

SEME VISIT AS AN EXAMPLE OF MOUNTAIN CULT IN SIVAS REFLECTED INTO THE PRESENT*

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Abstract

Mount cult has been an important public belief in many communities from prehistoric ages to today. Humans have thought that the natural phenomenons that they cannot explain the meaning of, are created by supernatural powers, namely gods. And they have chosen mysterious and unreachable mountains as the places where their gods with great powers live. In time, mountains have been accepted both as a god and as a place where gods live. In ancient Anatolia, the mountain cult appears as an important public belief, especially in Hittites. Although the written sources on Hittites have fallen into silence in 1200s B.C., we know that Hittites continued to exist in Anatolia through long ages. Today, in Anatolia, it is still possible to see the traces of Hittites in some public beliefs. Another factor that has an effect on the mountain cult belief in Anatolia is that the ancient Turkish pubic beliefs mostly continue their existence in the Anatolian Alevism by changing their identity. In our study, we will try to discuss the mountain cult beliefs in different communities and especially the effect of the Hittites mountain cult belief in Sivas to the present.

Keywords: Mountain Cult, Mount Şarişša, Mount Şeme, Public Lore, Sivas.



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SİVAS YÖRESİNDE DAĞ KÜLTÜNÜN GÜNÜMÜZE YANSIYAN BİR ÖRNEĞİ OLARAK ŞEME DAĞI ZİYARETİ

Öz

Dağ kültü tarih öncesi çağlardan günümüze kadar birçok toplulukta önemli bir halk inancı olarak yer edinmiştir. İnsanoğlu anlamlandıramadığı tabiat olaylarının doğüstü güçler yani tanrılar tarafından meydana getirildiğini düşünmüştür. Büyük güçlere sahip olan tanrıların yaşadığı mekân olarak da gizemli ve ulaşılmaz olan dağları seçmişlerdir. Zaman içerisinde dağlar hem bir tanrı hem de tanrıların ikamet ettiği bir mekân olarak kabul görmüştür. Eski Anadolu'da dağ kültü özellikle Hititlerde önemli bir halk inancı olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. M.Ö. 1200'lerde Hititlere ait yazılı kaynaklar aniden susmuş olsa da bizler biliyoruz ki Anadolu topraklarında Hititler uzun yıllar boyunca var olmaya devam etmişlerdir. Günümüz Anadolusu'nda hala bazı halk inanışlarında Hititlerin izlerini görmek mümkündür. Anadolu'daki dağ kültü inancı üzerinde tesiri olan bir başka etken de Eski Türk halk inanışlarının çoğunlukla Anadolu Aleviliğinde kimlik değiştirerek hala yaşıyor olmasıdır. Biz bu çalışmada farklı topluluklardaki dağ kültü inançlarını ve özellikle Sivas yöresindeki Hitit dağ kültü inancının günümüze tesirini ele almaya çalışacağız.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dağ Kültü, Şarişsa Dağı, Şeme Dağı, Halk İnanışları, Sivas.



Introduction

Since the existence of human beings, there has been a close relationship between the religious life of human beings and nature. People think that the natural phenomena that they cannot cope with, are created by supernatural powers, that is gods, and they accepted the sky as the place where gods live, a place where people cannot reach (Eliade, 2018, p. 65-66). As mountains are close to the sky, mountains have been known both as gods and a place where gods live.

From the prehistoric ages to today, many evidence demonstrates that high mountains took place in the center of the religious beliefs of various societies. These grand mountains rising towards the sky were either identified directly with a god or considered as the places where the gods lived and they were selected as the cult places (Çevik, 2007, p. 175). People accepted the grand

mountains or volcanoes that they were afraid of or they respected as gods (Baydur, 1994, p. 1).¹

The caves located in the mountains along the stone age were used both as shelters and temples. In the early times, the cave paintings, including scenes of sorcery and daily life, give clues about some cults performed in these places (Çevik, 2007, pp. 175-176). In this respect, the pictures in the Karadere Cave included in Herakleia cave paintings located in Latmos have a special place. In this cave paintings, which are different in terms of their subject, the dance performed during a cult ceremony was pictured. Due to the horn-like objects on the heads of the figures included in the pictures, these are considered to represent gods or shamans (Höhfeld, 2017, p. 201). (Fig. 1)

Selecting caves, reaching to the deepest parts of the high mountains and the end of which cannot be reached mostly, as the cult places have been observed from the early times to the monotheistic religions. The ancient people must have been continuing to seek for their gods in the deep darkness after leaving to live in caves, as they believed that their gods would appear from the blank doors which they built opening to rocks in the mountains because they thought to contact some of the gods, especially the underworld gods and the gods that had contact with darkness, in this way (Çevik, 2007, p. 176).²

It is possible to see the sacred mountain belief in many societies and civilizations. Sumerians identified mountains with gods. Sumerian word "KUR" was used to define both the mountain and the underworld (Eliade, 2002, p. 26).³ Mountains were accepted as the edge of the other world in Mesopotamia and it was believed that the souls went to the world of the dead by passing through the mountain (Eliade, 2002, p. 28). Sumerians called their ziggurats with names such as "the house of mountain" or "storm mountain" and they built their

¹ In Catalhöyük, an erupting volcano was pictured in a wall painting. This volcano is Mount Hasan, which was active in the Neolithic Period and can be seen from the settlement area (Hodder, 2017, p. 163).

² There are many open-air temples with doors/niches opening to mountains in the Urartu settlement area. In the Meher Door inscription, in the list giving information about the religious offerings, it is recorded that a bull and a sheep was sacrificed in each of Khaldi Door, Theispas Door and Shivini Door (Çilingiroğlu, 1998, p. 229). The holy places owned by the mother goddess Cybele, which is also named as Matar Kubileya (The mother of mountain) in Phrygian inscriptions, were believed to be in the mountains and rocky places and the goddess lived in these rocky places. Therefore, the holy places Cybele related to were generally built on rocks (Roller, 2004, p. 83; Bingöl, 2006, p. 13).

³ KUR is understood as "mountain, underworld, the world of the dead" in ePSD.

temples as man-made mountains (Eliade, 2002, p. 26; Bertman, 2003, p. 197). Sumerian Sky God, Enlil, is named as *lugal kur kura* "mountainous country khan" in the texts. A temple was built for Enlil in Nippur city in the form of a mountain named *EKUR* "mountain house" (Eliade, 2002, p. 26). The sun god *UTU* was often portrayed together with a mountain with two summits. In a cylinder seal of Gudea, there is an expression "the room of god that king had built is like a cosmic mountain" (Albright, 1919, p. 173). The mountain god belief of Sumerians were adopted by Babylon and Assyria and spread into the other societies (Baydur, 1994, p. 2).

Mountains had an important place in Babylon mythology. The version of the flood myth included in the Babylonian mythology is quite large and it included the epic of Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh, who was seeking for eternity had to climb over the Mount Mashu in order to arrive at the destination. It was recorded in the following parts of the mythos that the ship went aground in Mount Nisir at the end of the flood lasted 6 days and 6 nights (Hooke, 2015, pp. 56-59).

In the Ancient Greek, it was believed that the gods lived in the house built by Hephaestus in the Mount Olympos (West, 2007, p. 154). The Greeks must have designed the place their gods lived as a mysterious and an unattainable place and they thought that their chief god Zeus lived in Olympos with his wife Hera, children, siblings and the other gods (Estin & Laporte, 2002, p. 101). Mountains were accepted as holy for Zeus and sometimes they were accepted as his throne (Cook, 1914, p. 124). Mount Ida located in Crete were accepted as sacred by the Greeks and they prepared places to worship gods in the caves of these mountains. In a myth, it was recorded that Zeus was born here and fed by a goat (Estin & Laporte, 2002, p. 10). The same story was told in many regions for many mountains (such as Mount Dice and Tmolos). The main objective here was not to find a mountain for the god but to divinize the mountain (Çevik, 2007, p. 180).

In Hindu mythology, it was believed that Mount Meru was the center of the world and the heaven of the god Indra was located on it. It was thought that gods came together on Mount Meru and consult. This mountain is probably is a legendary form of a mountain in the North Himalayas (Kaya, 1997, p. 102; West, 2007, p. 151).

In Shintoism, it is believed that the sacred mountains have filled the earth. Mount Fuji, which is accepted as the most sacred mountain by Japanese, is

actually a volcano. They go to Mount Fuji, and they worship the rising sun (Tanyu, 1973, p. 7). In old Japan, there is information on worshipping mountains tradition in Kojiki and Nihongi texts. Volcanoes were generally accepted as the places where the gods lived. The water resources in the mountains were worshipped either as the places where the souls of the dead lived or the passages used while going to the other world (Rotermund, 2000a, p. 147). In Japan, in the past, and partially today, Yamabushis climb the mountain in some periods of the year and they believe that they improve their supernatural powers by making religious spiritual and physical movements. Yamabushi, which means long time sufferer, evokes shugendo, which is the most interesting of the Japanese beliefs. The most important characteristic of shugendo coming from the prehistory is worshipping nature, especially mountains (Rotermund, 2000b, p. 149).

In Indian mythology, mountains are told in the death mythos as follows: *“When people die, they have to climb a hill. There is a separating line between the world we live in and the world of the ones who passed away before us. That line is the peak of a hill. When someone gets seriously ill, he/she may start climbing the hill. Especially if his/her beloved ones are with him/her and they want him/her to come back, climbing is a very hard job. But if he/she is very ill and suffers a lot, he/she proceeds his/her way and he/she works hard to reach the peak despite of the people crying to make him/her come back. If he/she reaches the peak of the hill, he/she may take a glance at the other side. The people on the other side call out to the sick person as soon as they saw them and they beg him/her to join them. But if the people on the side of living love him/her enough to keep him/her, that person will stay with them.”* (Marriott & Rachlin, 2003, p. 276). Similarly, it is believed in Ural Altaic societies that the dead climb mountains (Eliade, 2018, p. 127).

The mountains which are close to the Sky God, located in the center of the universe and have a cosmic function are accepted as sacred also by Turks (Roux, 2000, p. 147). Mountain is the most important element among the mountain, water, trees, forest and rock cults which are called as yer-sub. Mountain cult in Turks is related to the Sky God cult and they believed that mountains are the places of god. In Middle Asia, the old Turkish tribes presented their offerings to the Sky God on the summit of the high mountains. As clearly understood from the Shaman prayers, they worshipped directly to mountains and they accepted them as living beings hearing everything (Inan, 1986, pp. 48-51).

After Turks started to migrate to Anatolia, they named the high places in Anatolia with the names they used in Middle Asia and they established a mountain cult. In Anatolia, there are lots of sanctuaries of saints, but the identity of these saints are unknown. Therefore, it is possible to consider them the individualization of these mountains (Roux, 2000, p. 147). By the effect of Islam, this mountain cult gave its place to saint beliefs in which people believe that there are saint tombs in the mountains (Ogel, 2014, p. 549).

In old Turks, a prayer made by a shaman on a mountain accepted as sacred is as follows: *“O holy and wide place of Altai! O Altai, who always grant fortune! O Altai, who judge us not to make us miserable! O Alta, who gives rest to our elder whose hair does not turn white! O Altai, who were blessed by our ancestors when our earth and seas were created! Our decent country is being miserable, our nation, with few people, suffers. O my sacred Altai! What do we do now? Please give us a living! O my Altai who creates the good fortune of our herds, give us my water...”* This tradition was conveyed to Islam as the rain prayer (Çevik, 2007, p. 183).

A. Hittite Mountain Cult

In Anatolia, this belief goes back a long way and the Mesopotamia cult had a significant effect in the sacredness of mountains and the formation of the mountain gods. This Mesopotamia based cult was transferred to Hittians via the Hurrians who had a significant effect on Hittite religion. It is possible to find the mountain gods, which takes an important place in Hittite pantheon in both the written sources and the depictions on the material evidence (Baydur, 1994, p. 2).

The storm god, Tešup, who was the chief god of the Hittite pantheon and was believed to make the agricultural areas fertile by bringing rain, was a Hurrian god. The main cult center of Tešup was probably the city of Kumme located in the Eastern Habur valley. In the documents with cuneiform script, the city of Kumme was included from the Old Babylonia Period to New Assyrian Period. Together with the appearance of Hurrians and the increase of the existence of Mittanis in North Syria, the range of the Tešup cult expanded (Schwemer, 2008, p. 3-6). It was believed that Tešup lived in a place close to the sky, in the summits of mountains and wandered in the mountains with its cart pulled by the bulls named Huri and Šeri (Bryce, 2002, pp. 143-144).

We learnt how the mountains that have an important place in the Hittite religion were depicted in the art objects from the extant written sources and art objects from Hittites. The mountain gods were depicted as a theriomorphic bull

and they were depicted as anthropomorphic as from 3000 BC (Çevik, 2007, p. 176). In the Hittite art, the mountain gods were generally depicted as their lower parts were with fish scale. The mountain gods depictions were found in Yazılıkaya, Fraktin, Gezbeli, Hanyeri, İmamkulu reliefs, (Hawkins, 2015, p. 1) structures-votive nails, (Aydingün, 2010, p. 53 et al) and in the form of seals, stone plastic works of art and ivory sculptures (Çevik, 2007, p. 176).

Tešup was generally depicted as stepping on its sacred mountains, Hazzi and Namni. This is clearly seen in the meeting scene in Yazılıkaya Room A and IV. Tuthaliya relief in Room B (Beckman, 2013, p. 154). (Fig. 2).

Hittites accepted mountains both as gods and the sacred places where the gods lived. This idea was reflected to the stories in the Hittite mythology.⁴ The Hittites, who defied their kings after their death, believed that the new residence of their kings were mountains after the death of their kings. Thus Hattušili III stated the death of Šuppiluliuma II saying "when my grandfather Šuppiluliuma arrived the mountain" (Ensert, 2006, p. 97).

Mountains which had an important place in the Hittite belief system took their place as the witnesses of the agreements together with the gods in the political agreements (Beckman & Hoffner, 1996, p. 25).⁵ In addition to this, it is known that offerings were made to the divine mountains in the prayer texts⁶ and rituals of Hittites.⁷

⁴ In the Telipinu mythos, the Sun God sent an eagle to the high mountains to find the god who left the country (Hoffner, 1998, p. 15). Also, it was believed that when Tešup was called it first arrived a mountain, close to the temple, then it went to the temple from this mountain (Bryce, 2002, p. 154).

⁵ It was a common application that the gods became witnesses in the agreements. The gods who were included as witnesses were accepted as the watchers of the agreement and it was believed that they would punish the party who violated the provisions (Brandau, 2015, p. 58). In Rome, Jupiter was accepted as the god blessing the international agreements and it was believed that he would punish the ones who broke their promises and violated an agreement with lightning. When the priest (fetialis), who represented Rome in the other international agreements, killed a piglet with a sacred flintstone, he warned "*If the Roman people violate an agreement, may Jupiter strike them as I hit this piglet with the flintstone!*" (Eliade, 2018, pp. 105-106).

⁶ In the text known as the Muwatali's Prayer, it is observed that there are mountains together with many gods and goddesses. (Garstag & Gurney, 1959, pp. 116-119).

⁷ CTH 682 3: It is mentioned in the 1st and 2nd lines of the document numbered KBo 12. 59 that "*King Tuthalia hunted regularly and billy goat was offered to Mount Šaluwanda that it followed*" and it was mentioned in KUB IX 17 document that it was drunk once to Mount Daha (McMahon, 1991, pp. 133; 221).

There was about 170 feast in Hittites to be celebrated for the gods in order to demand the productivity of soil, abundant rain, an increase of the herds and prey animals. It has been understood from the records related to the feasts and religious rituals that some of the celebrations took place in the mountains. If a feast should be celebrated in a mountain and this mountain was occupied by the enemies at that time, a model of that mountain was built and the religious rites were held on that model (Unal, 2003, pp. 91-92). The translation of the text numbered KUB XXV 33 is as follows: *"When spring comes and it starts to lighten, the priests carry the Mountain God Halwanna to the mountain. If the region is occupied by the enemy, they take him to the mountain, under the Huwasi stone standing under the tree in the mountain. They break bread and offer beer. But if the region is not occupied by the enemy, they put him on the huwasi stone standing under the tree in the riverside."* (Gurney, 1977, p. 27).

It is understood that a ceremony is held in the Mount Piškuruwuwa with the participation of the king and the queen during AN.TAH.ŠUM^{SAR} feast celebrated in spring and lasted for 38 days (Güterbock, 1960, p. 87). In the text in which the feast celebration are told, it was stated that a goat and cereal was offered during the king's visit to Mount Piškuruwuwa (Sir Gavaz, 2012, p. 176). Based on the statement included in the text mentioning the 2nd day of the feast *"on the next day, the king and the queen enter Hattuša. the guards and the palace officers compete"*, it is understood that several competitions are held in the mountains as well as the cult ceremony during the feast celebration (Güterbock, 1960, p. 85).

In the text mentioning the AN.TAH.ŠUM^{SAR} feast celebration, it was recorded that the king went to Mount Tapala and continued the celebration on the 28th day of the feast. In the text numbered KBo 30 69 mentioning the same feast, there is a record about the celebration made by the queen in Mount Tapala. The translation of the related lines of the text are as follows: *"The queen sits down, the king stands and offers kurtalli in a bowl for Mount Tapala and Mount Tapala god, for Maliya, for god 7.7 BI (?) tutelary god for Wašuma. Singers from Kanesh sing songs. Saki takes some sour bread and gives it to the soothsayer. the soothsayer puts it into its place."* (Sir Gavaz, 2012, p. 188-189). It was recorded in the feast celebration that a billy goat was sacrificed for Mount Tapala (McMahon, 1991, p. 60).

In the Hittite sources, the names of many mountains other than these mountains. But adequate information has not been found yet on the sacredness of these mountains and determining their locations.

B. The Places in Sivas Associated With Mountain Cult

Sivas was located in the region named as Upper Land surrounded by the small tributaries of Kızılırmak river, in the 20th century BC, when Hittites dominated over Anatolia. The Upper Land had a quite important strategic location for Hittites. That this region was occupied by the enemy meant that the region from Sivas to Malatya Plain (Tegarama) became exposed to the risk of the attacks of the enemies. Also, this way constituted an important route to Northern Syria for Hittites and became the only way of transportation from the period of Muršili I to the period of Šuppiluliuma I. (Macquen, 2013, p. 59).

Sivas and its surrounding was a region including the military centers and it was also accepted as an important religious center. In the region, they showed their respect for the gods by forming sacred places for the gods and performing religious rites in those places.

Šarišša/Kuşaklı, located in 4 km east of the Altınyayla District, Başören Village, was an important cult center for Hittites (Müller-Karpe, 1994, p. 259). (Fig. 3). As the Hittite cities were mostly established on the old residential centers, the buildings in the city were constructed in a disordered way. Šarišša, unlike the other Hittite cities, was established in the second half of the 16th century based on a city plan. In the research, no settlement before the Hittites has been determined in the city (Müller-Karpe & Schrimpf, 2009, p. 45). In the analysis of the geographical region on which the city was established, it was observed that the region was not located on a crossroad where important routes cross and it is hard to say that it was agriculturally productive (Müller-Karpe, 2015, p. 83). That is, Šarišša was established on a less important region compared to the other Hittite cities. So, why did Hittites choose this region to establish the city? Because the region had geographical advantages that may be attractive for Hittites despite its advantages. Rocky areas where the surrounding can be observed easily and building cities on steep slopes are typical characteristics features of Hittite architecture (For Hittite architecture see Schirmer, 1982). Mount Kulmaç, located in the south of Šarišša and known as Mount Šarišša in the period of Hittites was an important factor for establishing the city in the region. The water source emerging from the northern slope of the mountain confluence with three different rivers and reaches different seas. The part of the source confluence the Euphrates river flows into the Persian Gulf, the part confluence Kızılırmak flows into the Black Sea and the part confluence Seyhan

River flows into the Mediterranean Sea. This situation made the region to have symbolic importance for Hittites (Müller-Karpe, 2015, p. 83).

Šarišša city is mentioned as a cult center in Boğazköy texts. The texts in which the 1st and 3rd days of the feast celebrated by the participation of the king are mentioned have been found in Kuşaklı and the text in which the 2nd and 4th days of the feast are mentioned have been found in Boğazköy (Wilhelm, 2011, p. 106). The following was recorded in the text numbered Kut 19 including the celebration in the 1st day: *"The king comes in the spring to Šarišša to celebrate the feast. The king does not enter the city directly when he arrives. He enters from the upper road reaching the huwaši stone of the Storm God* (Wilhelm, 1997, pp. 17-18). In the following part of the text, it was mentioned that the king offered a sacrifice on the huwaši stone and there was a pond named šupitaššu. The existence of a pond was determined on Mount Kulmaç, located approximately 2.5 km south of Šarišša (Wilhelm, 2011, p. 106; Beckman, 2013, p. 157). In the research, the surface of the pond was covered by clay and its water level was raised with water refill. Also, it is known that there is a temple around the pond on a hill reaching out to the west (Müller-Karpe, 2015, pp. 84-85). (Fig. 4).

A stele was found near the Mount Kulmaç, localized by Mount Šarišša, in a desolate tomb which was probably taken from the city. On this stele named as Altınyayla stele, a scene of libation offered to the god on a deer was depicted. The word "Kurunta" is read on the left hand of the god reaching toward the horn of the deer. The god carries a bow on his right shoulder and there is a bird on his left shoulder. It is estimated that the person performing the offering to the god is a Hittite king. But there is no inscription on the stele demonstrating the name of the king (Müller-Karpe, 2003, pp. 313-314). (Fig. 5). In the text found in Boğazköy mentioning about the 2nd day of the feast celebration in Šarišša, it was recorded that the king offered a sacrifice on huwaši stone for ^dKAL (The Tutelary God of Wilderness) (Wilhelm, 2011, p. 106). In the written documents and depictions of Hittites, ^dKAL was mentioned or depicted with arrow and bow as a distinctive sign (Savaş, 2014, p. 229). That the god on the Altınyayla stele is depicted with a bow on his right shoulder makes us think that this god is ^dKAL whose cult ceremony was performed in Šarišša. All these demonstrate that Mount Šarišša was accepted as a sacred mountain used in the rituals by Hittites.

In the text numbered CHT 591, Mount Šarišša is mentioned as a tutelary mountain. The translation of the text is as follows: *"Oh Mount Šarišša stand up! May the fleshy cows and goats come back to your powerful king and queen, the guards*

of (Hatti). Come to make them powerful and to protect them! May the good news find them, the powerful king and queen be on the iron throne! May They be happy!" (Klinger, 1996, pp. 320-321).

In the document numbered KU 92/1 found in Kuşaklı, a mountain god whose feast was celebrated twice a year in Šarišša was mentioned as follows: "Two feasts are celebrated for the god of Mount Kupit. One is celebrated in the spring and the other is celebrated in the fall. Approximately 10 kilos of flour and 60 kilos of barley are given by the people of the city" (Wilhelm, 1997, pp. 23-24). In this text in which the celebration performed twice a year for a mountain god, it was mentioned that the offering performed for the mountain god was performed by the people of the city, not by the king.

The god figures included on the bronze ceremonial axe found in Sivas-Şarkışla were interpreted by K. Bittel as the Sun and Mountain Gods (Darga, 1992, pp. 107-109). (Fig. 6). In Hittites, some of the types of weapons were mentioned with gods in the written documents and depicted in the hands and on the shoulders of gods in the depictions. Axe, which was among these types of weapon, was used as the sign of Šarruma and Šaušga (Savaş, 2014, pp. 228-229). If the ceremonial axe was not taken here from another place, it may be accepted as a sacred place for Hittites where the religious rites were held.⁸

Mont Seme, today located in 3 km southwest of Saraç Village of Sarkışla District of Sivas,⁹ are accepted as sacred by the people of the village with tis stones, soil, water and trees. Therefore, the people of the village never give harm to any of the living creatures in the mountain and the trees in the mountain are not cut down. The villagers believe that a person who gives to any of the living creatures in this town will get in trouble. The people of the village climb Mount Seme generally in 3rd week of every June of each year sacrifice animals which they obtained through collective work. The people of the village who migrated

⁸ In Šamuha city, today located in Sivas-Yıldızeli Kayalıpınar Village Harabe Mevkii, the Šaušgası cult of Šamuha was sustained intensely in the period of Hittites.

⁹ Mount Seme is a mound of the Chalcolithic Period (Ökse 2001: p. 90). In the Karagöl Village, the neighbour of Saraç Village, the settlements of Chalcolithic, Middle Bronze Age and Iron Age; In the Kayapınar Village the settlements Old and Middle Bronze Age; in Ihsanlı (Lisanlı) Village the settlements of Old, Middle and Late Bronze Age were determined (Ökse, 1994, p. 244).

from the village and living abroad come to the village every year for the Mount Seme visit which has an unknown starting point.¹⁰ (Fig. 7).

Due to the common belief among the people, it is accepted that Seme and his friend were the vanguard commanders in the first migration of Turks to Anatolia and they martyred in the place mentioned today. For this reason, Seme is known as a Hero Saint (Alp eren) who come to help of the people who are in difficulty (Gökbel, 2002, p. 15). But as a result of the interviews with the people of the village, we may say that they accept the mountain itself sacred rather than Seme, whose tomb is assumed to be on the summit of the mountain and who has lent his name to the mountain. Thus, the villagers pray for the realization of their wishes by turning to Mount Seme. For example, parents who want their son to come back from army unharmed pray by turning to Mount Seme. It was determined that the tomb of Seme, made of masonry stones considered to be found in the mountain, was built during the environment planning in 2015 and there was a circular construction made of stones in place of this tomb (Fig. 8-9).

One day before Moun Seme visit, the people of the village take a bath and the women apply henna on their hands as a preparation for the visit. On the day of the visit, everybody pays attention to get on clean clothes. The sacrifices obtained by the villages by collective work are taken to the mountain and a ceremony is performed by the popular Turkish poet-singers (Aşık) in company with kaplama (a music instrument with three double strings). People pray as follows to have a good visit: *"May our Seme visit have fortune, may fortune is obtained, may the squares be prosperous, may our service is accepted, may our wishes come true, may bad people mend their ways, may the good people be all the time, may our heart be filled with joy, may our fortune be prosperous."* During the Mount Seme visit, a rain prayer is performed to have abundance and fruitfulness in that year. By looking at the saying *"plants less, havests a lot"* about Saraç village, we may say that agriculture is an important means of living for the people of the village. Nobody drinks alcohol during the visit and the visitors are disturbed for whatever reason. The food made from the sacrifices are offered to the visitors and then the remaining of the sacrifices are offered to the wild animals, that is, to nature.

¹⁰ I thank the people of the Saraç Village and E. Cemal Sahin for the information they provided about Mount Şeme visit. For the detailed information on the beliefs of people about Mount Seme (Gökbel, 2002, pp. 1-16).

The applications before and after the Mount Seme visit are listed as follows:

- Taking a bath one day before the visit and getting on clean clothes on the day of the visit.
- Taking the sacrifices (the number have not become less than 40 so far) obtained by collective work,
- The bağlama ceremony of Aşiks,
- Sacrificing,
- Rain prayer,
- Having the food prepared by the villagers together and leaving the remaining to the nature (Fig. 10).
- Coming back to the village after the visit.

Some of the applications performed by the people of Saraç village have similarities with the applications performed by the Hittites during the feast celebration.

The cultic actions in the ceremonies performed under the leadership of the Hittite kings or the high ranking religious functionaries have generally the order stated below:

- The arrival of king, high officials, other officials and, maybe, the cortege including people to the cult center. The cult place may be in a sacred city, mountain, forested land or riverside.
- The start of the ceremony, sometimes, with dance, music or songs,
- Sometimes, performing competition, acrobatic shows.
- Sacrifice ceremony,
- Lavish meal and having the gods and goddesses eat and drink in that lavish meal.
- Leaving the cult place (Sir Gavaz, 2016, p. 83).

It is known that the Hittite kings pay attention to cleanliness before the religious rites. In the text in which the 2nd day of the feast celebration in Šarišša was recorded, the cleaning made by a king before starting the ceremony was

mentioned as follows: *“Water is given to the king at the door of the (Palace) to wash his hands. The king washed his hands. Another palace servant gives him a cloth. The king wipes his hands. the king cleans himself with tuḫḫueššar¹¹ The king leans before the huwaši stone and cleans it with tuḫḫueššar.”* (Wilhelm, 1997, p. 10). In the text numbered KUB 13.3, the cleaning preparation made also before the religious rites are mentioned as follows: *“A slave must be washed and with clean dresses when he/she comes into the presence of his/her master; (this is the only way) to offer him food and drinks. When he wined and dined his master, he will be in a good mood and accept his/her wishes. But if he/she is dirty, (both his/her master and god) will not accept his/her wishes and behave him/her like a stranger”* (Unal, 2003, p. 93).

Before the Mount Seme visit, the people of the village try to show the respect they have for the visit by taking a bath and getting on clean dresses.

Another interesting similarity between the Seme visit and Hittite feast celebration is limiting alcohol use in order to prevent possible disturbing conditions. We know the tough rules to take into consideration during the Hittite feast celebration by the help of the texts mentioning the feast ceremonies. In the BĒL MADGALTI instruction text numbered KUB XIII 2, this situation was stated as follows: *“Nobody may lead to disturbance (by drinking a lot) in the presence of gods when they are blessed and nobody may disturb the peace in the feast house”* (Schuler, 1957, p. 47).

As a result, it is possible to say that the mountain cult belief is observed in almost all societies commonly and effectively. Mountain cult appears as an important belief of people in Ancient Anatolia, especially in Hittites. Although the sources of Hittites were interrupted suddenly in the 1200s BC, Hittites continued their existence in the Anatolian lands for long years and it is possible to see the effects of Hittites in the beliefs of people today. The mountain cult belief was performed intensely in Sivas in the period of Hittites. We can observe the effect of this in Mount Seme visit, although partly. It is possible to say that both the old Turkish culture and the Hittite mountain cult continue to exist in the Anatolian Alevism by changing their identity.



¹¹ For detailed information on tuḫḫueššar accepted as a cleaning material please (Alp, 1982, pp. 248-259).

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APPENDICES

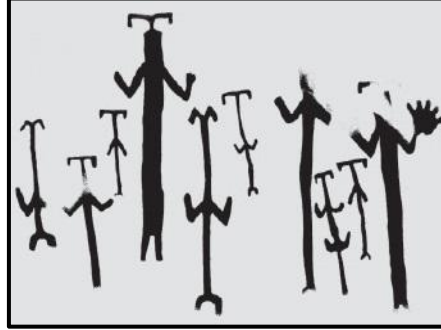


Fig. 1. Cave paintings in Herakleia (Çevik 2007)

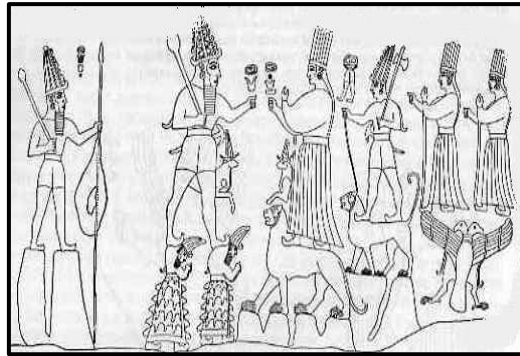


Fig. 2. God Tešup and the Holy Mountains Hazzi and Namni (Akurgal 2007)



Fig. 3. Šarišša/Kuṣaklı (This photo was taken from the official website of Sivas Museum Directorate.)



Fig. 4. *The Holy šupitaššu Pond Located on the Kulmaç Mountain. (A. Müller-Karpe 2015)*



Fig. 5. *Altınyayla Stele (Archaeological Museum of Sivas) (A. Müller-Karpe 2015)*



Fig. 6. Ceremonial Axe from Sarkışla (Bittel 1976)



Fig. 7. Seme Mountain (H. Kaya Hasdemir)



Fig. 8. A Photo of Seme Mountain Before 2015 (E. C. Sahin)



Fig. 9. The Symbolic Grave Made at the Seme Mountain in 2015 (H. Kaya Hasdemir)



Fig. 10. Meal Cooked by People of Sarac Village (E. C. Sahin)