



The Concept of Purity in Ancient Anatolian Religions: Water's Sanctity in Purification

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ABSTRACT

Purification, considered essential in ancient Anatolia, was the crown of religious rituals. Providing the most comprehensive archive of ancient Anatolia, The Hittite texts have many terms related to purity. These terms indicate that physical and spiritual purification was the most important condition of the rituals organized for Hittite, Hurrian, and Luwian deities within Hittite syncretism. In Hittite texts, the term “water” most frequently used for purification and mentions that the person must be clean by performing purification rituals. The main purpose of these rituals is spiritual purification. Existing findings in Anatolia indicate that purification continued in the religious rituals of the Phrygians, Lydians, Lycians, and Urartians. The aim of this study is to examine the sanctity of water in rituals in light of Hittite texts and modern sources through the cross-cultural development of the concept of physical and spiritual purity in ancient Anatolian religions and to identify the factors that led to this development. In this context, the sanctity of water in the religions of the Anatolian civilizations from the historical ages to the end of the Iron Age will be examined and the continuity of the issue will be discussed.

Keywords: Ancient Anatolian Religions, Purification, Purity, Sacred Water, Hittite Rituals



Introduction

Purification is one of the most important religious rituals of ancient societies. Although purification rituals are implemented in different ways in each society, their importance remains the same. "Purification", which is considered essential in ancient Anatolian religions, has been seen as the crown jewel of religious rituals. In prehistoric times, Anatolian people established settlements close to water resources in the Neolithic Age, when settled life began and agricultural activities began using water resources. When the Hittites, who began in the historical ages, came to Anatolia, they encountered a local people who were aware of the importance of water. Water, which was already considered important and sacred, maintained its importance in the Hittite religion. In fact, purification with water was the most important condition of the rituals organized for the Hittite deities.

The Hittite Empire mainly offers us sources that illuminate the religious rituals of ancient Anatolia. The Hittite Pantheon developed through cultural interaction with the surrounding cultures upon the Hittites' arrival in Anatolia and became an official pantheon consisting of many gods. In this pantheon, the Hatti gods of Anatolian origin and the gods of Mesopotamian origin through the Hurrians occupy the largest place. Hittite and Luwian gods of Indo-European origin also follow them (Dinçol 1982, 29, 80; Wilhelm 1989, 49-76; Popko 1995, 113-117; Melchert 2003, 219-220; Ünal 2003, 89-91; Taracha 2009, 3; Gilan, 2014, 195-205). In this respect, the Hittite pantheon is also known as Hittite syncretism¹. According to Hittite syncretism, the concept of pollution should be placed in a safe place somewhere beyond the limits of people's lives. All religious rituals serve this purpose (Hutter 2013, 167). The places chosen for this purpose are sometimes a river (KUB 29.7+ Rs. 48ff; Haas 2003: 574), sometimes a place where agriculture cannot be done, such as a mountain (KUB 7.53+ i 41-42; Hutter 2013, 167) and sometimes underground (KUB 17.10 iv 8-19; Hutter 2013, 167-168).

Hittite texts, which present the most comprehensive archive of ancient Anatolia, are rich in terms of purity and purification. These terms were used in two ways: physical purity and spiritual purity. As a root word, *parku-* is used for the terms clean and cleaning. For example, *parkuwa*, to clean; *parkuwalli* and *parkui-* clean; *parkuwantariya*, *parkuiyela*, *parkuešš* and *parkue*, to be clean; and *parkuyatar* are frequently encountered in texts with the meaning of purification and *parkun*, to be cleaned (Güterbock and Hoffner 1995, 161-167). Similar to these terms, Luwian *papparkuwa* and Hurrian *parn* correspond to the word "clean". However, these terms are generally used in the name of physical purity, and different terms are preferred for spiritual purity. The equivalent of the concept of being spiritually purified

1 It means a mixture of elements from different religious systems and traditions (De Marinis 2014, 1769; Akurgal 2014, 119). It is used to describe a state or process, and all or some components of a religion are described as syncretic (Colpe 2005, 8926-8934).

and sacredly clean was used as *šuppi*-² in Hittite religious texts, *kumma*- in Luwian texts, and generally *itk(alzi)* in Hurrian texts (Hutter 2013, 163-164).

Concept of Physical Purity

Physical purity, which means physical or concrete cleansing, is the main basis for the beginning of religious rituals. In Hittite texts, the adjective *parkui*- was used for a person who does not cross distances that would contaminate people concretely or for a person who has to be free to save himself from impurities (Gütenborck and Hoffner 2013, 98, 177, 346, 474, 630-632).

In Hittite texts, water, *parkui*- water (KBo 17.93, 6-7) was mostly used for purification, and it is frequently mentioned that the person should be clean by performing rituals specific to purification. For example, in a Hittite temple official's directive text, the people in the kitchen should be physically clean: "*People who prepare daily bread should be clean, washed, and the dirt inside them should be removed. Their nails, hair and beards must be cut and they must wear clean clothes...*" (KUB XIII 4; Süel 1985, 171-172; Ünal 1993, 123; Taggar & Cohen 2006 61, 80-81; De Martino 2004, 349). Similarly, in an AZU³ priest's purification ritual, the priest focuses on purity: "*Like the purity of this water, people wash and purify clothes with water. Just as they wash and purify tools with water, and just as this water purifies and ritually cleanses everything, it can also purify you, the gods, in the same way. And now, you gods, be free (pár-ku-wa-e-eš e-eš-tén) from evil, blasphemy, slaughter, tears, and everything else. And so that the person who comes for the ritual may be clean before you*" (KUB 43.58 i 40ff.; Haas 2003, 141; Wilhelm 1999, 197-217).

Both texts deal with the concrete concept of purity. In the first example, a person is cleansed by removing pollution materially by washing or cutting what is dirty, and thus he is also cleansed from impurities. In the second example, among those mentioned as purification from evil, massacre or murder and tears are concrete things that should be avoided, and it is emphasized that being concretely free from these elements, which are the opposite of cleanliness, is necessary. In this context, it is possible to say that the concept of cleanliness in the Hittites began with physical pollution. Purification involves removing substances that need to be washed, wiped, removed using incense or oil (Haas 2003, 70-79). From this perspective, cleanliness is not an abstract or spiritual feature (Wilhelm 1999, 198). A person who is unclean is considered unfit for certain situations within society and will eventually harm himself by overstepping the distance to the detriment of social order. Maintaining

2 For a discussion of whether the terms *šuppi*- and *parkui*- are the same or different, see: Wilhelm 1989, 203; 32; Hoffner 1998, 324; Taggar and Cohen 2006, 148-152; Strauß 2006, 247; Hutter 2013, 163-166, Güterbock and Hoffner 2019, 615-626.

3 The priest who conducts the *itkalzi* and *itkahhi* ceremonies is identified by a Sumerogram as "AZU". The AZU priest is mentioned in the Ḫattuša texts as "soothsayer priest" or "sorcerer priest" (Wilhelm 1989, 73).

cleanliness in the Hittite Empire is a fundamental element of co-existence and social order (Hutter 2013, 161).

In the great rituals held for kings and queens, the word *parkui-* was used for the city of Ḫattuša and the country of Hatti (KUB 17-21 i 13, 5-7): “*Gods, only Ḫattuša is a clean land for you, and only in Hatti we bring you wonderful, clean and delicious We can offer sacrifices.*” Hittite religious texts show that the adjective “pure” during offerings to God also belongs to heaven, sacrifice, and drinking ceremonies (KUB 25-20, 13-17; KUB 26.23, 17-23): “*Just as Heaven is clean, let’s also make our sacrifices and offerings. And let’s keep our drinks clean.*”.

The words *itkalzi*⁴ and *itkah(h)i* can be connected to the Hurrian verb spelling *itk-* whose meaning refers to the concept of purity and may represent these rituals in Ḫattuša texts (Wilhelm 1989, 71). In purification rituals, there is a priest responsible for clean water and a sacrifice owner who uses purification water for cleansing (De Martino and Süel, 2017: 9, 16)

The tenth *itkalzi* tablet indicates that silver and oil and other tablets indicate that water, lapis lazuli stone, cedar, and tamarisk trees are objects used in purification rituals (Wilhelm 1989: 72). Cleaning the mouth is critical in Hurrian-origin *itkalzi* texts used to purify the dirty person. This cleansing had the same features as repentance. In this context, cleaning the mouth with water is the first condition of the ritual (Haas et al. 1984, 79, 84; Wilhelm 1989, 72). Similarly, in the Ammihatna Ritual of Kizzuwata origin (KBo 5 2, Rs. III 50-52), the sacrificer passes through a gate that serves as a boundary between the unclean and the clean with arrows, while two priests sprinkle him with milk and clean water. In the continuation of the ritual (Rs. III 58-60), the victim takes off his clothes and washes them with holy water. In the continuation of the same ritual (KBo 5 2 Rs. IV 60-62), various metals seen as symbols of cleanliness are also used as cleaning materials. For example, silver metal is a purifying substance that makes the sacrificer clean in the presence of the gods (*KÜ.BABBAR issi an dai-*): “*And he puts the silver in the mouth of the sacrificer. And the priest says: ‘Be clean in the presence of silvery gods, male and female gods!’*” (Haas and Wilhelm 1974, 38-41; Murat 2003, 102-103; Reyhan 2004, 111-142).

Concept of Spiritual Purity

The main purpose of the rituals performed for a person who is physically purified is spiritual purification. Thus, one can understand that physical purification is not sufficient to initiate a ritual. For instance, it was believed that a person who committed a crime lost his purity and therefore became dirty. In this context, the person had to be purified to avoid incurring the wrath of the gods. The word *suppi-*, which means purification in the context

4 Near the villages of Ortaköy- *Şapinuwa*, a great deal of Hurrian *itkalzi* texts have been found, starting from 1990 (Wegner and Bomhard, 2020, 12).

of sacred and ritual also defines spiritual purification (Güterbock and Hoffner 2019, 618). In Hittite texts, the word *suppi-* was used for gods, kings and queens, people, household items, and all living and non-living things in nature. The state of being spiritually clean and purified corresponds to the word *suppi-*, which means holy (Güterbock and Hoffner 2019, 618- 626). Thus, priests used different methods of spiritual cleansing in rituals to improve people. A Hittite *itkalzi* text (CTH 777= KUB 29) containing Hurrian prayers clearly expresses the methods used in purification (Haas et al. 1984, 90-97; Murat 2012, 127-128). In this example, where the priest is responsible for purification, a relationship is established between the victim and the ritual materials, and the dirt on the contaminated victim is transferred to another object. It is conducted with the help of acts such as circling a bird over the victim, cleaning the victim with purification water, throwing his clothes into the water, praying for water, and finally turning the silver in the purification water around himself. Thus, holy water is used as a purifying agent along with bird and silver. Likewise, in the Ammihatna Ritual of Kizzuwata origin mentioned above (KBo 5.2), spiritual purification is achieved by cleansing the soul and body of the victim from disease and pollution using various methods (Haas et al. 1974, 38-49).

Another example indicating that other materials are used in purification rituals in addition to purifying the victim with holy water (*suppi-watar*) (KBo 23:23.62-63) (Güntenborch & Hoffner 2019, 630) appears in the text KBo 21 33+Vs. I. . It is stated that in the ritual led by an AZU priest, some oil and cedar wood are added to the water. There is a belief that these are ritual objects that increase the sanctity of water and contribute to purification itself. It is aimed to cleanse the sacrifice owner from impurities and cleanse him both physically and spiritually with fully purified water (Haas et al. 1986, 38-41). Apart from the purification of humans, ceremonies were held to purify clothes, cult objects, gods, and god statues with water. In the text, KUB 43 58+ Vs. I (CTH 491) especially, it is written why clothes, cult items, and gods should be washed and purified in the purification ritual directed by an AZU priest (40-51) (Strauss 2006, 342-343).

The concept of cleanliness and purification of places is also crucial. For example, water is requested from priests for the purification of a house. The purifying power of water appears in a ritual of invoking a god (Vs. II). “*Let goodness come into the house! Then let evil be sought with the eyes! And let him be thrown out! get clean! Let holy water cleanse evil language/ words, pollution, blood, sin, and curse! Let it (holy water) drive away the blood from this house, just as the wind drives away the filth and carries it to the sea! And carry it to the sea!*” (49-56) (Otten 1961, 122-126). In this home purification ritual, water is requested from the Goddess’ water source and the God of Water for the water supply process. In addition, in this ritual, a house is purified from bad words, pollution, murder, sin, and curses with clean water, which is considered sacred. Constantly sprinkling water into the house performs this

purification process. The most notable ritual performed to purify places from dirt and evil is the bird sacrifice ritual, which is of Hurrian origin. Bird sacrifices are offered in the name of the underworld gods, who remove pollution through spiritual purification (catharsis) and lock it safely in the underworld. In a ritual organized to purify a house contaminated by murder and perjury, the underworld gods are implored by name and asked to deliver the existing “evil (evil) blood” of the house to the “blood god” who will take it to the underground and keep it safe there (Wilhelm 1989, 74).

To purify the gods and goddesses, their temple centres must also be clean. In a ritual to purify the temple of Goddess Hepat again, that is, to clean and consecrate it, the statue of the god is cleaned with *šehelliaš* (suppi-) water (KBo 9.119 A i 5), that is, “purification water”, and it is sprinkled on the temple to purify Hepat’s temple. (CTH472) Vs. II 4-6 (IV 23-25) (Lebrun 1979, 143-154). Containers carrying the sacred purification water used during the cleaning of temples are essential. They (Fig. 1) are referred to as *šehelliški* in the texts (Lebrun 1979, 143, 150-151; Tremouille 1996, 87-89; Mouton 2008, 1-17; Hutter 2013, 163).



Figure 1: Some samples of *šehelliški* vessels, Šapinuwa (Süel 2010, 842, fig.9)

In the text named CTH 472 Vs. I, it is stated that the holy purification water was given with *šehelliški* at night and this vessel was taken back during the day (Lebrun 1979, 143, 150-151; Tremouille 1996, 87-89; Mouton 2008, 5). The importance of this vessel stems from the fact that it carries water that allows spiritually contaminated people, gods, and temples to be cleansed in accordance with cultic purification. It is believed to be an intermediary that filters this water, adds clarity to it, and allows stars to pass through it during the night (Tremouille 1996, 73-75; Güterbock and Hoffner 2019, 550). Tremouille (1986: 86) used the “pointed bottom” feature for the sacred purification vessel and argued that it is a vessel that facilitates the disposal of plant and mineral residues placed in water, and with this feature, it is a container.

An Ardzinba ritual tablet found in Ortaköy-Şapinuwa clearly supports the belief that *šehelliški* vessels were special vessels used for purifying water. The tablet states that *šehelliški* vessels were given for Hepat, the chief goddess of the Hittites, and in Šinapši, a sacred place interpreted as the “house of purification from sins” and where purification rites were performed (Haas et al. 1974, 36-38; Mouton 2008, 5-6; Güterbock & Hoffner 2019, 623). These small jugs containing the holy water used by the Hittites in purification ceremonies and the sacred *itkalzi* tablet series were produced in Şapinuwa -Ağılönü and distributed throughout the country. In fact, Ağılönü is accepted as a sacred area where cleanliness is at the highest level (Süel 2010, 831). It is thought that the reason Hittite kings chose Şapinuwa as their capital for a long period because they wanted to live in these sacred areas. The existence of purification vessels was also found in the purification house of the city of Washukanni (Ussukani), which was used as *bit narmakti* in the Hurrian religion. This shows that the Hurrians preferred silver jugs as purification vessels. Silver, thought to have a special power, might have been indispensable for the Hurrians as well as the Hittites (Haas and Wilhelm 1974, 38ff; Wilhelm 1989, 67).

In ritual texts, the number seven draws attention to the bringing of purification water. One can see the concept of “seven waters” for the “cleaning water” in three Hurrian *itkalzi* ritual texts recorded as KUB 27 24 + Vs. I (Nr.15), KUB 27 23+ KBo 27 88 Vs. II (Nr. 16), and KBo 20 131 Rs. III (Nr. 17) (Haas et al. 1984, 132, 138-139, 148). Similarly, the number seven also represents the sacred *sakuniya* or the sources of water. For example, the text of the Ritual of the *Kummanni King Palliia* (CTH 475), recorded as KBo 9.115 (+) KBo 9.119 Vs., states that the city of Lawazantiia received its holy water from seven sources and that the statue of the storm god was washed by adding some sacrificial items to this water (Haas, et al., 1974, 43-44). Similarly, in a sacrificial ritual for Hannahanna (KUB 12. 50: 11-13; 58.74, 11-14), it is stated that mud was taken from springs in seven places and thus the water was purified (*namma sa-ku-ni-ia-as*), and with the same water, the mother goddess would also be purified (*sa-ku-ni-ia-as IM-it sapianza parkunuwanza*). Here, an analogy is made between the purification of water, and the purification of the sacrificer and goddess (Güterbock and Hoffner 2019, 77).

Rivers are important water sources for the purification of gods and goddesses as well as the person who sacrifices them. In the Samuha ritual (CTH 480) (KUB 29.7+ Rs. 48ff.), for example, all negativities that pollute a person and prevent him from showing his talents in society are placed in a boat as a representative figurine, and then the person responsible for the ritual pours oil on the boat and floats the boat onto the river. Just as the river carries and drags the boat and there is no sign of it, it also takes away evils. This symptom is the evil word, curse, and dirt that creates the world of evil. Just as the trace of the boat disappears, the world of evil will not move away from either the gods or the ritual owner, and ultimately,

God and man will be purified (*parkui-*) (Haas 2003, 574; Hutter 2013, 167; Güterbock and Hoffner 2019, 454). Here, it is thought that the river is symbolically considered the border and that purification occurs beyond the river (Hutter 2013, 167).

In the Hurrian-Hittite ritual of Bogazköy (KBo 23 27 Rs. III 5-14), springs in Šapinuwa are highlighted for holy water to be used in the offerings. These sources are nine rivers in the city of Šapinuwa, and the purification of the place is carried out through rituals by sprinkling the holy water from these rivers upwards. In this context, the streams, rivers, and springs of these sacred cities, such as Ortaköy- Šapinuwa and Lavazantiya, have been accepted as places that provide purification and contain holy water (Wilhelm 1999, 208-211).

It is inevitable that there will be sacred structures in or around these cities that stand out with their feature of containing holy water that purifies the sacred areas. Among these structures, rock monuments take the lead, and it is regarded that these monuments, which have relief depictions and are generally located in rocky areas, are directly related to the Anatolian water cult. A rectangular basin on the rock opposite Temple I in the middle of the Bogazköy C building in Hattuša (Fig. 2) is one of the best examples. It is thought that the water here was used not only for washing hands at the beginning of rituals but also in a sacred sense (Darga 1985, 158-160; Ünal, 1993, 136-137; Özkan 1996, 103; Seeher 2006, 119-120; Murat, 2012, 140).



Figure 2: Rectangular basin, Boğazköy C building, Hattuša (Murat, 2012, 152)

Although there is no water source in some similar places today, some of these places, considered essential for Ancient Anatolian syncretism, have come to the fore. Fraktini (Neve

1971, 35-36; Tübingen 1971, 35-36; Dinçol 1982, 115; Darga 1992, 175-179), Hanyeri/Gezbeli (Neve 1971, 35-36; Dinçol 1982, 115; Darga 1992, 182-183), Hemite (Neve 1971, 35-36; Darga 1992, 182-183), Taşçı I/II (Darga 1992, 175-177, 180-181), İmamkulu (Neve 1971, 35-36; Dinçol, 1982, 115; Darga 1992, 178-181), Hatıp (Dinçol 1996, 8-9; Karauğuz 2001, 73-76); Akpınar/Sypilos (Neve 1971, 35-36; Dinçol 1982, 115; Darga 1992, 185), Kemalpaşa/Karabel (Neve 1971, 35-36; Dinçol 1982, 115; Darga 1992, 183-185), Fasıllar (Mellaart 1962, 111-117; Erkanal 1980, 287-301; Dinçol 1982, 116; Darga 1992, 190-194; Karauğuz 2001, 60-66) and Sirkeli (Neve 1971, 35-36; Dinçol 1982, 115; Darga 1992, 174-175) are the most popular rock monuments indicating the existence of sacred water sources in Anatolia.

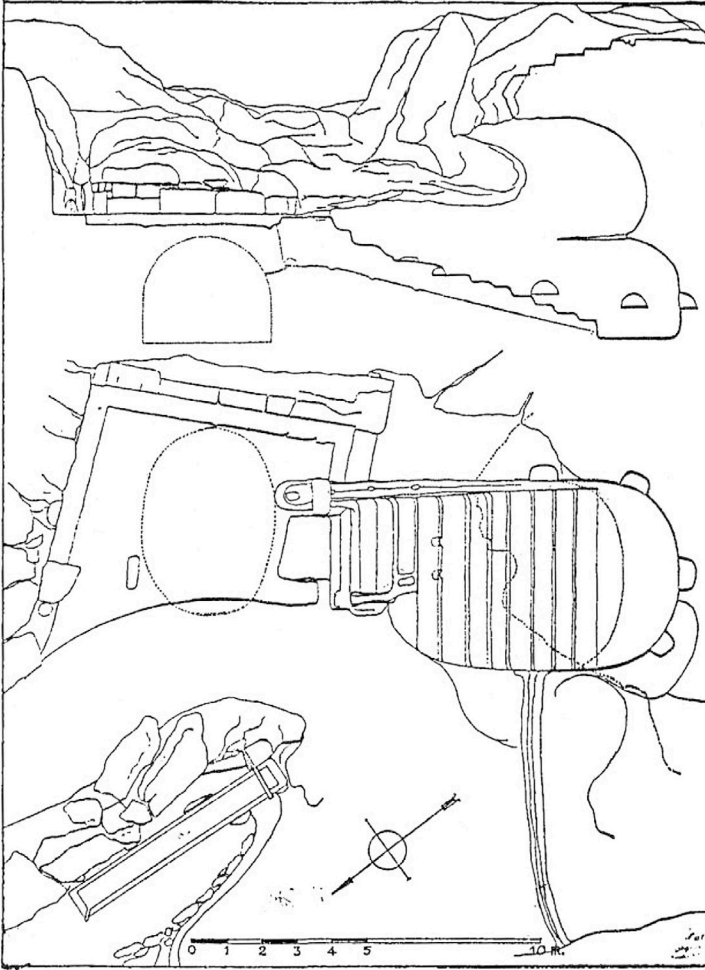


Figure 3: Fountain C, early Phrygian Midas (Özkaya, 1996, 98)

The Phrygians and Lydians, who inherited the Hittite empire, have also given importance to water resources (Rostad 2006, 23). The Phrygians in Anatolia after the Hittites continued the tradition of sacred water sources being important for purification rituals. In fact, the city of Midas, within the Phrygian sphere of influence, which is rich in water resources, clearly shows the continuity of this tradition. Among the sources, Fountain C (Fig. 3) is considered a sacred area in the Phrygian religion. There is a female statue representing Cybele on the mountain, and its location indicates that this is a sacred Cybele cult area. In addition, it is thought that the Romans washed and cleaned the Cybele statue and other cult objects, this practice is of Phrygian origin (Özkaya 1996, 100-101) and the beginning of this tradition is the legend of King Midas and Dionysus. According to legend, it used to be the holy water that saved the king, whose request from God turned everything he touched into gold, from the difficulty of this situation. Midas got rid of his troubles by bathing in the stream Sart, which is the source of the Paktalos in Sardes. While “gold” in the legend represents earthly desires, “washing with water” is used as a symbol of purification (Candan 2005, 240-242). In this context, a person who has desires and is therefore spiritually unclean must be cleansed with water.

Likewise, purification is important in the Hellenistic Lydian city, where Hittite and Greek influences are observed. This importance is quite clear in the two Lydian texts from the Hellenistic period. These texts state that one must be completely clean and purified before entering the temple. It has been stated that a *hetaira* who wants to enter the temple must be completely purified (Parker 2018, 4). In the research conducted between 1958 and 2017 in Sardis, which shows the importance of water in purification rituals, the inscription on the white marble stele (No.305), one of the finds found near the Paktolus Rock, states that the phrase *ἱερὸν Νυμφαῖον* refers that here is a hot water source here, and today it is called “Sart Mud Baths” (Petzl 2019, 8). The most striking of the marble stele finds (No. 456) is the inscription that directly points to the sanctity of water. In this inscription, it is stated that sacred water was used by Goddess Artemis (Petzl 2019, 124). In addition, the assemblage of egg finds on the floors of the temple walls of Sardis Artemis and under a building in Roman period Area 49 show that purification rituals continued here. Egg deposits are considered to be closely associated with purification rituals that protect from evil and troubles (Bruce and Deridder Raubolt 2014, 450; Payne 2018, 236-237).

The existence of the Nymph, or “water nymph” cult in the Lycian civilization is known in Letoon, Patara, Antiphellos, Idebessos, and Kyaneai (Hülden 2006). Steles and rock reliefs bearing Nymph reliefs, some written in Greek, are frequently encountered. In Xanthos Valley, Letoon, which is considered the most sacred area in Lycia, the temples of Apollo (Natri), Artemis (Ertemi), and their mother Leto (eni qlahi ebiyehi) were built near a spring water, in the cult of these three gods, Nymphs or Eliyana have always been found. The local Lycian gods were paired with the Greek Nymphs with the term “Eliyâna” mentioned in one

of the temple inscriptions. It has been documented in Letoon and Telandros that the Lycian water cult has a connection with spring water (Borchhardt-Bleibtreu 2013, 88 – 89; Akyürek Şahin 2016, 542-545).

Purification is important in the religious life of the Urartians, who also have Hurrian and Assyrian influences. When entering the courtyard of Ayanis Temple, one of the most important places reflecting this importance, from the east, there is a *pithos* with a length of around 2 m in front of the second pillar on the courtyard floor. The bathtub, which likely contained water, must have been used for religious purification before the ceremonies. The remains of this religious cleaning tub unearthed in the Ayanis temple area indicate the importance of purification in the Urartians' religious rituals (Çilingiroğlu 2020, 142). Çilingiroğlu (2007, 36-37) claims that in this Urartian temple, physical purity, which is the first phase of religious rituals, begins at the entrance of the temple and then libation, that is, sprinkling sacred water, takes place as a routine. From written sources showing the existence of sacred water containers used by the Urartians, Sargon II.'s report about the hostages taken from the temple in Musasir mentions the existence of 607 large and small copper water vessels. These were used for sacred water and wine in purification rituals (Loo 1966, 103).

The importance that the Urartians gave to purification was also reflected in the findings of Tuspa Castle. The stele, placed on the right of the entrance of the building called “Şirşini” (Salvini 2008, CTU A 5-68), is thought to have been used for a stable or similar purpose on the northern slopes of the castle, and the building stones around it indicate that this place was used for the “purification of sacred sacrificial animals” (Tarhan 2011, 318-320; Konyar et al. 2019, 177-190) (Fig. 4). However, it is not known whether water was used for this purification or not.



Figure 4: The entrance of Sirsini of Minua (Konyar et. Al. 2019, 178, Fig.22)

Conclusions

Religion, which is the cornerstone of Anatolian culture where civilizations unify, is the most determining element in Anatolian civilizations. In societies within Hittite syncretism, where written sources can be accessed, purity must have been an important step in the polytheistic religious system. Physical and spiritual purification was considered essential in societies that organized purification rituals in the name of purity. Hittite texts clearly indicate the importance of the concept of purity in the Hittites, Hurrian, and Luwian religions. In these pantheons, where spiritual purification was essential for the worship of the deities, the physical purity of people, cult objects, and places was first expected. The most important tool that removes impurities is water. In this context, water might be considered a sacred tool for prayers. Containers carrying water, which are the most important elements used in purification rituals, and the sources from which water is obtained began to be considered sacred over time. Anatolia is rich in these resources. The Phrygians, Lydians, Lycians, and Urartians, who inherited the legacy of the Hittites and where traces of other civilizations were also detected, continued the importance of water in purification in their religious lives. However, the available sources in these civilizations were not as comprehensive as the Hittite archives. Studies on these civilizations can be conducted by comparing them with neighboring cultures such as Greece and Mesopotamia. Thus, this study, which aims to contribute to the development and continuity of the "sanctity of water in ancient Anatolian purification rituals", will fully achieve its purpose.

The definitive conclusion drawn from this study is that respect for the concept of God has been important from the beginning of human history to the present day, and the main rule of this respect is physical and then spiritual purity. Through spiritual purification, a person can be cleansed of the evils, ambitions, and past sins he harbors. Purity is the food of the human soul and the most important element of psychology. The intense use of this form of purification in Ancient Anatolia, which is still applied with different methods today, is also very valuable for our study.

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