

DOOR AND THRESHOLD BELIEFS FROM ANCIENT CULTURES TO TURKISH CULTURE

ANTİK KÜLTÜRLERDEN TÜRK KÜLTÜRÜNE AÇILAN KAPI VE EŞİK İNANIŞLARI

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Abstract

The door defined as a structure or partition space in the place through which is passed when entering and exiting. Beyond this dictionary meaning in fact, it has various other connotations such as socio-cultural, political, literary, artistic, religious as well as architectural. Doors have been developed and shaped in accordance with the climatic conditions, structural features and cultural factors of the region where the buildings are located, and they are the elements forming the language of both people and spaces. In a sense, the door is the socio-cultural and economic expression of the owner of the place. In addition to connecting spaces, providing the function of passing from indoors to outdoors, from outdoors to indoors or from one space to another, doors also have functions such as insulation against temperature, water, humidity, noise, dust, insects, providing vision and light when necessary, and communication. When the historical processes of doors having many types and functions are examined, it is seen that they have not changed much in terms of shape, type and material use for thousands of years. Most of the beliefs about doors and thresholds from antiquity to the present have affected many societies in the context of cultural interaction. The symbolic meanings of doors and thresholds in Turkish culture are frequently encountered, similar to those in ancient cultures. Doors, keyholes and doorways have been seen as a passage for evil forces since antiquity, and certain rituals have been applied to the door and threshold to protect the inside against evil forces. Such practices are still found among the old Turks and in Anatolia. Apart from this, it is an ancient belief that the door is seen as a kind of gateway to life after death. The objects buried under the threshold to protect the household and the dwelling are also among the traditions that have survived since

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antiquity in the same direction. The aim of this study is to illuminate the impact of door and threshold beliefs from ancient cultures to today's Turkish culture in the light of examples.

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Keywords

Ancient Cultures, Turkish Culture, Door, Threshold, Demons, Afterlife

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Öz

Kapı, bir mekana girerken ve çıkarken içinden geçilen bir yapı veya bölme alanı olarak tanımlanır. Aslında bu sözlük anlamının ötesinde, mimari olduğu kadar sosyo-kültürel, siyasi, edebi, sanatsal, dini gibi çeşitli çağrışımları da vardır. Yapıların bulunduğu bölgenin iklim koşullarına, yapısal özelliklerine ve kültürel faktörlerine uygun olarak gelişen ve şekillenen kapılar, hem insanların hem de mekânların dilini oluşturan unsurlardır. Kapı bir anlamda mekân sahibinin sosyo-kültürel ve ekonomik ifadesidir. Kapıların mekânları birbirine bağlama, iç mekândan dış mekâna, dış mekândan iç mekâna ya da bir mekândan diğerine geçişi sağlama işlevinin yanı sıra sıcaklığa, suya, neme, gürültüye, toza, böceğe karşı yalıtım, gerektiğinde görüş ve ışık sağlama, iletişim kurma gibi işlevleri de vardır. Birçok çeşidi ve işlevi olan kapıların tarihsel süreçleri incelendiğinde binlerce yıldır şekil, tip ve malzeme kullanımı açısından çok fazla değişmediği görülüyor. Antik çağlardan günümüze kapı ve eşiklerle ilgili inanışların çoğu kültürel etkileşim bağlamında birçok toplumu etkilemiştir. Türk kültüründe de kapı ve eşiklerin antik kültürlerdekine benzer sembolik anlamlarına sıklıkla rastlanmaktadır. Kapılar, anahtar delikleri ve geçitler antik çağlardan bu yana kötü güçler için bir geçit olarak görülmüş ve içeridekileri kötü güçlere karşı korumak için kapı ve eşiğe belirli ritüeller uygulanmıştır. Bu tür uygulamalara eski Türkler arasında ve Anadolu'da hala rastlanmaktadır. Bunun dışında kapının bir tür ölümden sonraki hayata geçiş kapısı olarak görülmesi de eski bir inanıştır. Ev halkını ve konutu korumak için eşik altına gömülen nesnelere de aynı doğrultuda antik çağlardan günümüze ulaşan gelenekler arasındadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, kapı ve eşik inançlarının antik kültürlerden günümüz Türk kültürüne etkisini örnekler ışığında aydınlatmaktır.

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Anahtar Kelimeler

Antik Kültürler, Türk Kültürü, Kapı, Eşik, Kötü Ruhlar, Ölüm Sonrası



INTRODUCTION

Doors have reflected the beliefs, traditions, tastes and characters of mankind throughout history. These structures, which are used in every field from palaces to houses, temples to castles, take their place in today's history of culture as striking examples of each culture with the locks, doorknocker and keys on them (Saraçoğlu & Karakaş, 2007, p. 138). In addition to being a building element belonging to the interior, the door also belongs to the exterior space, to the outside where it is located. It carries its identity belonging to the building to this exterior space in which it is located and the inside thus together they form a whole. While doors and entrances direct us inside as long as we are outside the building, inside the space they become an exit. Here, doors and entrances change their identity as qualities of the actions. The acceptance of thresholds and transitional spaces as places where the world changes itself has increased the importance of doors as "thresholds" until Modernism. Doors and thresholds are concepts that reflect the continuity of opposites such as entrance and exit, inside and outside, here and there, sacred and profane, private and non-confidential (Bayram, 2003, p. 26).

Societies transform structures such as floors, doors, thresholds, windows, bridges, walls, passages and passageways, which are the most basic architectural forms constructed and produced for their practical needs in the process of 'settling', which is, existing on earth, into metaphors in a religious context with reference to the dichotomy of light (transparency) and darkness (opaque). To elaborate further, religious societies - in the context of the traditional soul-body distinction - seem to have redesigned structures that appear as physical forms in terms of the 'body' as well as metaphysical forms and structures in terms of the soul (consciousness, spirituality). Tatar explains the metaphorical meaning of the door in terms of Plato's division of the sphere of being into two, the realm of ideas (the actual reality, the soul) and shadows (the copy, the incidental reality, the body). Accordingly, the need for a threshold, a passage, a bridge, a window, a door, a threshold, a gateway that would lead us beyond the boundary (wall) of the light-proof (physical, opaque) space in which the body is located and into the transparent (transparent, metaphysical) space where the soul belongs has been decisive (2017, p. 11).

In addition to their functional use over time, doors have been carrying symbolic meanings such as hope, opportunity, openness, transition to a new life and transition between life and death. Doors have often been used symbolically for ritual purposes and the possession of the key to a door has been attributed special meanings. Similarly, doors and thresholds have been seen as mediators of change

in literature and art in metaphorical and allegorical situations (Karakul, 20019, p. 11). A door often has a transformative role, interrupting one continuum and allowing passage into another world. In addition to these roles, doors have also attracted attention for thousands of years as symbolic objects that prevent potential evil forces against entering into. The door divides what would otherwise be merged. Simmel observes that in this way, a space becomes cohesive within itself while remaining isolated from the outside world. However, the door's ability to open and establish a connection with everything outside is what gives it its essential nature. (Kaern, 1994, p. 407). As a result of the meanings attributed to the door and the threshold, these passages have maintained their symbolic meanings for thousands of years as objects where many rituals have been practiced in many societies from past to present.

Doors and Thresholds in Ancient Cultures

In the ancient belief system, objects helped the people living in that period and in that region construct the supernatural abstract environment they created in their minds in a pragmatic way. The objects included in the created environment and actions were the elements that perpetuated, strengthened and supported the religious system and proved the existence of supernatural forces by embodying them. Thus, they confirmed the existence of the religious system. As Eliade points out, in addition to their practical value, objects also have meanings of magical origin. The sacred is governed by precise laws and human endeavors depend on objects and superhuman values (2002, p. 42). In this sense, ancient societies attributed highly symbolic meanings to doors and thresholds. Many of these meanings have been transferred from period to period as a result of cultural interactions and still continue to be effective in today's societies.

Within the scope of the concepts of secular space and sacred space present in all beliefs, the symbolic meaning of gates and thresholds is quite strong and important. In terms of transition from the secular space to the sacred space or returning from the sacred realm to the worldly realm created within the belief system, the 'door' or 'gate' is the key to symbolic changing dimensions. It is understood from myths and ritual texts that doors and passages had very important figurative meanings in the beliefs of Mesopotamia. The fact that Mesopotamian temple and city gates were visually distinctive and decorated with monumental structures and different artistic ornaments symbolized the transition from one part of the cosmos to another (Ragavan, 2012, p. 201).

Among the texts in Mesopotamia in which the concept of gates and passageways were most frequently depicted are mythological stories dealing with

the theme of the underworld. The doors and gates in these stories reflect the symbolic meaning that separates and connects the worlds of the living and the dead. The stories surrounding Inanna's or Ištar's descent into the underworld are foremost among them (Bottero&Kramer, 2017, 312-327/360-374). The 'GANZER Palace Gate' in this story separating the world of the dead from the world of the living was also mentioned in the myth 'Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Underworld' as the place where Gilgamesh sat and wept (Ragavan, 2012, p. 201). The existence of a gate that allowed passage to the underworld was also mentioned in the myths 'Enlil and Ninlil' and 'The Death of Dumuzi'¹.

In Mesopotamia, evidence of gates' association with the underworld and death is found not only in mythological stories but also in funerary records. One of the funeral rituals that directly mentions gates is that of ŠU-SUEN (2037-2029 BC), one of the kings of the III Ur dynasty. In preparation for this burial ceremony, offerings and sacrifices were first made to the gods of the underworld and to the gates. These gates are listed as 'the glorious gate of the moon god Nanna', ... 'the glorious gate of the king', 'the glorious gate of the throne', 'the glorious gate of Šulgi's throne', 'the glorious gate of Amar-Suen's throne'. In the continuation of the text, it is stated that ŠU-SUEN's journey did not end here, and a month later, presentations were made by his successors to ŠU-SUEN at the 'Šulgi gate', to ŠU-SUEN at the 'UTU gate' and finally to the 'GANZER Gate'. (Ragavan, 2012, p. 212). It is possible to interpret that the offerings and sacrifices mentioned in this text, which were supposedly offered at the gates, were actually presented to the guards waiting at the gates. These doorkeepers included statues of mythological characters, gods, animals and symbolic drawings of all these.

In Mesopotamia, there were two other celestial gates similar to the cosmic gate that provided access to the underworld. These were the gates associated with the sun god Utu/ Šamaš and were the 'eastern gate of the sky', which marked the eastern direction of the cities and temples, and the 'western gate of the sky', which was located in the western direction, believed to allow the sun god to enter and exit the sky, that is, the divine realm (Polonsky, 2002, p. 751-752-753; Ragavan, 2012, p. 202). Depictions of these cosmic gates associated with UTU, found in mythological

¹ In the myth of Enlil and Ninlil, the god of the underworld became Nergal as a result of the relationship between these two deities at the gate of the city of Nippur, and since Enlil was disguised as the guardian of the underworld, there is a clear symbolic reference to the gate in this work (Bottero&Kramer, 2017, p. 115- 126). In the myth of 'The Death of Dumuzi', there is a metaphorical transition between the tomb and the gate. The majestic gate preventing the exit from the underworld indicated the border between the two worlds (Ragavan, 2012, p. 203).

and ritual texts or on cylinder seals, could be seen together with the existing gates of temples and city gates².

In Mesopotamian beliefs, doors, windows, doorposts, door pivots and doorways were potential places where demons, ghosts and similar evil forces could enter (Farber, 1995, p. 1903). For this reason, inscriptions and symbolic scenes were frequently found on the doorways in Mesopotamia. Apart from material cultural evidence, there are also written texts about the potential for demons to enter through doors. Here is an excerpt from a text addressed to the god Nergal, describing a bad dream passing through a gatepost: "O Nergal, noble hero, whose power is unsurpassed! It cannot pass through the doorpost as a dream passes through" (Butler, 2017, p. 87-88). In a literary work called 'The Blessing of the Bridegroom', there is also a reference to the door frame somehow protecting the space from evil forces³.

The reason for the emergence of the doorkeeper phenomenon in Mesopotamia and the protection of gateways with various statues and symbols was to restrict the passage of evil forces as much as possible. In Mesopotamia, controlling the entry or exit of a location was not only a matter of the underworld. The gates of palaces, temples or individual houses were also guarded to prevent evil from entering. The Assyrians used supernatural assistance in addition to the security provided by thick doors and locks to protect their entrances. All main gates in palaces and temples were decorated with statues of protecting supernatural characters. In these structures, as well as in private homes, protective spirit statues made of clay or metal were buried beneath the thresholds and occasionally had short inscriptions. These depictions, along with the performance of the required rites, were believed to provide strong defense against both demonic and human intruders (Radner, 2010, p. 271). The doorkeepers could be a protective deity, or they could be scary hybrid animals or mythological monsters⁴. In Mesopotamia, the plastering of doors

² The presence of the UTU symbol on the eastern Sugalam gate of the Eninnu temple suggests that some gates were physically adjusted to the sun (Polonsky, 2002, p. 751-752-753).

³ The good management of the Temple of Eridu, the cleanliness of the Temple of Suen, the well-placed protective door frames of Eanna, all were indeed included in the power of the house as gifts." (Jacobsen, 2017, p. 60).

⁴ As guardians, statues were buried in the foundations, walls and doorways of buildings, as well as erected in the doorways of temples and palaces to prevent evil from entering. In Mesopotamia, doors, windows and thresholds were considered as potential entry points for evil spirits, demons and ghosts, hence the need for such door guards to protect buildings (Ragavan, 2012, p. 209). These sculptures were depicted as hybrid mythological characters of varying sizes, mostly animal-human mixtures. Two giant lion statues were found at the entrance to the E-Absu in the temple of Enki at Eridu (Black & Green, 2017, p. 48). Human-headed, winged or wingless, lion- or bull-bodied figures

or thresholds of temples or individual houses with resin, anointing them with oil, burying statues, pouring gypsum and coating them with pitch were among the many rituals that were practiced.

Information on the use of city gates among ritual practices for protection from evil was found in rituals for protection from enemy occupation. In addition to these examples given above, the ritual of protection from an oppressive spirit ending at the city gate was an example of a ritual containing highly symbolic elements⁵.

In Hittite society, there were door and threshold beliefs similar to those in Mesopotamia and many ritual practices related to the door. In the Hittite belief system, the door was symbolically conceived as a gateway. In the text of the king's prayer to the Sun God, it is stated that only he could pass through the gate of Heaven: "They open the gate of heaven only for you. Sun God, only you can pass through this gate" (Singer, 2002, p. 34).

The door was also an important threshold for rituals of purification and transformation for Hittites. In a military purification ritual, a human, a puppy and a piglet were dismembered and the halves of these animals were placed on the right and left sides of the door and a fire was lit. Soldiers were passed through the door prepared in this way (Collins 1990, pp. 219 -220). In a ritual to increase a man's sexual potency, a door was made out of reeds and the man with sexual problems passed through the door⁶. In Tunnavi's ritual, two different doors were made by the old woman from two different trees on the upper side. The old woman led the ritualist through these gates and performed various magical purifications⁷.

were among the most common hybrid figures in Mesopotamian art from the Early Dynastic Period to the Neo-Babylonian Period. Depictions of these figures were painted on walls as gate guards or monumental statues were erected in front of palaces and temples, especially in the Neo-Assyrian Period (Black&Green, 2017, p. 69).

⁵ "An oppressive spirit sits on a person - it takes over his mouth. The person cannot eat bread or drink water. They tie a mature male goat to the head of the man's bed. They cut a long stalk from the garden. They color the stick with a red wool. They fill a container with water. They cut a tree branch from the garden. They put the stick, a container of water and the tree branch three times at the city gate, the 'eternal gate'" (Scurlock 2001, p. 211). The ritual objects used here must have been intended to be taken to the 'eternal gate' in order to eliminate the discomfort forever.

⁶ "... I make a door out of reeds. I tie red and white wool together. I slip the spindle and the braid into the patient's hands and the man comes to the doorway. When he steps forward into the doorway, I take the spindle and the spool back from him. I give the man a bow and arrow and all the while I say to the man: "I have taken from you femininity and given you back masculinity. Leave the sexual behavior expected of women and take for yourself what is expected of men" (Hoffner, 1987, p. 277).

⁷ "while this is being done, the old woman makes a door of *ḫatalkeššar*-wood on the upper side in front of the tent and covers it with white wool... And on the lower side the woman makes a door of *alanza*-wood and covers it with black wool... [...] through the door made of *ḫatalkeššar*-wood the man goes

It is understood from some ritual texts that in addition to the door, the door bolt also had an important meaning in Hittites. In Hıwarlu's ritual, it was requested from the inner fat of the dog that evil forces such as the devil should not pass through the door bolt on which the oil of the dog was applied⁸. In Hantitaššu's ritual, the door bolt is seen in connection with the dark world: "...you, door bolt! You are used to the double opening of the door, go down and now open the dark world in the same way" (Ünal, 1996, p. 30). The entry of external forces or the connection with other worlds was actually provided through the door. However, since the door bolt played the main role in opening the door, it may have been thought to have connections in this way (Turgut, 2018, p. 274).

In addition to the examples mentioned in Ancient Mesopotamia and the Hittites, the door motif was perceived similarly in most ancient civilizations and many symbolic meanings were attributed to the door. In Ancient Egyptian Civilization, doors were believed to be a gateway to the afterlife and the doors of important places were carefully designed. For this purpose, the practice of "false doors" was common in religious buildings and tomb structures. This door allowed the person to pass into the afterlife. On the wooden entrance doors of houses, there were holes to ventilate the interior (Demirarslan, 2020, p. 1223). The interest in the afterlife in Egypt continued at the same level from the pre-dynastic period until the end of Egypt. Death was a ritual that was always in sight for the Egyptian individual; it was a ritual that people encountered every day of life like eating and drinking. It was a gateway that opened the path of becoming a god to the Egyptian. The idea of the judgment they would face after passing through this gate was not an event to be feared if the necessary prayers were recited, amulets were carried, incantations were said and of course the Book of the Dead was placed in the grave (Çifçi, 2010, p. 115). Thinking that the pharaoh would live forever, the Egyptians placed five purified, consecrated, clothed and painted statues of the king inside his

and the old woman says: ... In the same way, take from the sacrifice the impurities of the devil, magic, sin, anger of the gods, curses, gossip of the people, early death!" ... then the man/woman pass through the door made of alanza wood and say: "As this alanza tree cleanses a thousand or ten thousand shepherds and cattle herders, so may it cleanse the twelve limbs of the sacrifice from demonic impurities, magic, sin, curses, bad dreams, the anger of the gods and the fear of death!" (Goetze 1938, p. 17 - 21).

⁸ "...and they prepare the puppy's suet and put it on the board over the door bolt and (the old woman) says: "You are the puppy that eats from the king and queen's table, and you must not let strange people into the palace during the daytime. You must never let the devil's words in tonight" (Collins, 1990, p. 212).

tomb temple, left food for him on a nearby altar every day, and built a false door so that he could come to the world of the living and be fed (Valbelle, 1992, p. 23).

Almost every culture in the ancient world was influenced by the "gate", a concept that had been around since people started living in walled cities. Homer mentioned the "Gate of Hades" and the "Gate of the Sun" and regarded the gates as separating heaven and earth (Bayram, 2003, p. 31). In addition to all these ancient cultures, the Hebrew and Christian traditions have given much importance to the phenomenon of the door. In the Law of Moses, the doorframe was given special significance, and the doorkeepers of the temple held a specific position. When used metaphorically, it refers to a chance, and Jesus Christ used it to describe himself as the doorway to God⁹.

Door and Threshold in Turkish Culture

The door reflects the interior of the space it occupies in many ways such as economic, cultural and beliefs. Doors belonging to all kinds of buildings, areas and cities built as houses, temples or for other reasons are designed and built in a way to provide preliminary information and data about the inhabitants. Doors are made, organized and decorated according to the taste, preference, situation and beliefs of the people living inside. Since ancient times, some objects and ornaments believed to be talismanic and protective have been used on the doors in Turkish culture (Özpinar, 2022, p. 144). The tradition of decorating the objects used by the Turks has always continued, and the aesthetic understanding arising from nature has provided rich examples in terms of color, motif and pattern on all kinds of works.

In the historical process, it is seen that some themes in the rich figural repertoire of Hun art were used very frequently by artists for centuries. These stereotyped figures were preferred for decorating all kinds of objects. Over time, the attempt to reflect symbols with a plastic understanding brought about some changes. Sometimes they could also pass into another tradition. Symbols continued to be seen on different artifacts because of their aesthetic forms or because they were the remnants of beliefs such as ancestor cult. This is one of the reasons for the use of the earliest animal figures in Ghaznavid and Seljuk buildings, which were considered talismanic and protective. Door knockers, wooden doors, plaster decorations, various household items are full of rich examples of this. It can be

⁹ For related quotations see: Ps 24:7 Ge 19:6,9-11; Ex 12:22; 2Sa 13:17-18; 2Ki 4:4-5Ne 13:19; Ps 24:9; Pr 5:8 Mt 6:6 ; Mk 1:33; Lk 11:7; Jn 18:15-16; Ac 5:19; Rev 3:8; Ps 84:10 2Ki 25:18 pp. 52:24; 1Ch 15:23-24; 2Ch 23:19; 2Ch 34:13

observed in some miniatures that some post-Islamic nomadic Turkic communities embroidered animal figures on the entrances to protect their tents from evil spirits, and placed animal figurines on the center pole of the tent as amulets. After Islam, these animal-shaped talismanic and protective crown ornaments continue the tradition as "realms" on artifacts in a different understanding and form. Although painting was frowned upon in Turkic communities that had embraced Islam, remnant examples of traditional symbolism continued in the arts of Turkic tribes. Thousands of examples of this understanding can be found in the art of the Avars, Pechenegs, Seljuks, Central Asia and Eastern Europe, the Northern Balkans, Iran, Iraq, the Caucasus, Egypt, India and Anatolia, as well as in Turkish buildings and findings (Diyarbakirli, 1972, pp. 165-173).

It is understood from the miniatures of the Seljuk period that it was a tradition for Turks to decorate the inside and outside of tents. It is seen that animal figures were embroidered on the tent either with colored fabric/felt appliqués or colored threads. The appliqués on various spreads and covers were sometimes glued and sometimes fixed with colored threads. This art made with colored threads created rich images in terms of embroidery. It is understood that the door was perceived as special and important as it was also called threshold from Old Turkic and had the same meaning in various Turkish dialects. Accordingly, all kinds of woven and felt works used on tent doors reflect these characteristics of the door. These artifacts, like the others, were formed by the blending of intelligence, faith and aesthetic understanding as well as the subtleties of handicrafts (Özpinar, 2002, p. 141).

The belief in the evil eye, which has survived from ancient Mesopotamia to the present day, is still one of the common beliefs in most societies. People are afraid that what they have in themselves will be damaged by envious glances from others. Such glances are usually thought to be malicious. However, as in the case of Hazara Turks, it was also believed that sometimes it was possible to be touched without malice (Kalafat, 2007, p. 33). The desire to be protected from the evil eye has led people to try to find solutions in this regard. Apart from other methods, the most common method was the use of protective objects like blue beads.

The belief in the evil eye has been also widespread among Turks and similar practices have been used for prevention for centuries. Most amulets against evil eye are in the shape of an eye. Objects such as blue beads, wolf and small animal shells can be used as evil eye charms. In addition to this, goods, property, animals and houses are also tried to be protected with the idea that they may come into contact with the eye. The tradition of hammering horseshoes on the door, hanging

various animal bones, evil eye beads or prayerful words at the entrance of the house is done for this purpose (Artun, 2017, pp. 361-365). Thus, the idea of protecting the house and its inhabitants from the evil eye is initiated at the entrance of the house, and objects to protect from the evil eye are placed on the doors, facades and entrances of the houses. According to Kalafat (2017, p. 33), the objects protecting against the evil eyes are placed on the exterior walls of houses in Anatolia, and sometimes eggs are placed inside the walls and doors. Similar to this practice, it is seen that prayer panels with written prayers are hung on the buildings or some special prayers are written directly on the building. One of the evil eye charms used on the door and inside the house are those made of esfand. The upper part of these are triangular in shape and at the bottom there are stalactites formed by stringing the seeds of esfand on a string. The seeds are also incensed for the evil eye.

As in most cultures, Turkish culture also believes in the existence of supernatural beings. Supernatural beings can be good, bad, devil, religious and even saints. They are believed mostly to inhabit places such as thresholds, hearths, and under the stairs. Sometimes they show themselves in the disguises mentioned above, and sometimes they make their presence known in various ways, such as opening locked doors and moving things around. It is believed that these invisible beings have power to make people sick (Balçioğlu, 1952, p. 555). One of the important characteristics of these beings is that they appear and disappear suddenly. They can enter houses through keyholes, chimneys and under doors (Duvarcı, 2005, p. 132).

The supernatural being that defines evil and negativity in the life of Sakha Turks is *Abası/Abahı*. People try to be protected from it throughout their lives. These beings, which are present in every aspect of life, also haunt houses. As in many other societies, amulet-like objects believed to be protective are common among the Sakha Turks. These amulets, called "*Imi*", include guns, bells, beech forks, rakes, knives with beech wood handles, snow shovels, scissors, lighters, nails of birds of prey and dried bear claws. To prevent *Abası* from entering the house, small copper objects (rattles, belt buckles), rabbit ears and tails, the inflated gizzard of forest birds, bird heads and tails with legs attached to the beak, dried horse eyes on the doors or pillars on the porch, and the heads of birds of prey - ravens, hawks or eagles with their beaks open - are nailed on the entrance doors. When going from one tent to another, they put small crosses made of kindling on the doors of the abandoned tent so that *Abası* cannot enter (Duranlı, 2019, p. 119).

According to a widespread belief in different parts of Turkish culture, there is an entity that harms people in the coldest days of winter. It has unique characteristics. According to oral source data, this evil spirit is characterized with names such as *Karakonculu*, *Karakoncilo*, *Koncolos*, *Wild Man*, especially in the eastern Black Sea region, and it is believed that it comes to the coastal villages from the forest in winter with a storm or comes out of the sea. This devil imitating humans and looks like a monkey especially eats small children and newborn calves. In order to prevent this situation, the host puts a dish called 'kuymak' at the door (Duvarcı, 2005, p. 126). Around Yozgat, *Karakoncolos* is called *Congolos*. The seasons are described as "*Congolos* is in, after *Congolos*". It is believed that this creature spits and urinates in exposed food cubes, thus causing diseases. People who get sick in this way are called 'marazlı'. *Congolos* sometimes calls a sleeping person by imitating the voice of one of his relatives, and if he does not wake up, it takes him away and leaves him to freeze outside. In order to prevent the *Congolos*, which is believed not to visit houses with beetroot, beetroot is cooked and buried in the thresholds (Duvarcı, 2005, p. 127).

In Kayseri, the groom and his relatives go to the Isha prayer before the wedding. Following the Isha prayer, they return home with the imam. At this time, a bunch of vineyard sticks called *Gilamada* is taken and lit in front of the door after the imam's prayer. The groom is thrown over this fire called Groom's Fire. While this custom existed in Yeşilhisar center in the past, it is not practiced today. The purpose of lighting this fire was to prevent the devil from entering the marriage with the groom and to save the groom from the difficulties he may encounter (Güngör&Köylü, 2014, p. 73). In addition, around Muş, there is the belief that when the bride arrives at the groom's house, an animal is sacrificed as she puts her right foot through the door. The basis of this belief is the belief that it will both prevent bad things from happening to the bride and bring good luck to the house she comes from. In addition, this practice aims to please the good of the house (Akkaş, 2018, p. 101).

In ancient Turks, respect for the sunrise over the country was represented by entering the Khan's tent from the east. In fact, all doors in the tents of the ancient Turks faced east (Koca, 2002, p. 20). The tent of the ruler of the Gok-Turks was located in Ötüken and its door faced east. The doors of the tents where the Altai shamans lived were also permanently facing east. During the rituals, the shaman's tent, which was brought to the place where the ritual was to be performed, was much larger than the other tents and its door faced east (İnan, 1995, p. 103).

In the tents of the Turks, the door opening towards the east and sometimes towards the south was called "threshold" and all Turks attached great importance to the threshold, which was the entrance to the house or tent. Turkish people envied and embraced their home, which was a sacred place for them, above all else. Therefore, when entering his tent or house, he believed that he was stepping into a holy shrine. Therefore, it had to be protected and respected. Based on this, he considered any stranger stepping or sitting on the threshold of his house as an insult to him or as an attempt to take away his home. The threshold is the beginning of the Turks' own world or life. As in the Abrahamic religions of today, in the beliefs of the Turks in history, there were probably angels who controlled and watched over man, family and nation. Similar to the way these angels are located to the right and left of the human being in the major religions, the ancient Turks believed that protective divinities were waiting to the right and left of the doors or thresholds of the houses. Accordingly, in order not to hurt or step on those holy beings, it is thought that Turks in the past and today take care not to step on the threshold when entering their homes (Gömeç, 2019, p. 292).

Turks do not step on the threshold because of its sacredness and do not log off on the threshold; the threshold is the boundary. According to Kalafat, in Hazara Turks, the house owner under the threshold of the house protected the people inside the house from the evil spirits that would enter. In Terekeme Turks, when the bride entered the threshold, she first threw her right foot to bring good luck and blessings¹⁰. In Kumuks, the host and the guest did not shake hands at the threshold, they shook hands inside or outside. Similarly, Balkar-Malkar Turks were careful not to step on the threshold as it was believed that people who stepped on it would lose their livelihood (2007 p. 11, 121, 153).

Another dimension that reflects that the Turks were influenced by ancient beliefs in doors and thresholds was the symbolic meaning of the door as a gateway to the afterlife. Every visible and tangible element of the tent, from its perch to the place where it was erected, from the color of its felt to its interior layout, reflected the creation, life and perception of the world by those who lived in these places. Ancient Turks regarded the sky as the most sacred and powerful being. They based their beliefs, traditions, material or spiritual culture on this acceptance. The fact that they likened their felt tents to the sky and called them "blue tents" regardless of their color was a requirement of this belief. The tent was the small world of

¹⁰ In the 11th century Kutadgu Bilig written by Yusuf Has Hacib, the sentence about entering the door with the right foot is as follows: "When entering the gate, put your right foot first; let your mind be on it when I command you" (2008, p. 707).

Turks. The dome of the tent symbolized the sky both in shape and space. The piece of land on which the tent was built was the earth. Again, according to ancient Turkish belief, since the earth was round, the area where the tent was placed was also round. The tent symbolized the dome of the sky, the pole of the tent symbolized the pole of the sky and the *tündük*, which was also used as a chimney, symbolizes the door of the sky. It is possible to observe the Turks' perception of the universe in the internal arrangements of the tent and in the rituals of religious ceremonies held in this space. The ascension ceremonies of shamans were held in specially arranged tents. The shaman started the ceremony by beating the drum and praying. After the prayer, he climbed the tent pole step by step to ascend to the sky. As he stopped and prayed at every step of the ascent, the participants of the ceremony were offered a drink. When he reached the perch of the tent, he was considered to have reached the door of heaven. From this point onwards, the gate of heaven was considered to be the bright countries of God and the spirit world (Abbasova, 2019, p. 98).

CONCLUSION

As a gateway and connection point, the door undertakes the function of protecting and integrating the interior by closing, covering and separating a certain space, a region or a place, while ensuring that all kinds of factors remain outside. Since ancient times, people who are connected and close to each other for many reasons, who have the need and desire to live together, have built walls and gates where they live. By doing these, they aimed to draw a border and protect the region, the city from dangers and ensure unity. City gates, castle gates can be given as examples in this context. Humans, by nature, want to live with their relatives in a private space, which is the shelter they take refuge and own, separately from other community members. In order for people to be comfortable in their homes and to keep this living space under control, it is imperative to have a door that is separated from the outside world by walls as well as a gate and connection point.

Since Mesopotamia is regarded as the cradle of civilization, it is clear from myths and ceremonial writings that gates and gateways had significant symbolic and symbolic connotations. Temples and city gates from Mesopotamia had symbolic significance that represented the change from one region of the universe to another. Mythological tales that tackled the subject of the underworld were among the writings from Mesopotamia in which the idea of gate and passage was treated the most. Demons were also thought to infiltrate via doors and under doors to harm people, according to Mesopotamians. Different methods were employed to thwart these terrible forces.

In Hittite society, there were numerous ritual practices pertaining to the door and threshold, much like in Mesopotamia. The door was conceptualized as a portal in the Hittite religious system. In numerous ancient societies, including Mesopotamia, the Hittites, and others, doors and thresholds had deep symbolic implications. In ancient Egyptian culture, doorways were seen as portals to the afterlife, and significant locations had carefully crafted doors. In religious structures and tombs, the use of "fake doors" was common for this reason.

The door and threshold beliefs found in all these ancient cultures were also found in the ancient Turks and today's Anatolian lands. It can be observed in some miniatures that Turkish communities embroidered animal figures on the entrances to protect their tents from evil spirits and placed animal figurines on the center pole of the tent as talismans. Another dimension that reflects that Turks were influenced by the ancient period in their beliefs about doors and thresholds is the symbolic meaning of the door as a gateway to the afterlife. In Anatolia, it is seen that various objects are hung on the doors and thresholds of houses to protect them from evil spirits.

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