linked to the underworld, family unity and purification. The Hittite texts referring to *Hassa*, the God of Hearth, concern the elite level centred around the hearth within the palace. Such an indigenous concept is possibly gained from the Hurrians, who has a crucial impact on Hittite religion (Takaoğlu, 2000: 14).

Such an assumption may well indicate the awareness of the *Hassa* in the Erzurum plain. The ritual there is involved with the hearth and fire related the horned objects. Thus, it is possible that the personified hearth from Cinis Höyük served to personify a male deity, perhaps a god of the hearth, *Hassa*. Because of the sacred role of fire, the hearth could be deified, which leads to its personification represented by the human likeness. The myth of the God of Hearth, *Hashas*, is found in a Turkish book by İsmet Zeki Eyüpoğlu (2007: 117-118). *Hassas* is described as a great power that bakes the bread and preserves the sancturaies and the people. It is the invisible power of the nature. It is the reflection of the liveliness in the nature.

Like Early Bronze Age houses, Hittite hearths are set up in the middle of the room (Ögel, 1995:122; Ünal, 1988: 1485). Even today one can see such houses in some of the villages in the province of Çorum. They consist of only one big room with a hearth or fireplace in the middle, and a hole in the roof immediately above the hearth that serves as chimney and light shaft (Ünal, 1988: 1485).

A great number of Anatolian researchers indicate that after Hittites, the divinity of the hearth goes on among the civilizations in Anatolia. For instance, the Greeks, who consider the hearth as a sacred place, have the goddess of hearth, named *Hestia* (Lawyer, 1953: 48-49; Pomeroy, 2006: 363). The focus of their rituals is the family hearth in *oikos* (Morgan, 1953: 48-49; Pomeroy, 2006: 363). In Classical and Hellenistic periods, the city hearth becomes highly important for the Greeks. This “common hearth” is located in the center of the city and in a building called *prytaneion*. It symbolizes the “eternal flame”, that is, the eternal life of the city (Lawyer, 1953: 48; Cartledge, 2002: 135; Hansen & Nielsen, 2004: 132; Morgan, 2011: 453; Serafim, 2021: 2-3). In Roman Greece, some royal women especially in Sparta serve as the title *Hestia Poleos*, “the Hestia of the city” (Lawyer, 1953: 48; Pomeroy, 2002: 125). Similarly, the Romans afterwards incredibly respect the family and city hearth and they continue the tradition of the goddess of hearth, named *Vesta* (Lawyer, 1953: 48; Pomeroy, 2002: 125, Higginson, 2007: 201). The vestal virgins are believed to protect the central sacredness of the state (Higginson, 2007: 201; Kroppenber, 2010: 423; Linke, 2013: 297).

There have been some beliefs and traditions related to the hearth in pre-Islamic Turks and Islamic Turks, as well. As fire seems to be a purifying and soothing element, hearth becomes a respected and sacred concept among the Turks (Uhri, 2003: 27; Yörükân, 2005: 68-69; Candan, 2005: 418, Ekici & Öger, 2007: 1359-1360; Kumartaşlıoğlu, 2014: 189). Like the Hittites, Old Turks highly respected the hearth as a cult (Candan, 2005: 30-31; Yörükân, 2005: 68-69; Ekici & Öger, 2007: 1361; Taş, 2011: 12-13). The Turks believe that the fire in the hearth is the follow-up of the descent. This Old Turkish belief system and refers the family hearth as the relic of the ancestors. The souls of them are believed to still survive in the family hearth, so one should sanctify them and should not put out the fire in the hearth (Yörükân, 2005: 68-69).

The symbol of the family is the hearth that is placed in the center of the house (Ögel, 1995: 502; Ekici & Öger, 2007: 1359). The traditions and the rituals are carried out around the hearth for the sake of the gods and their preserving souls. In terms of ritual activities, it is clear that the members of the family, as seen among the Hittites, give offerings to the gods at the hearth and pray for their help (Candan, 2005: 31; Kumartaşlıoğlu, 2014: 179). The Turks believe that the continuity of the hearth is really important. Furthermore, dying out of the hearth means a curse and ending up the family (Delaney, 1991: 159, Ögel,

1995: 502-504, İnan, 1976: 42; Ekici & Öger, 2007: 1361). Thus, the family hearth symbolizes the union, integrity and the follow-up of the family (Uhri, 2003: 35; Yörükan, 2005: 68-69; Ekici & Öger, 2007: 1360).

Shamans pray for the soul of the hearth that is believed to be lit by the ancestors (İnan, 1976: 44). Yakut Turks swear in front of the hearth and Kyrgyz / Kazakh brides turn around the hearth for three times and they grovel the fire pouring the oil on it (Tanyu, 1976: 292; Selçuk, 2004: 271). Yakuts believe “the family hearth” is a sacred fire that should not be extinguished and there has always been a holy soul that preserved this hearth (Uhri, 2003: 35). Altay Turks have a tradition that they move the old fire in the old house to the new house. The eldest person of the family carries the aisle in the hearth of the old house to the new one with a shovel. In the new home, he lights a new fire with the old aisle. Then, every member of the family prays for the “Ateş Ana” (The Mother of Fire), the Goddess of Fire. The moving of the aisle to the new house has a powerful aim. Moving the fire from the old to the new place refers the transaction of the beliefs and traditions of the family (Duymaz and Şahin, 2008: 123).

Among the Turkish myths and epics, Sarıkız myth may be the leading one related to the hearth. It is still popular among Tahtacı Turkmens, who live around the Mount Kaz (İda) in Balıkesir. In every August and September, the holy place named Sarıkız Hill is visited by many people and they set up a tent near the tomb of Sarıkız. In the tents, each family has its own hearth. The sacrifices for Sarkız and her father are prepared in this hearth. Every family has to use its own hearth. If a family does not come to the festival, no one can use its hearth. The hearth here is a family hearth. This myth is a great example as it shows the close link between the hearth and ancestors cult. The fire in the hearth symbolizes that the ancestors of those are still there (Tanyu, 1987: 109-110; Duymaz, 2001: 97; Duymaz & Şahin, 2008: 122-123; Taş, 2011: 12-13; Aydemir, 2013: 62-63; Gök, 2021: 30).

In Turkish village societies, the hearth still symbolizes the family continuity (Delaney, 1991: 159; Kvæstad, 2010: 28). For example, a wife is expected to assure the continuation of her husband’s hearth within the first year of marriage; by giving birth to their first child. If a man does not have any sons, his hearth is in danger, meaning his hearth will extinguish and his patriline will die out.

There have been various Turkish idioms related to the hearth such as “baba ocağı”, “ocağı sönmek”, and “ocağına incir ağacı dikmek” and they are all about the hearth cult in the family (Uhri, 2003: 35). For example, the idiom “baba ocağı” (the hearth of father) symbolizes the family where one brings up. As among Turks, the descent comes from father, the hearth here is associated with the father. “Ocağına incir ağacı dikmek” refers to ruin one’s family. “Ocağı sönmek (to perish)” means dying out of the family union. In addition, there have also been some Turkish wishes and prayers related to the hearth such as “Allah, ocağımı söndürmesin” and “ocağımız şenlensin” (Erol, 2007: 45-46). The first one is a kind of wish that means “God may not perish you” and the second one refers to a wish “may your hearth/home brighten up”.

CONCLUSION

In Hittite culture, the belief and the traditions related to the concept of hearth represent the unity, integrity, and the fruitfulness. The term of hearth frequently appears in the documents of sacrificial rites, festivals, sorcery, and fortune telling. Hearth is a sacred object that is served as a mediator between the gods and the people. Hittite mythological documents that reflect the beliefs of Hittites, fears, angers, and hopes are mainly Anatolian and Hurrian origin. They are generally formed upon the disappearance of the gods and after the gods disappear, the events that take place at home, in the nature and the country are explained in detail. It is clearly understood that vanishing deities symbolize the abundance and wealth of the communities. The disappearance of them brings disasters such as famine, hunger, and destroyed family. Due to the importance of the gods in the documents, one can easily realize that the hearth has a powerful position for the Hittite people. Whenever a god disappears, the cooking in the hearths and sacrificing rituals in and around the hearth can not be carried out. For that reason, after the disappearance of the gods, the unity and the continuity of the family will come to the end. The houses are completed with mist and smoke. The hearth is stifled and there is no longer fire in it. The health of the animals is badly affected. However, after the gods return, everything becomes right. The houses are in order, the hearth starts to serve again, the animals are healthy. Everything at home and the country is as it should be. All is right with the world. The unity and integrity are provided again. In addition, in a Hurrian myth, the Song of Release, the God Tessup uses the term of hearth in order to threaten the people of the city that he wants to take control. If the king and the people do not accept Tessup’s offer, the hearth will be moved

and poured out. The hearth of the city is used as a threat here. Moving and pouring it out means disrupting the city and the unity, as well. This Hurrian myth clearly points out the importance of the hearth for the sake and integrity of the city.

The Hittite cuneiform documents confirm the link between the hearth and the ancestral cult. The link between the hearth, and the ancestral cult starts in Neolithic Age and continues in Bronze Age settlements. The hearths with different shapes seem to be used for religious purposes rather than everyday life. The personified hearth structures are highly regarded as sacred. Putting out the fire in the hearth symbolizes the perishing of the family. The personified hearth that is popular in in Bronze Age gives place to personified god in Hittite State. The deity appears in the form of a human being and the hearth is a means of communication with gods. Moreover, the God of hearth is recorded in documents with the names of Hassa, Hassi or Hashas. In the myth of Hashas, the importance of the god for the unity and abundance is clearly understood and the God of hearth symbolizes the power of the nature and he is one of the gods that preserve the Hittites. The sacredness of the hearth continues to appear in both Greeks and Romans. However, the hearth is not the symbol of the god but the symbol of the goddess. First, *Hestia* and then *Vesta* are highly regarded not only in the family but also in the city and state.

The Hittite hearth is located at the centre of the house or in the middle of the rooms. This tradition still continues in some parts of Anatolia. Among Turks, the hearth is a holy object that provides the union of the family. The relationship between the hearth and the ancestral cult is crucial for Turks. Turks believe that putting out the fire brings curse and the family experiences disasters. Shamans, Yakut, Kyrgyz, and Altay Turks had some peculiar traditions related to hearth but they had in common in terms of the holiness of the hearth. The common reference is the concept of family hearth and there is a close link between the family hearth and the ancestor cult of that nation. In the myth Sarıkız, which is still popular among Tahtacı Turkmens around Balıkesir and Edremit, the hearth still points out to the same thing. The sacrifices for the soul of Sarıkız and his father are prepared in these sacred hearths. There are also Turkish idioms and wishes related to the hearth, which are still used in Turkish language. All of them indicate that the hearth means the family, the union and integrity as in Hittite myths.

It has been concluded that the hearth provides the unity, harmony, and the continuity of the family both in Hittite and Anatolian belief systems. In addition, it is likely to say that the hearth concept has been constantly respected and regarded as sacred since pre-historic times. In addition, the continuity of the term in Anatolia is clear in not only the traditions but also the folk tales and idioms. They indicate mythological continuity of the term in Anatolia for pre-Islamic and Islamic cultures. However, it is not still known whether the term hearth referring the family union has originated from the Hittites or not. Even though Hittites provides the first written records related to this reference, it may have come to the Hittites from the neighbouring cultures. Another suggestion is that Hittites may have determined the first Anatolian local beliefs. Thus, our current knowledge is not yet sufficient to say the origin of the term in Anatolia. Moreover, until the settlement of Islamic Turks, there were so many cultures in the region that should be studied on. We may just provide some assumptions about the continuity of the hearth concept, yet, the research on Greeks, Romans and Ottomans or the religions of Christianity and Islam should be intensely carried out in order to find out the mythological and cultural continuity of the term. Probably, the Turks might have combined their ancestor cult belief with the Islamic traditions. Finally, the studies on the myths, local tales and legends from the pre-historic times to the present-day Anatolia should be more in number so that the further researches could contribute to realize the precise origin of the term of hearth in Anatolia.

Authorship Contribution

This study was conducted with a single author, %100.

Ethics Committee Statement

Ethics committee is not required in this study.

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