

Water-Related Tales and Beliefs in Muğla Region, Turkey

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Abstract

Water, necessary for survival and essential for everyday life, is one of the most important themes of oral culture. In various cultures it sometimes appears in folklore as an entity that is sacred and mysterious, as one that cleans away dirt and evil, and sometimes as something destructive.

This article examines the water-related tales and beliefs from the Muğla region of Turkey that have an important part in the oral culture of the region but are not yet recorded in written form. The study, based primarily on the compilation method, is presented under three main headings. The first section gives an overview of water in the context of local culture. The second section describes actual mysterious water-related events and legends, and tales about the tombs of Saints at water sources. The third section describes general water-related beliefs from the oral culture of the Muğla region.

Keywords

Water, water cult, oral culture, tales, beliefs

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Introduction

There is absolutely a feeling and a thought beneath some beliefs of people. Almost none of the beliefs and practices and narratives traditionalized by people are causeless. “Water”, which is one of the common beliefs in the world, was also fed with the common feelings and thoughts of humanity (such as sacred, respect, fear and concern) but it belonged to a nation, being intertwined with local elements. The narratives and beliefs made around water, the source of life, can be indicated to be formed with the exhilarative, constructive or devastating, deadly effect of water. These two paradoxical effects, “generating” (call into being) and “demolishing” (eradication), caused a rich oral culture about water to form. Hence, water is an important part of the oral culture among Turks, like it is in all of the world, and thus in Muğla.

Muğla is located in the West of Turkey, on the point where the Aegean and Mediterranean Regions intersect. Muğla, which is surrounded by seas approximately on its three sides, is one of the important tourism centers of the country with its historical and natural beauty. The known history of Muğla dates back to the ancient *Karia* civilization. Muğla, which is one of the oldest cities of the *Karia* region, was named as *Mobella*, *Mobolia* and *Mogola* (*Muğla İl Yıllığı (Muğla Province Yearbook)* 1973: 19) in historical recordings. *Karia* came under the rule of various states and governments such as Egypt, Dorian, Persia, Alexandria, The Kingdom of Pergamon, Rome and Byzantium and it sustained its existence as a city-state between B.C 13th and A.D 800. In 800 A.D. the region met with Islam with the Abbasid Caliph. Then, the Muğla/Menteşe region was captured by Turks between 1281-1424. The region is annexed to Ottoman land in 1424 (Akar 2004: 4).

Muğla was known as the province of Menteşe until the last periods of the Ottoman Empire. Muğla has become a province with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the proclamation of the republic. The province of Muğla is very rich in terms of archaeological findings and there are 103 ruins within its borders.

In the consideration of the historical information given above, the Muğla region's being surrounded with water / sea approximately at three sides has

made it an attractive center of life in political, economical and social fields in historical periods. Thus, it can be indicated that the the geographical position of the Muğla region, which is surrounded with water, is closely related to the water culture that inholds the oral history.

The study intends to take the water - related narratives and beliefs in Muğla and its region which have not been written yet, which have a wide coverage in oral culture and which are archived in the memories of the reference people under preservation with the compilation method and hereby to put the oral culture on paper. In consideration of all these information, the reflection of “water” in oral history as a cultural code to narratives and beliefs makes the starting point of the study. Thus, the sample of “Muğla”, which is presented starting from the similar examples in the Turkic world and other nations, forms the study. For the sampling, totally 42 people from Muğla city center, township and villages between 30-86 ages were interviewed between 2006-2007 and compilation work was done. 33 of them were women and they were 30 years old or above. Middle aged and older men make the remaining 9 people. During the compilation, it was observed that women were more loyal to traditions and living oral culture when compared to men. Because of this reason, the number of women was higher than men among the participants. Men more supported the study about the “narratives” (for example, short stories about graves). They generally directed us to wives and elderly women of region for the questions about belief during the compilation. The clear addresses, birth places, education levels, ages and jobs of the compilation people who contributed to the study were given with the order of number in the reference people¹ chart at the end of the study.

I. A General Glance at Water within the Context of “Culture”

1. In the World

From ancient ages to today, water has been accepted as a sacred, mysterious element of nature even if it is an indispensable part of the daily life by many societies in the world. In our opinion, the most important reason of it is the water's being the source of existence. Hence, water is the arkhe of Thales, the ancient Greek philosopher, in other words, it is the first thing which everything comes from and returns to (Kasak 2000: 93). It is the source

of the existence which remains without changing under changing things (Diogenes 2004: 20, 28). One of the reasons for the water to be accepted as arkhe is its being one of the solid, liquid and gas states making the basis of beings (Aristotle 1996: 983b-20, 27). Water confronts us as the first principle of everything in Homer and Hesiod whom Aristotle named as theologians. Homer and Hesiod accepted Okeanos and Tethys as the beings which formed the world and they said that the Gods swore on the water named *Styx* (Hesiodos 1991: 782, 806). This sentence summarizing all of the “Vedic Tradition” is found in a text in Hindi: “Water, you are the source of everything, all existence” (Eliade 2003: 196).

Some waters have been sacred among various nations and in various cultures on the world today and in the past. Such as the Zamzam² water which is regarded as sacred by Muslims, some rivers - Ganges- being regarded as sacred in India (Korom 2000: 181,203), structuring of old Mongolian stories with “holy water” (Bayer and Stuart 1992: 323,334).

Notwithstanding in ancient “Egyptians, Babylonians, water was considered to be divine and sacred beings were believed to inhabit lakes, streams, rivers and wells” (Altman 2002: 14). In addition, according to what is reported by Richard Wilk, water was exactly sacred among the

Mayas who lived in Central America, but it was also an essential element in the worldly life. The most sacred form of water among ancient Mayas was in the form of water dribbling from stalactites in caves. This water was the virtue of purity as an original, basic source which belongs to the nature (Hahn and Wilk 2012: 126,127). Today, women generally have two different roles which they still undertake in the southern Ryukyu island which belongs to Japan: One of them is the priestessness of “sacred groves”, the other one is the priestessness of sacred water ducts (Rekkum 2006).

On the other hand, the water’s being sacred confronts us also in Ancient Greek Mythology. Water Gods are born from water and there are many Greek myths about it. Poseidon³, whose Cretan - Mycenaean origins are clear, is the God of the sea, lake waters and earth events related to water (Agizza 2001: 123). Water also became Goddesses’ symbol of power with its existence in Ancient Chinese mythology (Irwin 1990: 53,68).

Many studies have been made about water in world mythology. One of them belongs to Lina Bugiene (1999) and the reflection of the mythical symbols of water on legends and the beliefs of people in Lithuania was emphasized in the study. Wolfram Laube emphasizes that water is in the center of the physical, social and spiritual life in North Ghana - among the local Kassena, Builsa and Nankara communities - as in the similar regions of the world. Hence, it was seen that much information about the water-related beliefs, norms, values and myths was found in the field research done. It was seen that water was associated with water spirits in the myths which are among the narratives about water and with natural water bodies which are as natural as rain in many spiritual beliefs and rituals (Hahn and Laube 2012: 152).

Nathaniel Altman (2002: 3), mentions the importance of water in his book named *The*

Spiritual Source of Life Sacred Water and he indicates these: “Water, divinities appear in the mythologies of many past and present cultures, including Grek, Hindu, Celtic, Maori and Native American. Connected primarily with sacred lakes, rivers, waterfalls, springs and wells, water itself is often depicted as a living substance that is the primary element on Earth.” A global study about water including the world of today was made under the name *People at the Well: Kinds, Usages and Meanings of Water in a Global Perspective* (2012). The meaning of water, its impact on the world in terms of socio-cultural aspects and within the frames of various topics such as anthropology, religion, spirituality, charm and economics was discussed with examples from the communities of today and that of earlier. It is emphasized that water is a social reality controlling the economy, political power and culture in the study. Water is the rhythm of daily life and rituals (Hahn and Cless 2012: 9, 23).

In some studies about water in world literature, the curative feature of water and beliefs in this feature are found. For example, sick children are soaked in Saint Mandran’s well three times in Cornwall/Britain. There are many curative fountains and rivers in France. Diseases are thrown into water in India. Water of Life, which collects all potential and productive powers in itself is the symbol of life; it heals in magical rituals; it creates birth after death in funerals; it makes the life endless; it makes people younger. In other

words, water is a magical substance (Eliade 2003: 196, 200). On the other hand, water takes life as it gives life and because of this reason people are afraid of it. Hence, in some narratives “water shores are not auspicious and they are haunted by supernatural powers” (Hart V. 1999: 173,198).

2. Among Turks

When the history of humanity is studied, inanimate beings of nature such as stones, caves, fire, stars, sun and plants and animals like forests, trees and wolves were regarded as sacred and each were regarded as “belief - cult” elements.

“Water” has become a cult within the cultural history among Turks. This belief is intertwined with such a strong connection that Turks have embraced this belief in new geographics they move to and they have even synthesized it with new cultures after Islam. Hence, it is possible to encounter the traces of this belief in Anatolia today, like as in other Turkic geographics. These facts can be indicated (shortly) if following the traces of this belief with a very wide topic from the periods before Islam to today within a very general frame is necessary: Oldest recordings about water cult in cultural history of Turkish belong to the period of Chous who captured China in 1050 B.C. Chous believe in sacred Earth - Water and Sky God and they present sacrifices and oblations (Çobanoğlu 1993: 288, 289, Eberhard 1942, 1947, Esin 1979: 81). It was reported that in the context of water cult, water was regarded as sacred and clothes etc. were not washed in the period of Hun Turks, in the sources (Çobanoğlu 1993: 290, Akpınar 1985: 34). It is known that old Oğuz Turks and Mongolians did not enter into water and they did not bathe because they regarded the water as sacred (İnan 1987: 493). According to what Çobanoğlu (1993: 290) narrated from Beşeliev (1935: 3476), Kurum Han washes his face and feet with sea water and he sprinkles water onto his soldiers for a magical cleaning before the siege of Istanbul in the period of Proto-Bulgarians.

It is reported that the Sky God arranges the sacred earth - and water in the Orkhon Inscriptions which belong to Göktürk period (Ergin 1991: 21). It is known that water was respected by Uighur Turks after the Göktürks. Hence, Turks, who met with Manichaeism by favour of Böğü Kağan, respected water as a requisition of this religion - but also because they were

familiar with it (Gömeç 2011: 86). In the (*Dictionnaire des Mythologies*) (II-2000: 1020), according to Turks and Mongols, water was a purity symbol that has been its most striking feature. The puddle (in Turkish “Köl İrkin”), was a symbol of great intelligence that kings/rulers were presumed have it.

The “owner of the water” is illustrated generally in the form of human and sometimes in the form of fish and they are divided into various groups such as rivers, streams and springs in the mythological imagination of Turks (Bayat 2007: 248). Many of the world’s mythologies teach that before creation, the world was covered with water. According to Turkish mythologies and epopes (Oguz 1998: 22, 25), the Turks, living called big lakes *Tengiz Deniz* (Ögel 1995: 467). The creation myth of the Turks states, “when there was nothing, only there was God Kayra Khan and endless sea. Moon, stars and earth had not been created yet. The universe consisted of only water” (Banarlı 1987: 12).

Water saw the face of God and it is regarded as sacred because of this reason in *Dede Korkut*, the book of epic folk stories of Oğuz Turks after Islam (Ergin 1989: 101). According to what Ö. Çobanoğlu (1993: 293) narrated from Radloff (1976: 215 - 221), “the earth-waters, which are among the essential elements making Siberian Shamanism, are known as all upper world gods making and protecting the humanity and keeping it alive.” It is reported that the Sakhas believe that every river and lake has a spirit. It is known that Kazakhs regard a tree, spring or a big rock as sacred and women who cannot have children visit these places and they sacrifice animals and they spend the night in these places (İnan 1991: 258).

Y. Kalafat indicates that people believed in the sacredness of water, prayed to the “Mother of Water” and they even had various family traditions about it among Crimean Turks (previously) (2002: 342). According to what J. P. Roux cited from Atkinson, the pair of sacred mountain - water was used among Bashkirs until recently (Roux 1999: 251).

According to what K. Türkan recited from N. Yugusheva (2001: 209) who is a shaman herself, the shaman addresses to the helpers of the god Ülgen before the wish prayers in Altays. If they are not strong enough, he prays to Ülgen. Because, every valley, mountain and river have spirits according to the people of Altay. Hence, water is not taken from the river after the sun

sets. If the water is going to be taken, it is taken very silently and from the direction the water flows. Meanwhile, prayers are said (2012: 137). Beliefs of sacred and magic water also exist among Uighur Turks (Akman 2002: 6). Water is the essence of life in the Turkish belief system (Türkmen 2013: 15-18).

Today, people of all religions visit the holy spring of Orthodox Greeks on the hill where Aya Yorgi Church is located in Büyükkada, İstanbul on April 23rd and 24th. They believe that the wishes will come true on these dates. They believe that the water of the holy spring is curative. This water is drunk and faces and hands are washed with it (Önal 2003: 99,124). A woman, who wants to have children, drinks water from the hands of a woman who gave birth to robust children, in the villages of İzmir and Manisa. In this belief, it is believed that the “magic power of fertility” will pass to the woman, who wants to give birth, via water (Türkmen 1991: 2). Epileptic patients benefit from the water of the “Büklü Ziyaret” in Pülümür/Doğanpınar village and cockeyed children benefit from the “Göz Pınarı” in Divriği for healing. It is believed that if water is poured in front of the door at the early hours in the morning the abundance of the house will increase, in the region of Urfa. The bride is always passed from a stream while she is being brought to her house in the vicinities of Bingöl and Tunceli. Thus, it is believed that the bride who comes to the house will be protected from the evil and bring the abundance to the house (Kalafat 1995: 54). “Door of a mosque is left ajar” or the water of the gutter of any fountain unleashed for a woman who has difficulty during birthingiving to give birth comfortably (Akman 2002: 9). The water has been a part of the beliefs and philosophy in Turkish people (Erdemir 2011: 822).

As it is seen in the examples above, Turks keep their beliefs about water before Islam in spite of geographics far from each other after Islam and they synthesize it with the new culture they gain.

II. Water-Related Tales in Muğla Region

Mysterious events about water and narratives about the graves at the streams in Muğla consist of personal experiences gained in person. Thus, it is possible to determine the genre of the narratives under the first two topics given below as “memorats” because they belong to reference people. Hence, according to

Ö. Çobanoğlu (2003: 21, 25), a memorat is described as “a story depending on a person who experiences a supernatural individual experience or told by someone who listened it from him. Memorats are generally dealt under the topic of legends. The distinctive feature of memorats from genres such as legends, epics and folk stories is their being “extraordinary memories that are lived.”

1. Water-Related Mysterious Events

According to a popular belief, all waters sleep one night every year. In Yeşilyurt, it is believed that sleeping water turns into gold. The father of one informant spent one night asleep on a mountain. While he was sleeping, he was awakened by a sound, later understood to be a person called “*Hidrellez⁴ Efendi*” (an immortal being with the power to grant wishes), because there were no footprints in the field where this person had walked. This was the night when the water on the mountain slept. Although the father had been informed by *Hidrellez Efendi* that the water was sleeping, he could not take any of it, so he did not have any gold.

Also in Yeşilyurt, in the house of the informant’s grand-mother, a stream was running. One night, the family did not hear it stream. Apparently, water fell asleep that night. They assumed that the water was sleeping and did not think of taking any of the water (RP10).

Some of these mysterious events survive in oral culture. In Koycegiz province of Muğla City in Turkey, a girl who had not been allowed to marry the boy she loves elopes. Her brother finds them and stabs her to death. On the night when the girl’s corpse was being washed, the place is lit by a divine light (RP12). In this story, water is associated with the murder of a girl who was an innocent. Another common belief about water is that within seven days the dead person comes back the place where his or her body was washed and leaves an eyelash in a cup of water. In the village of Dalaman/ Kayadibi, a woman dearly loved by the villagers suddenly died and her ghost visits the place where her corpse is washed. All her neighbors see her and become very afraid. Thinking that she has come back to leave her eyelash, they leave a cup full of water. The next day, foot steps are heard. The dead woman comes and leaves her eyelash (RP41).

According to a well-known belief, places around the water source are haunted (Yalılı 1991: 155). In Muğla/Yatagan – Bozuyuk Village, in the place where a stream called Köprübaşı runs, the informant's two sons see a fairy in the water (RP31). In Greek mythology, water fairies are called *nymphs*, and they are sacred virgins who appear as young girls. They are protective angels that wander on the grass, valley, around water sources and in the forest (Kozanoğlu 1994: 283). In “Dede Korkut,” Uzun Pinar is the place for fairies to rest (Ögel 1995: 360).

Again, in respect of a widespread belief, people who sit where dirty clothes or dishes are washed are paralyzed by mysterious forces. There is a fig tree (regarded as evil) behind the house of the person telling this story, and a small creek runs next to the tree. One day, a person sits under the tree as no dirty clothes are being washed there. Suddenly he hears a voice shouting “do not sit there.” He gets frightened and never goes there to sit again and never eats figs from that tree (RP2).

It is possible to encounter similar narratives in Anatolia apart from Muğla. Hence, a water-related narrative can be given in this way in the study *Türk Halk Kültüründe Memoratlar ve Halk İnançları (Memorats and Folk Beliefs in Turkish Folk Culture)* by Ö. Çobanoğlu: “Grandmother of the reference person finds a 25 kurush coin at the stream beside the garden of the house in Gençay ward of Tokat. The woman, who thinks that the waterman of the village has dropped the money, takes the money and she hides it under her pillow. However, she finds a 25 kurush coin again when she goes to the stream to fill water every morning. She hides the money to give to the waterman. However, she can never see the waterman. Hence, the money is collected and it increases. The grandmother shares this secret with the Lady Hodja but the day after, when she gets to the stream, she cannot find Money” (2003: 176,177).

In a narrative recited by P. N. Boratav, in the past (in Muğla), mermaids who came out of the sea and took the children of Koycegiz/Dogusbelen village away. They enslaved the children in their houses. Stories about these children are still told (1994: 52).

Of course there are many more events about the mysterious properties of water. On the basis of this information, it can be concluded that there is a mysterious, supernatural dimension of water in oral culture.

2. Stories about the Tombs of Saints at Water Sources

There are many stories about the tombs of the *evliya / eren* (saints) in Turks. According to Ögel, presence of a saint in every mountain or giving the names *Dede* (*grandfather*) or *Baba* (*father*) to the peaks of Toros Mountain Range (In Mediterranean Region) seem to be a continuation of “Ata” designation (Ögel 1995: 458). Hence, Önal (2003: 99) emphasizes that beliefs and rituals about the mountain cult before Islam leave their places to the *saint* cult in many places after Islam - like the Muğla region - in his study about this subject.

Some of the saints having tombs at the water sources are Yaran Dede (Kargacık/Milas- RP 22,23), Dambelin and Kusburnu Dedes (Milas/ Comakdag- RP 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26), Saint Tombs (Yatagan-RP 30, 31) and Saint’s Dining Table (Bodrum/Gundogan-RP 33). The common point of the information we have collected about these four tombs of saints is the proximity of a water source. RP 33, related an event in Bodrum/ Gündoğan. While he was going past the saints’ tombs with his friend, they saw lights blinking on the tombs and they also saw a dining table on the one side of the cistern next to the tombs and another one half on the other side. Another example is Türbe Dede. A young man was martyred during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent (16th century). Two tombs are built, one on the spot where the head of this young man had fallen and the other on the spot where his body had fallen. A *derviş* (holy person) was appointed to oversee the tombs. This *derviş* is believed to have supernatural powers. A towel tied around the tomb was found to be wet in the morning. The glass filled in the evening was found empty in the morning (Filizok 1973: 185).

In conclusion, the local people revere these tombs and believe that the tombs have supernatural powers. Holy people are associated with water. There is a water pot by the tomb of almost every Turk, proving that the Turks view the water blessing life. These pots are never allowed to stand empty.

3. Waters That Became Legendary

Legends are imaginary stories, which believed to be true, about supernatural creatures and occurrences. While B. Seyidoğlu emphasizes that legends have “sacred, extraordinary” features (1985: 8), S. Sakaoglu indicates that legends depend on a place and time and they are accepted as really happened but

their narrators and analogues can be seen in other nations (1992: 9, 24). On the other hand, it is possible to see the animistic structure of thought coming from old ages to today. Legends are the reflections of oral culture and history and geography, shortly lifestyles, from the human mind.

3. 1. The Pisili Hodja Legend: This story is about Pisili Hodja Abdilvahap Efendi, who hosted Suleiman the Magnificent when his troops were traveling to invade the Rhodes island in Aegan Sea. According to this legend, messengers from the army come to the village of Kafaca with the news that Suleiman the Magnificent and his troops were coming. This news is relayed to Pisili Abdülvahap Efendi. When the people go him to tell the news, (which he knows already) they find him cooking rice. He says, “I will welcome them.” Suleiman and his army come to the place. At the same time the hodja is waiting for them with ayran (a kind of drink made by mixing yogurt with water) and horse food. There is nothing left for the last horse, so, it complains to the hodja. The hodja says there is a shortage of crop because someone has taken more than his share. What the hodja says is right and so all horses become full up. When it is time to leave, Suleiman says “hodja we are thirsty.” The Hodja prays and hits the ground three times with a stick⁵. Suddenly water squirts out. Suleiman shouts “Hodja you will drown us.” When the hodja told “*kosul*” (get smaller), the water got smaller. Today this water runs with the same speed both in winter and in summer and its name comes from this legend (RP10).

3. 2. Göcük Water: Years ago, (in Yatağan/ village of Bozarmut) a caravan with camels stops in a place called Göcük. The caravaner sleeps under a tree. He sees a man with grey beard in his dream. There is a stream of water running next to the place where the man is sleeping. The grey-bearded man says “if you slaughter one of the camels and let its blood flow into the stream, this stream will never stop running.” The man wakes up and sets off. He does not slaughter a camel, and while traveling, he sees one of the camels being cracked like a water jug. The man regrets not having slaughtered a camel. The ground where the camel cracked is still cracked (Gocuk). Water started flowing from this crack (Önal 2005: 188,189).

In Muğla, besides the legends above, information about water is found in the legend told about the saint named Çiçek Baba. Hence, in the narrative, Çiçek Baba hits the ground with his stick and he says “cry” and water comes

out of the ground. Thereon, the name of the village where the water comes out of the ground remains as “Ağla (cry)⁶”.

In these legends, we see water being used as the name of a place and person.

III. Water-Related General Beliefs in the Oral Culture of Mugla-Turkey Region

People’s contact with the water has rendered it an inevitable part of the oral culture. Water has become a belief - cult within the oral history and culture - as it is indicated above - from ancient Turks to today. Thus, the following information compiled from Muğla and its region are extensions of these beliefs as cultural heritages. On the other hand, to divide the compiled information obtained for this part into two parts as “Examples for sustaining the traces of the water cult before Islam today” and “Examples for sustaining the traces of the water cult before Islam today with Islamic influence” and to give them in this way will be a more correct approach, in our opinion.

1. Examples for Sustaining the Traces of the Water Cult Before Islam Today

Anthropologists believe that, mythical depictions of water had both real and symbolic meaning (Altman 2002: 12). The Elixir of Life⁷, in which the water’s feature of giving life is given a meaning as the water of immortality, elixir of life and water of life, is a concept found in all mythologies of the world. The meaning of “endless” is given to the water’s feature of giving life, in this concept. The concept of “endless life provided by the plant in the water” is found in the Epic of Gilgamesh which is one of the oldest epics known, dating back to 3000-2000 B.C. (Ocak 1988: 2). It is possible to see the semibolic extension of water’s being the source of endless life taking the form of “giving life” in the practice of “water passed through reverse sieve⁸”, in Dalaman. We see that the magic power of the water is unified in the object of “sieve” and the action of “holding it reverse” in this practice which confronts us in paradoxical way. Hence, In Dalaman, Milas and Ula towns of Mugla a person who gets very frightened is given water passed through a reverse sieve on it to save him (RP 9, 13, 27, 36, 37). In particular, in Dalaman when a person is bitten by a dog, the same practice is performed. On the basis of this practice lies the concern that the person may die if he is not given this water.

The concept of “arı su” (pure water) is seen in the 16th century Ottoman documents. “If any fountain is polluted with human dirt, it runs out of water” (Ögel 1995: 360). In the same way, some Finns – Ugurs believed that polluting or disrespecting water led to illness (Eliade 2003: 201). A stream was not polluted in Eastern Anatolia, like among Yakut Turks (Kalafat

1995: 54). In Muğla / Ortaca, people do not spit into water in order not to pollute it (RP2). In Yatagan/Pınarbasi, it is believed that if a bride passes over dirty water coming from a place where dishes are washed, she will be “*subanlı* (infertile)” (RP31).

On the other hand, these are practices concerning the use of water as a source of healing⁹ on humans and animals: In Yatağan/Pınarbaşı village, the sick child is soaked in water as cold as ice for him to get well (RP30). In Muğla, when cows become sick, their feed is mixed with sacred water (RP 2, 32, 34, 38). There are many healing waters and fountains in

Eastern Anatolia (Kalafat 1995: 55). A. Gökbel emphasizes that beliefs about curative/healing waters were generally found among all Varsak Turkomans (2007: 179).

In some villages, flower petals are dipped into water and this water given to children to drink (RP 9, 14, 15, 24). Of course when a beautiful flower looks healthy. People want to see their precious children attractive and healthy (RP 9, 14, 15, 24).

During a hailstorm, putting a hailstone into mouth of a young girl will prevent the hail from destroying crops. If the same practice is performed in every household, the hail will stop (RP11). A practice similar to it is recorded this way in Elazığ: “The first daughter of the family is made a piece of hail eat or she is made a piece of hail cut, for the hail to stop” (Çobanoğlu 1993: 295, Kalafat 1995: 45).” It is also possible to encounter beliefs about some animals and water in Muğla today. In Yatagan/Bozuyuk Village, a white stork is a sign of drought and a black stork is indication sign of rain (RP30, 31).

2. Examples for Sustaining the Traces of the Water Cult Before Islam Today with Islamic Influence

A few beliefs about water showing that people are afraid of the supernatural powers. Hot water is not spill where dishes are washed, especially at nights.

Invocation and lukewarm water should be used to prevent the person using it from becoming paralyzed (RP3). According to another belief, sides of creek, stream, and fountains and sinks are the houses of genie and Satan. Particularly at night and when there are not many people, water sources should be avoided. People should not walk alone around such places without saying the name of the God (RP 1, 8, 10, 28, 29, 35).

Turks believe that placing a fountain in a place where there is no water is charity.

These fountains are called “sebil, hayrat.” In Mugla/Yesilyurt, in places like fields where there is not a fountain, water is left in large earthenware jars (RP 10, 39, 40). It is possible to see the “Sebil” (Public Fountain) culture in many places in Anatolia today.

On the other hand, throwing some objects into water is an extension of the old beliefs of Turks. For example, in the past, Bashkirs plucked a thread from their clothes and they threw it into the water if they wanted to bathe in a lake or sea for the first time (İnan 1987: 492). In Yatağan, washing clothes on Friday (that is believed to be holy day) is thought to bring bad luck. If it is done because of an obligation, a metal object should be put into water (RP30, 31).

Like all Turks, people living in Mugla pour water behind a person who is going away in the hope of a safe return. In Dalaman/Mugla water is poured behind someone who is leaving on a trip they pray to god for the person to go with wetness and not to come with drought (RP5). Water is poured to the feet of someone, who returns from a journey late, for him to return from the next journey early, among Varsaks (Gökbel 2007: 181).

At the same time, these can be exemplified for the synthesizing of the Zamzam water which is regarded as sacred by Muslims with the beliefs about water before Islam: In the evening of *Hidrellez*, earthenware jugs are filled with water and left outside. This water is drunk for curative purposes in Muğla (Özic 2000: 160). In Ortaca this water is believed to be Zemzem water (RP 4, 7). The first amount of water taken from a fountain or well at *Hidrellez* day is believed to be a source of blessing. It is also called Zemzem water (RP 16). A belief which is related to another (Islam) religion is to bring water from the fountain of a saint to a sick person (RP 9). In Muğla/

Yesilyurt, it is believed that water taken from a fountain of a saint before dawn is Zemzem water (RP 11).

Beside all of them, the belief about water and animals in Muğla/Dalaman is unified with Kaaba, the sacred place. For example, if a cat turns towards Kaaba and cleans itself, this is believed to be an indication of the end of drought and beginning of rainy season (RP 5,6, 42).

Conclusion

Water has been the symbol of mainly the sacred, the natural, cleanliness, purity, abundance, death and life and even the endless life among Turks, just like the other nations, since old ages. The water – related narratives and beliefs, which have a wide coverage in the oral history in Muğla and its region, in the memories or minds of reference people, were first written down with this article and their protection was provided. In the continuation, it was observed that water was kept alive as a culture code among people with the important messages it carried from the periods before Islam to today. Concordantly, the features ascertained from the narratives and beliefs about water determined in Muğla can be shortly expressed this way: Water is a mysterious, sacred, healing being hosting supernatural powers, providing magic powers for saints, which is the subject of various memorats, which becomes a legend, which is respected and in this sense carefully abstained from polluting, which is not auspicious at night, which prevents passengers from return with drought, which is associated with rain by some animals, which heals infertile women and in consideration of all these information, - whose power of the feature of giving life on magical effect as a pure element is known - it is a universal being clad in the national costume of Turks but known to be mainly sacred among other nations and communities. Thus, it was observed that, at the heart of the water-related narratives and beliefs, water was regarded as a living and conscious being, and that water undertaking a duty of reflection like association or projection was attached to an unquestionable belief that water can answer to the intent of the person.

Endnotes

- ¹ Cultural accretions containing the narratives or beliefs of the source people about water is taken to the related parts of the article under reference person numbers (for example RP:1) also indicating the places they live.

- 2 “Zamzam Water”: Sacred water coming from a well near the most sacred structure; Kâbe, in Islam. The Well of Zamzam or the Zemzem Well is a Well located within the Masjid al Haram in Mecca, 20 meters east of the Kaaba the holiest place in Islam. According to Islamic belief, it was a miraculously-generated source of water from God, which began thousands of years ago when Ibrahim’s infant son Ismael was thirsty and kept crying for water and was kicking at the ground when water gushed out (Mehmet Mahfuz Ata (2013), “Zemzem Suyu ve Özellikleri”/ “Zamzam water and Features”, *EKEV Akademi Dergisi*, Yıl 17, S. 56. pp. 375-398. www.ekevakademi.org/DergiPdfDetay.aspx?ID=80. Erişim Tarihi: 20. 04. 2015).
- 3 *Poseidon*: One of the sea gods in ancient Greek mythology, he is the god of raucous thunders. For further information see: Azra Erhat (1978), *Mitoloji Sözlüğü*. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, p. 274, 275.
- 4 *Hidrellez*: Hızır- İlyas or Hızır is called on for help when all the hopes and possibilities are lost, according to Anatolian belief. For further information see: A. Y. Ocak (2007), *İslâm –Türk İnançlarında Hızır yahut Hızır-İlyas Kültü*. İstanbul: Kabalcı Yayınları.
- 5 The first examples for the legends about “taking water out of the ground” which happened in Anatolia were found in the Bible, according to A. Y. Ocak (Ocak 2007: 274/For the examples of Ocak, see: 274).
- 6 The article “Dağ Kültü, Eren Kültü ve Şenliklerinin Muğla’daki Yansımaları” (Reflections of the Mountain Cult, the Cult of Saints and the Festivals of Saints in Muğla) by M. Naci Önal (2003: 99-125) can be consulted for the continuation of Ağla-Çiçek Baba, one of the legends about water’s becoming the name of a place in Muğla.
- 7 *Ab-ı Hayat*: Elixir of life or water of immortality: A tasty and sweet water whose drops bless life. People who drank it became immortal (Pala 1989: 15,35).
- 8 There is the desire for reversing a situation which happens that moment at the origins of actions such as “wearing, holding or turning” an object reverse. It is possible to encounter this kind of practices from rain prayer practices to funerals in Turkish cultural history and today, still in Anatolia.

- ⁹ In Central Asia, like all of the nations of the world, majority of sacred places have curative significance. “They are visited by people who have different physical and spiritual illnesses and ask for healing. These sacred places usually have such attributes as water, trees, stone and pilgrims believe they can heal. This kind of sacred place is widespread. For example, in Rabkan village of the Fergana region there is a sacred place named Buston-buva which has a tree, people say it heals eye illnesses and futility. In Kuk-terak-buva in Kazakhstan pilgrims are healed of bronchitis and asthma by the help of water and 11 poplars, in the Navoi region there is clay, which heals skin problems” (Kalanov and Alanso 2008: 182).

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List of References Person (RP)

<u>No</u>	<u>Surname-Name</u>	<u>Birth of Age</u>	<u>Educ. Backg.</u>	<u>Profession</u>	<u>Address</u>
RP1	YAYMAN, Sevim	40	Pr. School	Housewife	Kötekli/Muğla
RP2	ŞAHİN, Güler	48	Sec. School	Housewife	Ortaca/Muğla
RP3	AYSEL, Tevfik	50	Pr. School	Librarian	Ortaca/Muğla
RP4	İZMİR, Gülizar	80	not to be lit.	Retired	Ortaca/Muğla
RP5	ÇOBAN, Güllü	74	not to be lit.	Housewife	Atakent/Dalaman
RP6	TURGUT, Nüziye	67	Pr. School	Housewife	Atakent/ Dalaman
RP7	BAYKAL, Ayşe	67	Pr. School	Housewife	Ortaca/Muğla
RP8	ÇETİNER, Durgül	35	High School	Housewife	Kötekli/Muğla
RP9	TURHAN, Neriman	56	Pr. School	Housewife	Atakent/Dalaman
RP10	ALTINSOY, Nazik	44	University	Educationist	Yeşilyurt/Muğla
RP11	YILDIRIM, Medine	86	86 not to be lit.	Housewife	Yeşilyurt/Muğla
RP12	GEZGİN, Fatma	70	not to be lit.	Housewife	Kırcağız/Milas
RP13	SERT, Rukiye	75	Pr. School	Housewife	Kırcağız/Milas
RP14	GÜNGÖRMÜŞ, Sahibe	40	Pr. School	Housewife	Kargıcak/Milas
RP18	YALÇIN, Gülsun	78	not to be lit.	Housewife	Kargıcak/Milas
RP16	AYAR, Fatma	84	not to be lit.	Housewife	Kargıcak/Milas
RP17	YILDIRIM, Hasan	51	High School	Educationist	Çomakdağ/Milas
RP18	ÇEMREK, Mustafa	72	Pr. School	Farmer	Çomakdağ/Milas
RP19	KIR, Hüseyin	87	Pr. School	Farmer	Çomakdağ/Milas
RP20	ERTUĞRUL, Mustafa	77	Pr. School	Farmer	Çomakdağ/Milas
RP21	KESKİNATEŞ, Nahit	57	Pr. School	Farmer	Köyceğiz/Muğla
RP22	YILMAZ, Mehmet	66	Pr. School	Farmer	Çomakdağ/Milas
RP23	KÜÇÜK, Selahaddin	65	Pr. School	Farmer	Çomakdağ/Milas
RP24	ZENCİR, Hatice	57	Pr. School	Housewife	Çomakdağ/Milas
RP25	KARABIYIK, Ayşen	46	Pr. School	Housewife	Çomakdağ/Milas
RP 26	USTA, Meryem	72	not to be lit.	Housewife	Çomakdağ/Milas
RP27	DİRGİN, Ayşe	75	not to be lit.	Housewife	Dibekdere/Milas
RP28	BİLGİN, Ayşe	78	Pr. School	Housewife	Bozüyük/Yatağan
RP29	SARAÇ, Gülayşe	73	Pr. School	Housewife	Bozüyük/Yatağan
RP30	SEPETÇİ, Hanife	42	Sec. School	Housewife	Bozüyük/Yatağan

RP31	YILMAZSOY, Nişan	40	Pr. School	Housewife	Bozüyük/Yatağan
RP32	OKYAY, Fatma	51	Pr. School	Housewife	Gündoğan/Bodrum
RP33	AKBAŞ, Fatma	59	Pr. School	Housewife	Gündoğan/Bodrum
RP34	ERDOĞAN, Gülper	44	Pr. School	Housewife	Gündoğan/Bodrum
RP35	ARKUN, Niyase	64	not to be lit.	Housewife	Yalıkavak/Bodrum
RP36	ŞEKER, Sıdıka	90	not to be lit.	Housewife	Ula/Muğla
RP37	CİVELEK, Tennur	65	Pr. School	Housewife	Ula/Muğla
RP38	TOMAŞ, Dudu	67	not to be lit.	Housewife	Göcek/Fethiye
RP39	UGAN, Fahrettin	75	Pr. School	Retired	Göcek/Fethiye
RP40	PARÇA, Ümmügülsüm	67	not to be lit.	Housewife	Göcek/Fethiye
RP41	MUSLU, Şennur	47	Pr. School	Housewife	Dalaman/Muğla
RP42	TURHAN, Serpil	30	University	Accountant	Dalaman/Muğla

Abbreviations

RP: reference person

Educ. Backg: Educational Background

Pr. School: Primary school

Sec. School: Secondary school

not to be lit. : Not to be literature

Türkiye/Muğla Yöresinde Suyla İlgili Anlatılar ve İnançlar

Sibel Turhan Tuna*

Öz

Sözlü kültürün en önemli temalarından birisi olan su, gündelik yaşam için elzemdir. Çeşitli milletlerde su, bazen kutsal, gizemli bir varlık olarak görülür, tüm pislikleri ve kötülükleri temizler, bazen de yıkıcıdır. Bu çalışmada, Türkiye'nin Muğla bölgesinde, henüz yazıya geçirilmemiş, fakat sözlü kültürde önemli bir yer tutan, kaynak şahısların hafızalarında arşivlenen, suyla ilgili anlatılar ve inançlar ele alınmaktadır. Çalışma, üç ana başlık altında incelenmektedir. İlk bölümde, suya kültür bağlamında -dünyada ve Türklerde olmak üzere- genel bir bakış yapılmıştır. İkinci bölümde, Muğla bölgesinde, yaşanmış gizemli olaylar, subaşlarındaki erenlerin türbeleri ve ef-saneleşmiş suları kapsayan suyla ilgili anlatılar üzerinde durulmuştur. Son bölümde ise Muğla bölgesinde, sözlü kültürde, suyla ilgili genel inançlara değinilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Su, su kültü, sözlü kültür, anlatılar, inançlar

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Рассказы и поверья, связанные с водой, в районе Мугла/Турция

Сибель Турхан Туна*

Аннотация

Вода-одна из самых важных тем в устной культуре, необходимая для выживания, для ежедневной жизни. У разных народов, иногда она представляется священной и мистической сущностью, которая очищает всю грязь и зло, а иногда она сама-разрушительна. Эта статья изучает рассказы и поверья, связанные с водой, взятые из воспоминаний и преданий людей, эти рассказы пришли не в письменной форме, но имеют большую роль в устной культуре района Мугла в Турции. Это исследование, в основе которого метод компиляции, разделяется на 3 части. В первой, обзор водной стихии делается в контексте культуры. Во-второй описываются до сих пор встречающиеся связанные с водой загадочные явление и легенды, истории, сказки о могилах святых у водных источников. В третьей части описаны общие поверья о воде в устной культуре района Мугла.

Ключевые слова

вода, культ воды, устная культура, сказки, легенды

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