Rites Aquatic: The Role of Water in the Constructions and Perceptions of Sacred Landscapes in Hittite Anatolia[1]

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Introduction

The Hittite archives comprise around 30,000 cuneiform tablets and fragments that cover a period of almost 500 years. They trace the history of the Hittite polity from its formation around 1650 BCE in the area within the bend of the Kızılırmak River with Hattusa at its center, through its transformation into an empire whose presence and control went well beyond its core territory, to its demise in ca. 1190 BCE.[2] The majority of texts found at Hattusa and other provincial centers pertain to Hittite religion. These texts include hymns and prayers, rituals, cult inventories, divination theory and practice, and a staggering number of festival texts that alone amount to about 40% of the Hittite archives.[3] The abundance and variety of Hittite religious documentation is unparalleled in the broader chronological and regional context of the ancient Near East during the Late Bronze Age, allowing us to study diverse aspects of religion in Late Bronze Age or "Hittite" Anatolia.[4]

One can hardly overstate the importance of water in the Hittite world and Hittite cult.[5]

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2 For recent treatments of Hittite history, see Stefano de Martino, "Hatti: From Regional Polity to Empire," in *Handbook Hittite Empire: Power Structures*, ed. Stefano de Martino (Boston, Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg), 205–70; and Alvise Matessi, "History, Society, and Culture in Anatolia and Neighboring Regions during the Hittite Period (Ca. 1650–1190 BCE)," in *Contacts of Languages and Peoples in the Hittite and Post-Hittite World*, eds. Federico Giusfredi, Alvise Matessi, and Valerio Pisaniello, vol. 1, *The Bronze Age and Hatti* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2023), 108–58.

3 Daniel Schwemer, "Quality Assurance Managers at Work: The Hittite Festival Tradition," in *Liturgie order Literatur: Die Kultrituale der Hethiter im transkulturellen Vergleich,* ed. Gerfrid G. W. Müller (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016), 12, n. 7. On the nature and composition of the Hittite archives, see Theo van den Hout, *A History of Hittite Literacy: Writing and Reading in Late-Bronze-Age Anatolia (1650–1200 BC)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); and Jörg Klinger, "The Hittite Writing Traditions of Cuneiform Documents," in *Handbook Hittite Empire: Power Structures*, ed. Stefano de Martino (Boston, Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg), 121–39.

4 In the following, unless I state otherwise, I will use the terms "Hittite" and "Hittite Anatolia" in reference to the Late Bronze Age polity centered in Hattusa and the regions and periods in which the Hittite polity was active. Though the Hittite archives were compiled and produced by a central, elite minority, they probably represent, at least to some extent, the worldviews, perceptions, and cult practices of the culturally diverse Anatolian communities who were the subjects, neighbors, or clients of the Hittite state. For the use of the terms "Hittite," "Hittites," "Anatolia," and "Anatolians," see van den Hout, *History of Hittite Literacy,* 8.

5 For the similarly central role of water in Roman religion, see Fransisco Marco Simón, "Monumentalisation of Watery Cults in Tarraconensis and Lusitania," in *Sacred Landscapes in Antiquity: Creation, Manipulation, Transformation,* eds. Ralph Häussler and Gian Franco Chiai (Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2020), 133.

This life-sustaining, cathartic, therapeutic, and conductive substance is pervasive in both the textual and archaeological records. A rich and diverse array of texts bear witness to the sundry roles of the aquatic element in the Hittite cult (i.e., as site, ingredient, conduit, or agent), as well as in how Anatolian communities perceived, constructed, and interacted with their landscapes. The archaeological record similarly presents us with ample documentation of aquatic components of sacred landscapes in both urban and extra-urban settings. The uses and meanings of water, particularly in cultic contexts, have befittingly generated a substantial body of scholarship, especially in the last few decades.[6]

Landscape—both as a unit of analysis and a theoretical framework—has similarly featured prominently in recent research on Hittite Anatolia.[7] Within this body of scholarship, several contributions have concentrated on symbolic and sacred landscapes, perusing textual and/or archaeological data ranging from landscape monuments (such as sacred pools or monumental rock reliefs) to mythological compositions or festival texts. Typically, these studies either focus on "sacred places" in a general sense[8] or investigate particular festivals or cult places/centers.[9] In contrast, less has been written on the perceptions, constructions, experiences, or representations of sacred landscapes.[10]

6 For references to most recent literature, see N. İlgi Gerçek, "Rivers and River Cults in Hittite Anatolia," in *Cult, Temple, Sacred Places: Cult Practices and Cult Spaces*, StBoT 66, eds. Susanne Görke and Charles W. Steitler (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2020), 254, n. 2. For the role of the sea in the Hittite cult, see Gary Beckman, "The Sea! The Sea! A Rite from the South of Anatolia (CTH 719)," in *Saeculum: Gedenkschrift für Heinrich Otten anlässlich seines 100. Geburtstags*, StBoT 58, eds. Andreas Müller-Karpe, Elisabeth Rieken, and Walter Sommerfeld (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015), 15–16; and Sevgül Çilingir Cesur and Michele Cammarosano, "Hitit Büyü Ritüellerinde Deniz," in *Hititlerden Günümüze Anadolu'da Dini Törenler ve Tören Mekânları*, ed. İlknur Taş (İstanbul: Ege Yayınları, 2020), with references to earlier literature.

7 For an overview of landscape research on ancient Anatolia (with references to earlier literature), see Ömür Harmanşah et al., "The Archaeology of Hittite Landscapes," *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology & Heritage Studies* 10, no. 1 (2022): 2–6. See also, Michele Massa et al., "A Landscape-Oriented Approach to Urbanisation and Early State Formation in the Konya and Karaman Plains, Turkey," *Anatolian Studies* 70 (2020): 45–75; Alvise Matessi, "The Making of Hittite Imperial Landscapes: Territoriality and Balance of Power in South-Central Anatolia during the Late Bronze Age," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History* 3 (2016): 117–62.

8 Gary Beckman, "Intrinsic and Constructed Sacred Space in Hittite Anatolia," in *Heaven on Earth: Temples, Ritual, and Cosmic Symbolism in the Ancient World. Papers from the Oriental Institute Seminar Held at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago 2–3 March 2012*, ed. Deena Ragavan, OIS 9 (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2013), 153–73; and Susanne Görke, "Hints at Temple Topography and Cosmic Geography from Hittite Sources," in *Heaven on Earth: Temples, Ritual, and Cosmic Symbolism in the Ancient World. Papers from the Oriental Institute Seminar Held at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago 2–3 March 2012*, ed. Deena Ragavan, OIS 9 (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2013), 41–54.

9 See, for instance, the contributions to Anacleto D'Agostino, Valentina Orsi, and Giulia Torri, eds., *Sacred Landscapes of Hittites and Luwians: Proceedings of the International Conference in Honour of Franca Pecchioli Daddi, Florence, February 6th–8th 2014* (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2015); and Susanne Görke and Charles W. Steitler, eds., *Cult, Temple, Sacred Places: Cult Practices and Cult Spaces*, StBoT 66 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2020).

10 But see, e.g., Romina Della Casa, "Symbolic Representation of the Sacred Space/Landscape in the Telipinu Myth," in *Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Hittitology (Warsaw, Poland, September 5–9, 2011)*, eds. Piotr Taracha and Magdalena Kapeluś (Warsaw: Agade, 2014), 263–76; Romina Della Casa, "Hittite Symbolic Landscapes: An Analysis from the Standing Point of Myths," in *IX. Uluslararası Hititoloji Kongresi Bildirileri, Çorum 08–14 Eylül 2014*, ed. Aygül Süel (Çorum: Çorum Valiliği İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü Yayınları, 2019), 211–36; Romina Della Casa, "A Problem of Meaning: Variations in Hittite Landscape as Narrated in the Sun-god's *mugawar* (CTH 323)," in *Hrozný and Hittite: The First Hundred Years. Proceedings of the International Conference Held at Charles University Prague, 11–14 November 2015*, eds. Roland I. Kim, Jana Mynářová, and Peter Pavúk (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 484–98; Ömür Harmanşah, *Place, Memory, and Healing: An Archaeology of Anatolian Rock Monuments* (London: Routledge, 2015); Ömür Harmanşah, ed., *Of Rocks and Water: Towards and Archaeology of Place* (Oxford and Oakville: Oxbow Books, 2014).

Combining these two avenues of research on the aquatic element and sacred landscapes, the present study investigates the meanings and roles of water and bodies of water such as rivers, springs, creeks, and ponds in the constructions and perceptions of sacred and ritual landscapes in Hittite Anatolia, as evidenced in the Hittite textual record. It will start out with a discussion of the analytical terms and concepts that frame the investigation and how these, in turn, relate to emic terms and concepts attested in the textual record. It will then turn to the agency and roles of water as the medium or substance though which humans constructed, transformed, and interacted with sacred landscapes.

Terms and Definitions

The present investigation requires us to engage with complex concepts, each with its own history of scholarly reflection and debate. The first concept—and our main analytical unit—is *landscape*. In current geographical and anthropological usage, the term landscape is distinguished from related concepts such as environment, nature, geography, or topography mainly through its focus on the subjective experience of the individual; landscapes, in other words, are constructed, perceived, and transformed by the people who dwell in them.[11] A landscape is more than the sum of its constitutive features, it "gathers"[12] meaning through the associations and actions of the individuals or groups that behold them.[13] The construction of a landscape is neither a singular event, nor a one-sided undertaking; landscapes should instead be viewed as ongoing processes generated by the mutually-structuring interactions between humans and their environment in which both sides have agency.[14]

Sacred landscapes, in the same vein, are to be understood as cultural constructs, in that they refer to a particular way of perceiving and interacting with the landscape, though they are at the same time part of the natural environment and have physical characteristics.[15] The landscape, with its natural and human-made features, is transformed into a *sacred* landscape through human perceptions, experiences, and actions that are "particularly of a spiritual or religious nature."[16] These encompass both intangible elements, such as the symbols, stories, and myths attached to particular places, or tangible ones, such as performances and physical constructions. Most pertinent to the present discussion is the description of *sacred landscape* by Kathryn Reese-Taylor, from her investigation of Mesoamerican sacred places and landscapes:

11 D. W. Meinig, "The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene," in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, eds. D. W. Meinig and John Brinckerhoff Jackson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 1.

12 Christopher Tilley and Kate Cameron-Daum, "The Anthropology of Landscape: Materiality, Embodiment, Contestation and Emotion," in *Anthropology of Landscape: The Extraordinary in the Ordinary*, eds. Christopher Tilley and Kate Cameron-Daum (London: UCL Press, 2017), 20, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1mtz542.7. It is worthwhile to quote the entire passage: "Landscapes gather…topographies, geologies, plants and animals, persons and their biographies, social and political relationships, material things and monuments, dreams and emotions, discourses and representations and academic disciplines through which they are studied. So landscapes are mutable, holistic in character, ever-changing, always in the process of being and becoming."

13 Meinig, "The Beholding Eye," 1.

14 Tilley and Cameron-Daum, "The Anthropology of Landscape," 20.

15 Ralph Häussler and Gian Franco Chiai, "Interpreting Sacred Landscapes: A Cross-cultural Approach," in *Sacred Landscapes in Antiquity: Creation, Manipulation, Transformation,* eds. Ralph Häussler and Gian Franco Chiai (Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2020), 1, 3; Katharina Zinn, "Creating and Conserving Sacred Landscapes: Abydos and Amarna – Keeping the Spirit Alive?," in *Sacred Landscapes in Antiquity: Creation, Manipulation, Transformation,* eds. Ralph Häussler and Gian Franco Chiai (Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2020), 298.

16 Kathryn Reese-Taylor, "Sacred Places and Sacred Landscapes," in *The Oxford Handbook of Mesoamerican Archaeology*, ed. Deborah L. Nichols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 752–64, https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195390933.001.0001. Reese-Taylor's definition, which places more emphasis on "action" has been modified here to also accommodate "perception."

> A sacred landscape is a temporal and spatial fabric spread over a geographic region, unifying all the rituals conducted at the various sacred places within a narrative framework.[17]

The present discussion will also refer to *ritual landscape* as a more specific analytical unit, to highlight the role of ritual activities in the construction of sacred landscapes. Ritual landscape, in this context, may be viewed as a type of *taskscape*, namely, a space created by repeated and related human activities.[18]

Past sacred and ritual landscapes can be studied through archaeologically detectable material remains, such as monuments, objects, or the landscape itself, as well as through the symbolic meanings embedded in the landscape, which we may trace in the textual record.[19] Our task, then, is to try to extract from the written record ways of seeing, imagining, and engaging with the sacred and ritual of Hittite Anatolia, as its inhabitants did. To this end, let us turn first to the question of whether these terms and analytical concepts find correlates in *emic* (or native) terms and descriptions.

Emic Terms and Concepts

The Hittite archives present us with a bewildering number and variety of terms that refer to water and bodies of water, in Hittite as well as the other languages attested in the Hittite archives. They include natural features of the topography (such as rivers, springs, lakes, or the sea), human constructed water installations (such as fountains, dams, and canals), as well as nouns, adjectives, and verbs that classify or describe the movements of water or the features of aquatic ecosystems. To name some of the most significant terms: *wātar* 'water'; *aruna-* 'sea'; *ḫapa-*, *ḫapa-/i-* (Luw.), *šiya-* (Hurr.), *ḫapinna-*, *arša(r)šur-* 'river, stream'; *wappu-* 'riverbank'; *luli-*, *wattaru-*, *altanni-*, *šak(k)uni-*, *tarman(a)-* (Hurr.), *wattanni-*, *šarunta/i-* (Luw.), *ištappeššar* 'spring, lake, pond, fountain'; ^{d}KASKAL.KUR (literally 'divine earth road') 'underground river or stream'; *ḫaršummar*, *ḫaršar*, *tarnaluli-* 'headwaters; *aršanu-* 'flow, current'. Both the unparalleled richness of the terminology and the need for a systematic and comprehensive study have been noted in previous scholarship.[20]

Tracing the concept of *landscape* in Hittite sources requires more interpretive effort on our part. The Hittite language, or other languages attested in the Hittite archives, do not seem to have had terms or phrases that precisely denote *landscape* or *sacred landscape*.[21] Words such as *utne* 'land', *peda* 'place', or *gimra-* 'outdoors' have broad semantic ranges and can denote different concepts depending on their contexts. *utne,* for instance, can denote 'polity', 'territory', 'region', 'countryside'. *peda* may be understood as 'place', 'location', 'posi-

17 Reese-Taylor, "Sacred Places," 752.

18 Tim Ingold, "The Temporality of the Landscape," *World Archaeology* 25, no. 2 (1993): 158. In Ingold's description, "tasks are constitutive acts of dwelling" and may be "defined as any practical operation, carried out by a skilled agent in an environment, as part of his or her normal business of life." A taskscape, in turn, is "an array of related activities" and is composed of "the entire ensemble of tasks, in their mutual interlocking."

19 Zinn, "Creating and Conserving Sacred Landscapes," 298–99.

20 Gerçek, "Rivers and River Cults," 255–56; Alice Mouton, "Water and the Gods: Ponds and Fountains in the Hittite State Cult According to Hittite Textual Evidence," *Ash-Sharq* 2 (2018): 112; Charles W. Steitler, "Sacred Springs, Spring Sanctuaries and Spring-deities in Hittite Religion" in *Natur und Kult in Anatolien: Viertes Wissenschaftliches Netzwerk an der Abteilung Istanbul des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, eds. Benjamin Engels, Sabine Huy, and Charles W. Steitler, Byzas 24 (İstanbul: Ege Yayınları), 1–25; Ahmet Ünal, *Hitite and Hurrian Tablets from Ortaköy (Çorum), Central Turkey: With Two Excursuses on the "Man of the Storm God" and a Full Edition of KBo 23.27* (İstanbul: Simurg, 1998), 85.

21 A similar situation has been noted also for other contexts such as Assyria, Egypt, or ancient Greece or Rome, as noted by Häussler and Chiai, "Interpreting Sacred Landscapes," 4; and Ann Shafer, "The Assyrian Landscape as Ritual," in *Critical Approaches to Ancient Near Eastern Art*, eds. Brian A. Brown and Marian H. Feldman (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), 713, https://doi.org/10.1515/9781614510352.713.

tion', 'locality'; *gimra-* as 'outdoors', 'countryside', 'field', 'wilderness', as well as 'military campaign'.[22] In addition to these, Hittite texts document a myriad of words that describe or define the features, functions, uses, or qualities of the landscape or its components.[23]

Words that denoted landscape (or parts thereof) could be combined with other descriptors that denoted sacrality, especially *šuppi-* an adjective meaning 'sacred', 'consecrated', 'holy' or 'ritually purified', and to a lesser extent, *parkui-* which denoted 'pure, free of impurities, unadulterated'.[24] It is generally understood that *šuppi-* can denote deities or divine beings, though it more commonly describes the state of being "consecrated" through which a person, thing, or place is deemed fit for communion with the divine.[25] *parkui-* was possibly a more general adjective that denoted 'pure' or 'clean'.[26] In the Hittite world, sacrality, numinosity, even divinity, could be ascribed to a wide range of animate and inanimate beings: in addition to anthropomorphic deities, features of the natural environment, such as rivers, springs, or mountains; meteorological or climatic events; and specific locations or buildings, even objects, could be perceived as sacred or numinous. However, as demonstrated below, in addition to consecrated or inherently pure places, ritual activities also—and perhaps equally commonly—took place in 'uninhabited' or 'undisturbed' places in the 'wilderness'.

Nevertheless, although we cannot find terms with precisely the same connotations as *landscape* the way this term is used in modern anthropological and geographical parlance, we do find phrases and descriptions that invoke concepts akin to our modern understanding of a *sacred* or *ritual* landscape, in the sense of a space designated for and created by repeated and related ritual activities. Illustrating this point clearly are the following examples, all from different ritual compositions and describing the spatial setting of particular ritual actions:

a. "on the mountain, in a sacred place where there is water."[27]

b. "[We go] to a mountain, to a place outside; we go where the plow does not come."[28]

c. "They set up the tents either in a place outside or in the forest."[29]

d. "One performs a ritual on t[hi]s border of the sea; one calls [it, however] 'the Ritual

22 For these terms, see Alwin Kloekhorst, *Etymological Dictionary of the Hittite Inherited Lexicon* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2007), https://brill.com/view/title/12608.

23 Terminology and descriptions pertaining to landscape are particularly prominent in land donation documents, lists of fields, and the so-called "border descriptions" in Hittite treaties, for which, see respectively, Christel Rüster and Gernot Wilhelm, *Landschenkungsurkunden hethitischer Könige,* StBoT Beih. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012), 78–85; Vladimír Souček, "Die hethitischen Feldertexte," *Archiv Orientální* 27 (1959): 5–43, 379–95; and Vladimír Souček, "Randnotizen zu den hethitischen Feldertexten," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung* 8 (1963): 368–82; Gary M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts,* 2nd ed. (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1999). The rich but (to my knowledge) understudied terminology pertaining to landscape, space, place, or features of the natural or built environment are not only difficult to grasp for us modern interpreters but were often left untranslated from one language to the other by the ancient scribes.

24 For conceptualizations of sacrality Hittite Anatolia, see Alice Mouton, "The Sacred in Hittite Anatolia: A Tentative Definition," *History of Religions* 55, no. 1 (2015): 41–64, https://doi.org/10.1086/681805.

25 CHD (*The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* [1980 ff.]) Š, s.v. "*šuppi-*."

26 CHD P, s.v. "*parkui-*."

27 KUB 9.28 (CTH 442) i 10′f.: ḪUR.SAG-*i šuppai pedi kuwapit* [*w*]*ātar ēšzi*; see also, Beckman "Intrinsic and Constructed Space," 155, n. 20; Gerçek, "Rivers and River Cults," 253, n. 1; CHD Š, s.v., *šuppi-*, p. 618f. For the translation of *dammeli*, see Jaan Puhvel, "Hittite *dammeli–: jurare in verba magistri*," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 64 (2012): 83–86.

28 VBoT 24 (CTH 393.A) i 31–33: *nu* ḪUR.SAG-*i dammeli pedi* [*paiwani nu k*]*uwapi* ^{GIŠ}APIN-*aš ŪL āraškizzi* [*nu apiya*] *paiwani.*

29 KUB 17.28 (CTH 730) iii 36–38: ^{GIŠ}ZA.LAM.GAR.ḪI.A *mān dammili pedi mān=kan* ^{GIŠ}TIR-*išni anda tarnanzi.*

of the Sea,'" and further along in the same composition, "they set up 6 pitchers of wine and 6 pitchers of beer outside in the wilderness."[30]

e. "We bring it to a different place in the wilderness."[31]

Though only the first (a) mentions a "sacred place" (*šuppai pedi*), these examples clearly point to a common conception of sacred places reserved for ritual acts being located in, or connected to, water, mountaintops, forests, and the wilderness, often in combination.

Occasionally, we find detailed descriptions of an extended area perceived as a sacred landscape through regular ritual performance, as may be exemplified by the following excerpt from a so-called "cult inventory" concerning cults in the territory of Hakmis, a significant Hittite cult center in the Black Sea region.[32]

> The next day the priests, the GUDU-priests, the lords, the free men [...] come in, and carry Mount *Halwanna* up to the mountain. If it (i.e., the area) is laid down by the enemy, they carry him to the mountain and [place] him [in front of the stela (?)], and the stela stands under a poplar. They break 3 loaves of (one) handful (of flour) and they offer beer. If it isn't laid down by the enemy, they place him at the stela under the poplar (which is) by the side of the river.
>
> And one brings bread (and) beer from all the towns that are around the mountain.
>
> When the leafy branches seize the Sun-god of Heaven, they carry the god away to the town and arrange him in the temple.[33]

This passage presents us with a vivid description of both where and when the cult image of the mountain god Hawanna is to be presented with offerings: somewhere up on the mountain or by the river, surrounded by towns, next to a stela under a poplar tree, from morning until sunset, when the leafy branches seize the Sun-god of Heaven.

The examples cited above bring us to the next part of the investigation, that is, sacred and ritual landscapes constructed through ritual action and the presence and agency of the aquatic element. We will consider, in turn, 1) aquatic elements and places as repositories of myth, memory, and meaning, 2) the conductive quality of water and the critical role it played in defining and constructing sacred places and landscapes, and lastly 3) the construction of ritual landscapes through aquatic rites.

Myth, Memory, and Meaning

Presented in translation below is a small but extraordinary tablet found in Hattusa, which describes the landscape around the road to the Hittite town Sassuna (of unknown location). This composition demonstrates how the symbolic meanings embedded in the landscape—myths, memories, stories, or knowledge—regularly concentrated in or around features or spaces that incorporated the aquatic element. This is a unique composition, in that its sole purpose is to depict in words a particular landscape. This composition was, in all likelihood, an eye-witness account, experienced and constructed on the move while traveling the road to Sassuna.

> [O]n the road to *Šāššūna*, [on] the right: an old tower. An oven, *tittapalwant-*, above. *Mount Muranhila*, the mountain is round (and) "anointed," above.

30 *nu=ššan k*[*ēda*]*ni*ʔ *ANA* ZAG *arunaš* SÍSKUR *iyazi arunaš=a*[=...SÍS]KUR *ḫalziššanzi*; KBo 15.19 i 16–17: 6 ^{DUG}*K*[(*UKUB* GEŠTIN 6 ^{DUG}*KUK*)]*UB* KAŠ=*ya araḫza gimri ḫandānz*[*i*].

31 KUB 9.27+ i 16–17: *n=at gimri dammeli pedi pētummēni.*

32 For a recent treatment of the texts called "cult inventories," see Michele Cammarosano, *Hittite Local Cults* (Atlanta, Georgia: Society of Biblical Literature, 2018).

33 KUB 25.23+ i 10'–16'; i 19'–20'; i 23'–24'; translation follows Cammarosano, *Hittite Local Cults,* 362–65.

> Buckhorn: a sickening, deceptive spring. A *šinahtura-*. Hewn stones, they are inside in the *huwaši* enclosure. Its grainfield, above.
>
> But in the deep, four springs. Underneath, the bitter-sweet mouths of the four women, front.
>
> A small water, an oven, *ašaliya-*, they are inside in the the huwaši enclosure. Mount Akkanhila. The road to the [town *Š*]*ūwanzana*. [... *-a*]*lki* [... (-)]*hargāššana*. The *huwaši* enclosure of the town *Šalmā*, great, on the right. The x-*aškueššar* of the town *Ukkiya*. In a quarry: dark stones. The *huwaši* enclosure of the town *Hupandahšūwa*. It is behind the town.
>
> On a great precipice, *pandukišša*, a bump, a tower. A *huwaši* area, wet wetlands[?], mouth-shaped, smallwater, *huwazzarani-*, front. A tower, Mount *Tāmūriya*. The sluice of the stag.
>
> On the road to *Šāššūna*, left.
>
> Colophon: The scribe Aškaliya wrote this tablet in Hatti, in front of Labarna "the Great."[34]

While some of the places that together constitute this landscape are natural (like mountains and springs), others are human built (like towers or ovens). The relations between these places are expressed through subjective positional words such as "right," "left," "above," "front," or "behind." Most important for the present discussion are the indications that this particular landscape does not simply represent what was visible to one person but went beyond the visible, tapping into a shared symbolic meaning. The descriptions of some of these places, such as "buckhorn: a sickening, deceptive spring," "the bitter-sweet mouths of the four women," or the "sluice of the stag," are likely based on local memory, knowledge, experience, or stories concerning watery places.[35]

Memories and myths attached to aquatic elements could be articulated and enacted through rituals, which reaffirmed the connection of meaning and landscape. This is vividly illustrated in the excerpt below from a well-known ritual and prayer to invoke and appease the Storm-god of the town Nerik, a Hittite cult center in modern Oymaağaç.

> You, [*Maraš*]*ša*[*nta*] River, are clo[se to] the soul of the Storm-god of *Nerik*. The *Maraššanta* River once flowed westward (*ipatarmaya-*), but the Storm-god turned it and made it flow toward the Sun-god of the gods. He made it flow near *Ner*[*ik*]. The Storm-god said to the *Maraššanta* River: "If someone angers the Storm-god of *Nerik*, and he goes forth from Nerik, from the *dahanga*, you, *Maraššanta* River, must not let him go to another river, to another spring.
>
> The Storm-god of the sky said to the *Maraššanta* River: "You shall be under oath. You shall not alter (your) flow." And the *Maraššanta* River did not alter (its) flow.[36]

This prominent deity had apparently abandoned his beloved town Nerik, descended into

34 KBo 62.5 (CTH 230). The language of this unique composition is lexically and syntactically arcane; it is thus rather difficult to translate, and I have based my translation on Elisabeth Rieken and Jürgen Lorenz's edition: Jürgen Lorenz and Elizabeth Rieken, "Auf dem Weg der Stadt Šāššūna ..." in *Tabularia Hethaeorum: Hethitologische Beiträge. Silvin Košak zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. Detlev Groddek and Marina Zorman (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 467–86. See also, N. İlgi Gerçek, "Hittite Geographers: Geographical Perceptions and Practices in Hittite Anatolia," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History* 4, no. 1–2 (2017): 39–60, https://doi.org/10.1515/janeh-2017-0026.

35 For an exploration of watery places as repositories of local stories, see Harmanşah, *Place, Memory, and Healing*, 54–82, 120–42.

36 KUB 36.89 (CTH 671) rev. 11–19. For this particular passage, see also Gerçek, "Rivers and River Cults," 257, with references to earlier literature.

the watery underworld, and thus brought about a lack of precipitation. The Storm-god of Nerik seemingly had a special relationship with the Marassanta River (modern Kızılırmak), since the ritual aims to recruit the Marassanta River to retrieve him from the underworld. The composition refers to how the Storm-god of the Sky had formerly set the course of the Marassanta River near the town Nerik and how he placed the Marassanta under oath to keep to its determined course and to ensure that the Storm-god of Nerik will not go to another river or spring, taking precipitation with him.

Just as myth and memory were manifested in aquatic elements of the landscape, aquatic landscapes also permeated myths and stories. These included local accounts, such as the well-known story of the Queen of Kanesh, who famously placed her thirty baby boys in baskets and sailed them down the river to the sea,[37] as well as epics of foreign origin, like the Hittite version of the Gilgamesh epic, which uses the Mala River (the Hittite name for the Middle Euphrates, a river of great cultic significance) as a landmark, although it is not found in other, Mesopotamian versions of the composition.[38]

Making Connections: Then and Now, Here and There

Water was perceived as a conductive substance, and its function as a passageway has been well-illustrated in previous literature.[39] Water could convey physical objects, like vessels of transportation or leftover trash from ritual activities to distant places. It could also transport intangible, spiritual substances and beings, like deities or their divine essence, perhaps even the human soul.[40]

Through human engagement in the form of ritual action, liquid elements and features formed *and* provided access to an interconnected web that comprised different spaces—cosmic realms, geographical zones, natural spaces, and urban places—as well as different temporalities. The capacity of water to connect different cosmic realms and to tap into historical or mythical time can readily be observed in the ritual and prayer for the Storm-god of Nerik mentioned above, in which the river is tasked to retrieve the Storm-god from an aquatic underworld:

> He (i.e. the Storm-god of *Nerik*) went down to the shores of the nine seas. [He went] down to the banks of the [Nob]le River.[41]

Even more interesting to consider is how water could interlink physically distanced spaces and places, thereby creating sacred and ritual landscapes that transcended geographic borders, as well as the divisions between urban and non-urban, indoor and outdoor, or natural and human-built. A striking example comes from a ritual recorded in Hittite and Hurrian in which numerous rivers and springs in and around Sapinuwa, modern Ortaköy, are summoned to receive libations.[42] Curiously, we observe that distant rivers, like the Puratti (another name for the Euphrates), could be conjured and provided with offerings through local rivers, all the way in Sapinuwa:

37 Harry A. Hoffner, *Hittite Myths*, 2nd edition (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1998), 81–82.

38 Della Casa, "Hittite Symbolic Landscapes," 211–12, with further references therein; Gary Beckman, *The Hittite Gilgamesh* (Atlanta, Georgia: Lockwood Press, 2019), 5–6, 9–10.

39 Yiğit Erbil and Alice Mouton, "Water in Ancient Anatolian Religions: An Archaeological and Philological Inquiry on the Hittite Evidence," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 71 (2012): 53–74; Ömür Harmanşah, "Cities, the Underworld, and the Infrastructure: The Ecology of Water in the Hittite World," in *New Materialisms. Ancient Urbanisms*, eds. Susan M. Alt and Timothy R. Pauketat (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), 228.

40 On water transporting the human soul, see Erbil and Mouton, "Water in Ancient Anatolian Religions," 61–63.

41 KUB 36.89 (CTH 671.1.A) rev. 21–23.

42 KBo 23.27, ascribed to CTH 776.1, edited in Ünal, *Hittite and Hurrian Cuneiform Tablets,* 86–97; Marie-Claude Tremouille, *Quelques observations sur KBo 23.27+ et ses relations avec CTH 776*, in *Studi e Testi II,* Eothen 10, eds. Stefano de Martino and Fiorella Imparati (Firenze: LoGisma, 1999), 193–211.

> They bring one set of water from the river of the town *Šapandaliya*. They summon the rivers of *Zuwahhu*, *Zitarpa*, *Puratti*, *Ubilpaeše*. He libates to the river of the town *Šapandaliya* (and) to these rivers.[43]

We can see the same principles at work on smaller scales, as well. Several rituals or cult ceremonies required their practitioners to move from one setting to another in order to worship divine waters sources *in situ* or to acquire materials from aquatic environments. This connection of movement, ritual action, and water brings us to our final topic, namely the construction of ritual landscapes.

Ritual Landscapes, Aquatic Taskscapes

Aquatic elements, features, and places could form ritual landscapes or *taskscapes* through an array of related and repeated tasks, activities, or performances.[44] In Hittite texts, we may observe the following main types of interconnected tasks and activities related to water, which, in turn, constituted clearly delimited sacred spaces and ritual landscapes:

1. Aquatic places functioned as settings for worship, sacrifice, and performance during rituals and cult ceremonies, which typically were time-specific, in that they took place in specific seasons, days, hours, or on special occasions.[45] These could range from purification rituals that took place by rivers or springs, invocation rituals to summon divine water deities (like rivers, springs, ponds, or the sea), different types of divination—especially bird augury—as well as state sponsored festival processions which often included rivers, ponds, or springs in their itineraries as places of performance.[46] In addition to official or state-sanctioned rituals and ceremonies, water sources could also be the site of more unsavory, or uncanny, performances, such as black magic or the river ordeal.[47]

2. Aquatic places were regularly visited to procure important ritual ingredients—primarily water, but also clay from riverbanks, pebbles from springs, and the like.[48]

3. Aquatic places could serve as places where the physical and potentially contaminating remains of rituals were disposed. Such ritual remnants were regularly disposed of directly in the watercourse itself or transferred to special carriers—such as boats made out of precious metals or frogs!—which were then placed in the watercourse. The watercourse—typically a river—was expected to carry them to the sea, to far-off places, or to the underworld.[49]

Ritual actions thus constructed *taskscapes* that were recognized at once sacred and consecrated, as well as dangerous, and clearly demarcated from their surroundings. There are several texts that bear witness to their special treatment. For instance, in the aforementioned ritual concerning the rivers and springs around Sapinuwa, we find a warning issued for the ritual specialists against drawing water at the confluence of the Red River ($^{\text{ÍD}}\text{SA}_5$) and the Marassanta River:

> They will not draw water in the place where the Red River joins the *Maraššanda* River. Downstream they do not draw, for

43 KUB 23.27+ i 13–17.

44 See note 17 above.

45 For seaside rituals, see Çilingir Cesur and Cammarosano, "Hitit Büyü Ritüellerinde Deniz," 68–72; for riverside rites, Gerçek, "Rivers and River Cults," 260–61; for rites conducted by springs, see Steitler, "Sacred Springs," 1–25.

46 Gerçek, "Rivers and River Cults," 260, n. 34.

47 Gerçek, "Rivers and River Cults," 260–61.

48 Volkert Haas, *Materia Magica et Medica Hethititca* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyer, 2003), 141–60.

49 Çilingir Cesur and Cammarosano, "Hitit Büyü Ritüellerinde Deniz," 72–78.

> the Man of the Storm-god goes forth to the Red River. They do not draw water also a second time in that place. They draw it from the *Maraššanta* upstream.[50]

The specialists whose duty it was to draw water from various rivers in this document are warned against taking a shortcut and drawing water nearby from the confluence of the rivers Marassanta and the Red River. It seems the Red River was reserved specifically for the cult activities of the ritual specialist known as the Man of the Storm-god and was regarded as sacred and/or potentially contaminated.

Conclusions: An Aquatic Landscape

This paper has attempted to trace through the textual record the sacred landscapes of Hittite Anatolia as their inhabitants experienced them and thereby to highlight the importance of texts in resurrecting past landscapes and their perceptions, which we will never fully experience as their inhabitants did. In contrast to the long-held view of the Hittite heartland as a wild, untamed, even barren steppe and the equally persistent notion of a "landlocked" Hittite civilization,[51] the available textual and archaeological sources reveal that Anatolian communities of Late Bronze Age Anatolia saw their homeland as an aquatic landscape. Not only was there an awareness that their land was bordered by the sea, but its inhabitants appear to have held a view of their land as a landscape penetrated by an aquatic web that connected it to a boundless dimension, allowing them to tap into different temporal, spatial, and cosmic realms. Its karst topography, scattered with springs, rivers, ponds, and lakes above its surface and with watery caverns and deep sinkholes below it, profoundly affected the ways in which Late Bronze Age Anatolian communities perceived and interacted with their world.

The themes explored in the present study are inevitably part of a larger conversation, since there are more issues to consider such as the temporal and spatial scales of sacred landscapes, the diverse spectrum of ritually motivated human alterations to the landscape, or the role of the state in appropriating, politicizing and monumentalizing sacred landscapes. Lastly, the general notion of *landscape* in Hittite Anatolia and its subsets such as *sacred, ritual,* or *aquatic* landscapes are not only relevant to the study of Hittite religion but are in their own right worthy of scholarly scrutiny, particularly now, when human activity is obliterating those very features of the landscape that—from a Hittite perspective—animated it.

50 KBo 23.27+ (CTH 776.1) obv. ii 25′–35′. The translation and interpretation here follow CHD L–N, s.v. *ma(n)ni(n)kuwan*, 172 and CHD Š, s.v. *šarazziyaz* 1, 251, with modification.

51 See Müge Durusu-Tanrıöver's contribution to the present volume. Cf. Beckman, "The Sea! The Sea!," 15.