

The Mala River and its importance according to Hittite documents

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The concepts of “location”, “climate”, and “human” are of great significance for historical geography. Among these, “location” in particular has taken a determining role in the formation of states. In Mesopotamia, located between the Tigris and the Euphrates, and in Egypt, in the valley of Nile, first states were established. Human beings have altered environmental factors such as climate, water, topography, and geographic features as much as possible in order to create their cultural-geographical structures. Therefore “natural borders” i.e. rivers, mountain ranges, coastal areas, deserts, and marshlands gain historical importance as geographic factors. After settling within the arc of the Kızılırmak River that was the core of their territory, the Hittites pursued an expansionist policy initially to protect their land, and then to increase their economic power, develop their state, dominate larger areas of land, and thus become a major political power. Their intention was to reach “natural boundaries” and then keep this area under their domination. From the time of the Old Hittite period expansion was directed primarily to the southeast of the core region-towards the Euphrates river- and this remained a consistent policy of the Hittites throughout their history.

The Euphrates, which can be considered a natural boundary in Anatolia, is a 2800 km-long river that arises in eastern Anatolia, passes into the lands of Syria and Iraq, combines with the Tigris River to form the Shatt al-Arab, and flows into the Persian Gulf. The Euphrates has very long tributaries with powerful currents. Its two main tributaries are the Murat and the Karasu Rivers. In addition, among those considered small rivers or large streams are the Tohma, Peri, Çaltı, Munzur and others. The Karasu River, commonly known as the Upper Euphrates, is considered a main branch of the Euphrates. The Karasu, which originates from Mount Dumlu to the northeast of the Erzurum plain, flows through Aşkale gorge and merges with the Tuzla stream which descends from the Tercan plain. It then heads towards the Sansa gorge, flows through the Erzincan plain and on to the Kemah gorge, where the Çaltı stream merges with it before turning south into narrow, deep gorges. Finally, near Keban it combines with the Murat River.

Being longer than the Karasu and as wide as the Euphrates itself, the Murat is the primary branch of the Euphrates, and when one considers the area it waters and the quantity of water it carries, it is much larger than the Karasu. The Murat River originates north of Lake Van in an area known as Muratbaşı in the district of Ağrı. It flows in many branches as far as Karaköse, where it is joined by the Şıryan stream, and then enters the Hamur gorge to the south of Karaköse. From there, it flows through the Muş plain where, the Karasu stream flowing from Mount Nemrut joins it, and passes through the deep, narrow Genç gorge. At this point, the width of the Murat is about 50-80 m and its depth is 2-3 m. farther down, it receives the Göynük stream, then combines with the waters of the Peri stream around the city of Elazığ. The upper section of the Peri is known as the Elmalıdere; the mid-section is known as the Büyüksu, and the lower section is called the Peri stream. When the Munzur stream with its gushing flow joins the Peri, it gains characteristics of a river. From this point to the junction near Keban, the Murat runs as a deep, wide river.

From their point of intersection down to the Turkish frontier, the Karasu and Murat rivers, running wider at some places, are joined by many streams and brooks (Tohma stream, Cendere brook, Göksu etc.). Passing through the vast plains of eastern Anatolia and the deep gorges between mountains, the Euphrates River and its branches flows slowly and forms waterfalls in many other places. Its width reaches 100 m at some points and is narrower in the mountain gorges. Its depth is usually 2-3 m, but can reach 5-8 m at certain locations; even when the river is low in, it can be forded in very few locations.

When the Euphrates leaves Turkey, it first enters a semiarid region, then a fully arid one where its volume declines, its basin narrows, and its depth decreases as low as one meter. However, the volume of water significantly increases in spring depending on rainfall and the snowmelt from the mountains in eastern Anatolia, while it dwindles in fall.

Thus, in Mesopotamia, located in the arid regions which the Euphrates passes through, it was necessary to conduct irrigation with dams.

The main body of the Euphrates is formed after the Karasu and Murat Rivers merge near Keban, but it has been difficult to determine exactly where to place the name "Euphrates" within this system of rivers. In some instances, the body of water formed from the junction the Karasu and Murat Rivers near Keban onwards was referred to as "the Euphrates River". In many other instances, after passing through the Erzincan plain the Karasu River was referred to as "the Euphrates River". Accordingly, the Karasu River flowing from the vicinity of Erzurum was considered the starting branch of the Euphrates¹.

As can be seen, even today the term "Euphrates" is not always clear as to which river it refers. This is due to the formation of this river by many other smaller rivers, streams, and brooks, as was previously mentioned.

Referred to as, *Purattu* in Akkadian, *Puranti* or *Uruttu* ('Subarean') in Hurrian, the Euphrates² is known as the Mala³ in Hittite.

¹ R. İzbırak, *Türkiye I*. İstanbul 2001, pp. 185-189.

² For the names of the Euphrates river in other languages see A. Goetze, *Kizzuwatna and the Problem of Hittite Geography*. New Haven 1940, p. 69 n. 267; H. Otten, *MDOG* 91 (1958), p. 82 n. 24, p. 83 n. 28; K. Riemschneider, *JCS* 16 (1962), p. 113a and n. 49; H.G. Güterbock, *JCS* 18 (1964), pp. 3-4; H. Ertem, *Boğazköy Metinlerinde Geçen Coğrafya Adları Dizini*. Ankara 1973, p. 198; M. van Loon, "The Euphrates mentioned by Sarduri II of Urartu", *Anatolian Studies Presented to Hans Gustav Güterbock on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, K. Bittel - Ph.H.J. Houwink ten Cate - E. Reiner edd. Leiden 1974, p. 192; G.F. del Monte - J. Tischler, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der hethitischen Texte*. Wiesbaden 1978 (Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes 6), pp. 543-544; I. M. Diakonoff - S.M. Kashkai, *Geographical Names According to Urartian Texts*. Wiesbaden 1981 (Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes 9), p. 111; K. Nashef, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der mittelbabylonischen und mittelassyrischen Zeit*. Wiesbaden 1982 (Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes 5), pp. 312-313; K. Nashef, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der altassyrischen Zeit*. Wiesbaden 1991 (Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes 4), p. 146; C. Woods, *ZA* 95 (2005), pp. 7-45.

³ See Ertem, *Boğazköy Metinlerinde*, p. 196; del Monte - Tischler, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen*, p. 537 along with the bibliography; see also Otten, *MDOG* 91 (1958), p. 83 n. 28; H.G. Güterbock, *RHA* 66 (1960), p. 58; H.A. Hoffner, *RHA* XXIII/76 (1965), p. 8 and n. 14; E. Laroche, *Les Noms des Hittites*. Paris 1966, p. 277; K. Nashef, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen*, pp. 145, 146.

The term used for the Euphrates in Hittite is quite different from its counterparts in other languages with regard to its vocalization⁴.

In the Hittite version of a Hittite-Akkadian bilingual text discussing military interventions (KBo X 2, rev. III 29) belonging to king Ḫattušili I of the Old Hittite period, the term ^{1D}*Ma-a-la-an-* is found, while in the Akkadian version, (KBo X 1, rev.18) ^{1D}*Pu-ra-at-ta* refers to the Euphrates⁵. Considering this correspondence, it can be understood that the toponym 'Mala' used in Hittite cuneiform texts refers to today's Euphrates River in Anatolia.

Naturally, the exact identification of the river in Anatolia of the Hittite period remained a problem among the Hittite geographical names. The Mala River has been claimed to be the middle Euphrates⁶ that formed a border between the Hittite and Hurrian states⁷. In addition, there are other opinions that claim it is the Balih or Habur⁸, Bitlis Su⁹ or a branch of the Upper Euphrates¹⁰.

Precisely which river did the Hittites intend to designate within this system of rivers with the term Mala, i.e. the Euphrates? Providing a definite answer to this question today is extremely difficult because even in today's Anatolia the same challenge remains, as explained above. Nevertheless, it seems logical to search for this river in the area designated the Middle Euphrates since it used to form a border between the Hittite and Hurrian states in Anatolia of the Hittite period.

In the text mentioned above, king Ḫattušili I boasts of crossing the Euphrates. He mentions that before himself, Sargon (2340-2284 B.C.), founder of the Akkadian state and known from the texts entitled *šar tamḫāri* "The King of Battle" in which the Anatolian campaigns of Sargon and his grandson Naram-Sin are described, was the first to cross the Euphrates.

KBo X 2¹¹ rev. III

29 ^{1D}*Ma-a-la-an-na Ú-UL [(ku)-iš-ki za-a-iš]*

30 *na-an ú-uk LUGAL.GAL T[a-ba-ar-na-aš GÌR-it]*

31 *zi-iḫ-ḫu-un KARASḪ^H[(1).A-YA-an-mu(?)] EGİR-an(?)*

32 *GÌR^{MES}-it za-a-iš LUGAL-g[i-na-ša-an za-a-iš]*

"[No-one (had) crossed] the Mala, (but) I, the great king Ta[barna], crossed it [on foot], and my army crossed it [after me(?)] on foot. Sarg[on (also) crossed it]."

From what can be understood from the text, Ḫattušili I had conducted a challenging but important military event. He recalls that this feat could only be achieved by Sargon of Akkad who had lived seven hundred years before, and who was also known as *Šarru-kīn* meaning

⁴ Otten, *MDOG* 91 (1958), p. 83 n. 28; del Monte - Tischler, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen*, p. 544.

⁵ Otten, *MDOG* 91 (1958), p. 83 n. 28; H.C. Melchert, *JNES* 37 (1978), p. 18.

⁶ del Monte - Tischler, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen*, p. 537; G. Frantz-Szabo, *RLA* 7 (1988), p. 273.

⁷ A. Goetze, *KIF* I (1927-1930), p. 224; M. Vieyra, *RA* 68 (1974), p. 122.

⁸ E. Cavaignac, *RHA* 20 (1935), p. 119 and n. 9; see also H. Otten, *MIO* 1 (1953), pp. 139-140.

⁹ A. Goetze, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. J. B. Pritchard ed. (2nd ed.). Princeton 1955, p. 395 n. 2.

¹⁰ A. Goetze, *JCS* 16 (1962), p. 27a.

¹¹ For translit. and tr. see Güterbock, *JCS* 18 (1964), pp. 1-2; F. Imparati, *SCO* XIV (1965), pp. 52-53; see also M. van Loon, *Studies Güterbock*, p. 193.

“the king is real”¹². Here, with “political reasons” in mind, he must have intended to emphasize the difficult task he had achieved by crossing this river in order to gain the acceptance of his people; in addition, he wished to be remembered along with a river that is difficult to cross due to its depth, width, and high volume of water.

All of these prove the Hittites’ consciousness of history as well as indicating how widespread a legendary hero Sargon was in the ancient Middle East¹³.

Ḫattušili I, doubtlessly seeking to hold regions of strategic and commercial importance, determined southeastern Anatolia and northern Syria as a direction for expansion, and organized campaigns to these areas. He first invaded the city of Alalaḫ (KBo X 2 obv. I 15-16). After defeating Arzawa (obv. I 22-23) located in southwestern Anatolia, he conquered the city of Ḫaššuwa (obv. II 12 ff.), which had sent soldiers to aid the country of Ḫalpa, and the city of Ḫaḫḫa (rev. III 6 ff.), harnessing the kings of these cities to a wagon (rev. III 41-42). However, apparently, the city of Ḫaššuwa was freed from Hittite domination in the last years of Ḫattušili I who was then ill¹⁴.

The grandchild and successor of Ḫattušili I, Muršili I conquered the city of Ḫalpa (KBo III 1+ obv. I 27-28; KBo III 57 obv. 10'-14'; KBo I 6 obv. 11-14), and advancing along the Euphrates, fought with the Hurrians (KBo III 1+ obv. I 29; KBo III 57 obv. 15'-16'). Going as far as Babylon (KBo III 1+ obv. I 28-29; KBo III 57 obv. 19'-20'), he confirmed the concept of considering the Mala River as the “natural border”. Thus, it is clear that the Hittites pursued this as a goal throughout their history.

Likewise, Šuppiluliuma I, in the Akkadian version of a treaty signed with Šattiwaza of Mitanni, claimed to have added the area from mount Niblani (Lebanon) to the other bank of the Euphrates to his land (KBo I 1 obv. 47)¹⁵.

Ḫattušili III, in telling the campaigns of his grandfather Šuppiluliuma I¹⁶, stated that his grandfather considered the Mala River as the border on the East:

KUB XIX 9¹⁷ obv. I

11' ... nu-za KUR.KUR^{MEŠ} Hur-ri da-pí-an-da

12' tar-aḫ-ta nu-za e-te-za KUR^{URU} Ki-in-za KUR^{URU} A-mur-ra ZAG-an

13' i-ya-at LUGAL KUR^{URU} Mi-iz-ri-ya-za tar-aḫ-ta ke-e-ez-za-ma

14' KUR^{URU} Ir-ri-ta KUR^{URU} Šu-u-ta ḫar-ga-nu-ut nu-za^{ID} Ma-a-la-an

15' ZAG-an i-ya-at ...

¹² It should not be forgotten that based on the legend of the birth and childhood of Sargon, he was born in *Azupirānu* (known as Safran today) by the Euphrates River. See C. Günbattu, *ArAn* 3 (GsBilgiç) (1997), p. 131 and n. 2 along with the bibliography.

¹³ Ali M. Dinçol, *Hittitler, Anadolu Uygurlukları, Görsel Anadolu Tarihi Ansiklopedisi* 1. Görsel Yayınlar. İstanbul 1982, p. 29.

¹⁴ Between the lines KBo III 27 obv. 28'-31' of a will-order text belonging to Ḫattušili I “the men who disobeyed the word of their father”, from Zalpa, Ḫaššuwa, and Ḫalpa are mentioned; in 31', it is reported that the city of Ḫalpa will be ruined because of this.

¹⁵ E.F. Weidner, *Politische Dokumente aus Kleinasien*. Leipzig 1923, pp. 14-15.

¹⁶ Otten, *MIO* 1 (1953), p. 139; K.A. Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs*. Liverpool 1962, p. 3; Riemschneider, *JCS* 16 (1962), pp. 115-121.

¹⁷ For translit. and tr. see E. Forrer, *Forschungen* 2/1. Berlin 1926, p. 10; Otten, *MIO* 1 (1953), p. 139; Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna*, p. 3.

“... defeated all the Hurrian lands. He set the land of Kinza on the other side (of the Euphrates) and the land of Amurru as borders. He also defeated the king of Egypt, but on this side demolished the land of Irrita, the land of Šuta and set the Mala River as the border.”

In the rest of the text, Ḫattušili speaks of his assigning Telipinu - one of Šuppiluliuma's sons - as the king of Ḫalpa and Piyaššili to Kargamiš as a vassal-king.

It is possible that Ḫattušili III mentioned that the Euphrates was the border in the time of Šuppiluliuma I because the empire's eastern borders had not extended that far for a long time¹⁸.

In the period of Tuḫaliya IV, like Sargon of Akkad, the Assyrian king Tukultī-Ninurta I (1243-1207 B.C.) crossed the Euphrates. In a letter sent to Baba-aḫu-iddina¹⁹ Tukultī-Ninurta's chancellor²⁰, Tuḫaliya IV writes about the unyielding mountains in the country of Papanḫi²¹ (*Māt Paphī*) (KUB XXIII 103 rev. 20-21). However, it seems that Tukultī-Ninurta disregarded this because in two of his documents (A.0.78.23 and A.0.78.24), the son of Adad-nārārī, Tukultī-Ninurta, tells of driving 28,800²² people from the land of the Hittites on the other side of the Euphrates to his country and conquering countries such as Paphu, Uqumunu, and Qutu²³.

Muršili II listed the following as the causes of the plague that had continued for twenty years and that had devastated the Hatti country since the time of his father Šuppiluliuma and his brother Arnuwanda²⁴:

1) The killing, that is the murder, of young Tuḫaliya (first plague prayer).

2) Not complying with the conditions of the treaty made in the time of Šuppiluliuma I between the Egyptians and the Hittites due to placement of the people of Kuruštama²⁵ (a city whose location in Anatolia is uncertain today) under Egyptian domination in the city of Amka (second plague prayer).

3) Neglecting the gods (second plague prayer).

¹⁸ Vieyra, *RA* 68 (1974), p. 122.

¹⁹ Laroche, *Les Noms des Hittites*, p. 51; H.D. Galter, *JCS* 42 (1988), p. 231.

²⁰ For the text of KUB XXIII 103 along with the bibliography see H. Otten, *AfO* 19 (1960), pp. 39-46.

²¹ Ertem, *Boğazköy Metinlerinde*, p. 106; Otten, *AfO* 19 (1960), p. 45 n. 48; del Monte - Tischler, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen*, p. 301; S. Heinhold-Krahmer, *AfO* 35 (1988), p. 95 and n. 192, 193; Galter, *JCS* 42 (1988), p. 231 and n. 69; G.F. del Monte, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen der hethitischen Texte*. Wiesbaden 1992 (Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes 6/2), p. 120.

²² For opinions stating that this number is exaggerated and the bibliography see Galter, *JCS* 42 (1988), pp. 217-235.

²³ E.F. Weidner, Tn.16A, 17, *AfO* Beih.12 (1959); see A.K. Grayson, *Assyrian rulers of the third and second millennia BC (To 1115 BC)* (The Royal inscriptions of Mesopotamia. Assyrian periods I). Toronto 1987, pp. 271-274, 274-276 along with the bibliography; see also Heinhold-Krahmer, *AfO* 35 (1988), p. 86 and n. 94; Galter, *JCS* 42 (1988), p. 217.

²⁴ For prayers of plague see Goetze, *KlF* I (1927-1930), pp. 161-251; see also Güterbock, *RHA* 66 (1960), pp. 57-63; Vieyra, *RA* 68 (1974), pp. 121-123; A. Ünal, *Bulleten* 44/175 (1980), p. 479.

²⁵ Ertem, *Boğazköy Metinlerinde*, p. 81; del Monte - Tischler, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen*, p. 229; A. Ünal, *RLA* 6 (1980-1983), pp. 373a-374a; M. Forlanini, *Hethitica* 5 (1983), p. 14 n. 4; del Monte, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen*, p. 87; I. Singer, "The Kuruštama Treaty Revisited", *šarnikzel, Hethitologische Studien zum Gedenken an Emil Orgetorix Forrer* (19.02.1894 - 10.01.1986), D. Groddek - S. Rößle edd. Dresden 2004, pp. 591-607.

4) The slaves who were brought from Egypt in the time of Šuppiluliuma I carrying the plague and their contaminating the Hatti country with it (second plague prayer).

The important issue for us here is the neglect of the gods, a serious religious negligence. This was attributed to the lack of sacrifices for the Mala River since the time of Šuppiluliuma. In the second plague prayer this is explained as follows²⁶:

“... I [resorted to oracle for the reason of gods’ fury and thus] I [foun]d two [an]cient tablets. One tablet was about the [sacrifice of the Mala River]. O[ld] kings [alwa]ys us[ed to offer] the sacrifice of the Mala River. But [now] and since the day of my father, in the Hatti land [(people) are constantly dying] and we never perform[ed] the [sacrifice] of the Mala River.”

In the rest of the prayer, in order to discover the reason for the epidemic the issue of the sacrifice offered to the Mala River is investigated through questions to the oracle. One of the reasons for the gods’ fury and, as a result, the plague epidemic is that sacrifices to the river are no longer offered²⁷:

“... I also resorted to an oracle about the sacrifice of the Mala River because of the plague. It was determined that I needed to go to the presence of my master the [Storm God of Hatti] for that issue ...”

In the following lines, Muršili admits his guilt and ask for the forgiveness of the Storm God of Hatti. The determination of the offense is not sufficient for forgiveness; penance is also due. The course of penance starts with acknowledging the offense or sin, and continues with explicit verbalization of the sorrow felt. In addition, the Hittites, who believed that the gods could not read their consciences or thoughts, thought that the gods did not consider what they did sufficient, and thus, they would express their remorse by offerings, oblations, and prayers, by which they showed the purity of their intentions. Offerings and oblations were usually of Kizzuwatna origin, and were mediators for acquittal. The aim in this was to attempt to constrain the divine judgment and to soften the unyielding thoughts of the gods. Accordingly, in the text Muršili II reports that he will immediately offer the sacrifice of the Mala River that was previously neglected, and that he is prepared to set off to do this²⁸:

“My lord, Storm God of Hatti, (and) my lords, gods; now that I am going to the Mala River, leave the sacrifice of the Mala River [determined due to the plague] behind me! (allow time for me!). I want to do the sacrifice of the Mala River. Let me fulfill it. Due to plague I myself will do whatever issue there is.”

Here, it is particularly emphasized that the tablet related to the sacrifice of the Mala River is “ancient” and that previous kings always offered the sacrifice of the Mala River and never neglected it. Thus, the Mala River appears as a divine entity. Mankind has always feared the natural forces that he could neither control nor comprehend the causes of, eventually falling in despair and looking up to them. This has resulted in sanctifying and worshipping these forces because they have been considered superior entities that control natural events. As a result, in the Hittite pantheon of a thousand gods, geographic features such as mountains, rivers, and springs were each represented by a god. The Mala, i.e. the Euphrates River is still a deep, unyielding body of water and a rich source of water today.

²⁶ See Goetze, *KIF I* (1927-1930), p. 208, § 3, l. 3 ff.

²⁷ Goetze, *KIF I* (1927-1930), p. 212, § 6, l. 1 ff.

²⁸ Goetze, *KIF I* (1927-1930), p. 214, § 8, l. 4 ff.

Without a doubt, the Euphrates was even more so in Anatolia of the Hittite period. Therefore, the Mala River had been deified and offering sacrifices to it had become a tradition by Hittites.

Hittite gods have been referred to in the prayers, major festivals, and the texts of major treaties. In the texts of treaties²⁹, among the gods summoned as witnesses for the pledge were the gods of the sky, gods of the earth, rivers, springs, clouds, winds, sky, earth, and big sea. In the prayer texts³⁰, the gods of mountains, rivers, springs, and underground waters have been mentioned.

In only two of the treaty texts, are the names of mountains and rivers mentioned. The first treaty is the one between Muwatalli II and Alakšandu of Wiluša³¹, where the mountains Ḫulla and Zaliyanu³² are mentioned, and the other treaty is the one between Šuppiluliuma and Šattiwaza of Mitanni³³, where [the Tigris] and the Euphrates (^{nār}*Diklat*, ^{nār}*Purattu*)³⁴ are mentioned³⁵. It appears that the mountains Ḫulla and Zaliyanu as well as the Tigris and the Euphrates were among the geographic locations worth mentioning.

The “ancient tablet” referred to in the second plague prayer must be a mythological text, KUB XXIII 79³⁶. On rev.10' ff. of the extremely broken text we read: “[ŠA] ^{ID}*Ma-a-la* SÍSKUR [*ma-a-a*]n KUR-ya an-da ḫi-in-kán 11' [*ki-*]i-ša nu ki-i [SÍ]SKUR [... *IŠ-TU*] DINGIR^{LIM} ar-ḫa a-ri-ya-an-zi 12' [*na-*]at ma-a-an [...] ḫa-an-da-it-ta-ri ... “the sacrifice [of] the Mala River. [I]f there is a plague in the country, they will investigate this (subject) (reality) of [s]acrifice [...] from the god by means of an oracle. If it [...] is determined ...”

These lines are reminiscent of the second plague prayer in their content and use of technical terms such as *ariya-* and *handāi-* (*KIF* 1, 212, § 6, ll.1, 2)³⁷. On obv. 3' of the text, the expressions “(all) the rivers in the country (merge) with the Mala River”; on rev. 8', “The Mala River thus [...]”; on rev. 10, “The sacrifice [of] the Mala River [...]” have been used.

The Mala River has also been mentioned in the myths of Elkunirša³⁸ and Ašertu, which most likely involve a ritual against impotency³⁹.

The Storm God that hears the words of Ašertu arrives at the spring of the Mala River and enters the home of Elkunirša:

²⁹ KBo V 9 rev. IV 18-19; KUB XIX 50+, rev. III 26-27; KBo V 3+ obv. I 58-59; KBo IV 10+ rev. 4; KUB XXIII 77a(+) obv. 9; KBo I 4+ rev. IV 44-45; KUB III 7+ rev. 9'-10'.

³⁰ KUB XIV 14+ obv. 5; KUB VI 45+ obv. I 15, 16 obv. II 38, 39, 45, 47 etc.; KBo XI 1 obv. 3, 16, 29, 30.

³¹ J. Friedrich, *Staatsverträge des Hatti-Reiches in hethitischer Sprache* II. Leipzig 1930, pp. 50-102.

³² KUB XIX 6+ XXI 1+ rev. IV 24.

³³ Weidner, *Politische Dokumente*, pp. 2-37, 36-57.

³⁴ KBo I 1 rev. 53'; KBo I 3 rev. 24'.

³⁵ See Y. Arıkan, *DTCFD* 38/1-2 (1998), p. 279.

³⁶ Vieyra, *RA* 68 (1974), p. 123. For translit. see E. Laroche, *RHA* XXIII/77 (1965), pp. 175-176.

³⁷ Vieyra, *RA* 68 (1974), p. 123.

³⁸ E. von Schuler, *Wörterbuch der Mythologie*. Stuttgart 1965, pp. 162-163; B.H.L. van Gessel, *Onomasticon of the Hittite Pantheon*. Part I. Leiden - New York - Köln 1998, p. 63.

³⁹ V. Haas, *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion*. Leiden - New York - Köln 1994, pp. 172-173.

KUB XXXVI 35⁴⁰ obv. I

5' [na-aš-kán ša-ra-a] ti-ya-at na-aš ŠA ^{ID}Ma-a-la ḫar-šum-na-aš a-ar[-aš]

6' [na-aš A-NA] ^DEl-ku-ni-ir-ša ŠA ^DA-še-er-tu₄ ^{LU}MU-DI-ŠU a-a[r-aš]

7' [na-aš-kán ŠA] ^DEl-ku-ni-ir-ša ^{GIŠ}ZA.LAM.GAR-aš an-da pa-it

“He (the Storm god) stood up, arrive[ed] at the spring⁴¹ of the Mala River. He came to Elkunirša, the husband of Ašertu and entered the tent of Elkunirša.”

The Mala River was also mentioned in the Hittite version of the legend of Gilgameš. Gilgameš and Enkidu reach the Mala River on the road to the Cedar Mountains and offer a sacrifice upon their arrival:

KBo X 47g⁴² rev. III

2' [...] GIM-an I-NA ^{ID}Ma-la NUNDUM-ši

3' [e-ri-ir (?) ...]x SÍSKUR pé-e-er ...

“[...] when they [reached (?)] the bank of the Mala River [...] they offered a sacrifice.”

In addition, in another Hittite fragment of the legend of Gilgameš, the Mala River is referred to⁴³.

Similarly, in a Luwian prayer ritual, which has expressions with mythological content, the Mala River is mentioned as ḫa-a-pí-iš Ma-a-la-aš (KUB XXXV 107+108⁴⁴ rev. IV 22').

In another text written in Hittite and partially in Luwian (KBo XII 100⁴⁵ obv. 4), [M]a-a-la-kán ^{ID}i refers to the Mala River.

Strikingly, the determinative that precedes the name of rivers has not been used in either of these two texts⁴⁶.

⁴⁰ Text edition by Otten, *MIO* 1 (1953), pp. 126-127; for translit. along with the bibliography see E. Laroche, *RHA* 82 (1968), pp. 25-26; for tr. see Hoffner, *RHA* XXIII/76 (1965), pp. 5-8; H.A. Jr., Hoffner, *Hittite Myths*. Atlanta 1990, pp. 69-70.

⁴¹ For ḫaršumna- see Otten, *MIO* 1 (1953), pp. 127, 129 “Quellen”; J. Friedrich, *Hethitisches Wörterbuch 1.Ergänzungsheft*. Heidelberg 1957, p. 5a “Wassertiefe oder Springquell”; Hoffner, *RHA* XXIII/76 (1965), p. 8 and n. 13 “spring, source, deep”; H. Kronasser, *Etymologie der hethitischen Sprache* 1. Wiesbaden 1966, p. 102, 113 “Wassertiefe; Quelle”; Vieyra, *RA* 68 (1974), p. 124 n. 2 “bord”; for ḫaršummar see Friedrich, *Hethitisches Wörterbuch 3.Ergänzungsheft*. Heidelberg 1966, p. 14b “Quellgebiet (eines Flusses)(?)”; J. Tischler, *Hethitisches Handwörterbuch*. Innsbruck 2001, p. 44 “Quellgebiet (eines Flusses)(?)”.

⁴² For translit. see Laroche, *RHA* 82 (1968), p. 12.

⁴³ KUB XXIII 9, 7'] A-NA ^{ID}Ma-la-a [e-ri-ir (?)]; for translit. see Laroche, *RHA* 82 (1968), p. 16.

⁴⁴ For translit. see H. Otten, *Luwische Texte in Umschrift*. Berlin 1953, pp. 97-99; F. Starke, *Die Keilschrift-luwischen Texte in Umschrift*. (StBoT 30). Wiesbaden 1985, pp. 211, 215, 240; along with the bibliography see E. Laroche, *Dictionnaire de la langue louvite*. Paris 1959, p. 158; E. Laroche, “Fleuve et ordalie en Asie Mineure Hittite”, *Festschrift Heinrich Otten*, E. Neu - Chr. Rüster edd. Wiesbaden 1973, p. 180.

⁴⁵ For translit. and tr. see Laroche, *FsOtten*, p. 181; Starke, *StBoT* 30, p. 244.

⁴⁶ See Starke, *StBoT* 30, pp. 211-212.

In text KBo XI 40⁴⁷ on the festival performed in honor of the protective god ^DKAL/^DLAMMA, Tuthaliya⁴⁸ (II/IV) designates offerings such as one *tuhurāi*-bread, one *harpī*-, and ribs for the Mala, Mammāranda and Gurmaliya Rivers referred to as between the Upper Country and Hurri Country as well as for other countries mentioned (Arzawa, Maša, Luqqa, Gašga). Furthermore, the Mala River is referred to in many other Hittite and Luwian fragments⁴⁹.

It is also evident from the extensive annals of Muršili II that a festival celebrated in the spring used to be organized for the Mala River. Muršili II, who spent winter in the city of Katapa, specifically stated that in spring, he himself celebrated this festival:

KUB XIX 37⁵⁰ obv. II

46 [GIM-an-m]a ha-me-eš-ha-an-za ki-ša-at nu LUGAL-uš¹ I-NA [... pa-a-un]

47 [nu-za-x Š]A ^{ID}Ma-a-la EZEN₄-an i-ya-nu-un

“[But when it] became spring, (I) the king also [went] to [... and] celebrated the festival of the Mala River.”

In rev. III 1' and the remainder of the text, when the news of Gašga's burning the city of Timmuḫala reached Muršili II who had been celebrating the festival for the Mala River, he was on his way from the Mala River to the city of Ḫešhašpa (Ḫišašhapa).⁵¹ Thus, it seems that the Mala River was considered a sacred natural force since it provided fertility and life with its water, and a festival was organized in its honor. In Hittite belief, festivals were required to be celebrated at the proper time and without lacking anything. The offences and sins committed due to festivals not being celebrated on time or incompletely, infuriated the gods and consequently led to the punishment of humans. If the religious rituals and prayers performed during these celebrations were to reach their destinations, they had to be observed meticulously. This was an issue that allowed no room for confusion, because the Hittite gods, lacking the ability to penetrate human consciousness or thought, were only able to judge humans by observing their completed actions from the outside. Therefore, fearing the gods' vengeance, nothing was left to chance; the gods could misinterpret even unintentional neglect. Aware of this because of the earlier plague epidemic in his country, Muršili II acted more cautiously this time, and specifically explained that he had celebrated the festival for the Mala River in spring during his campaigns.

⁴⁷ rev. VI 5' [ŠA KU(R ^{UR})^UUGU^{7I} ^DUTU^{ŠI} ku-i-e-eš 6' [(šī-y)a-a]t-ta-al-li-iš-ki-iz-zi 7' [I ^{NINDA}₁(u-h)]u-ra-i I ^{UZU}har-pī-iš A-NA ^{ID}Ma-a-la 8' [I ^{NINDA}₁(u-h)]u-ra-i I ^{UZU}TI A-NA ^{ID}Ma-am-ma-ra-an-da 9' [I ^{NINDA}₁(u-h)]u-ra-i I ^{UZU}TI A-NA ^{ID}Gur-ma-li-ya 10' [I ^{NINDA}₁(u-h)]u-ra-i I ^{UZU}har-pī-iš ḪUR.SAG^{MES} hu-u-ma-an-te-eš 11' [I^D^{MES} hu-u-ma-an-te-eš ŠA KUR ^{URU}Ḫur-ri: see A. Archi, *SMEA* 16 (1975), pp. 113-115; G. McMahon, *The Hittite State Cult of the Tutelary Deities*. Chicago 1991 (Assyriological Studies 25), pp. 130-131.

⁴⁸ For the dating of the text to the period of Tuthaliya II see Ph. H. J. Houwink ten Cate, *The Records of the Early Hittite Empire (c. 1450-1380 B.C.)*. Leiden 1970, p. 75; for the dating of the text to the period of Tuthaliya IV see McMahon, *The Hittite State Cult*, p. 140.

⁴⁹ A letter fragment in Hittite: KBo XVI 52, obv. 13'] ... I-NA ^{ID}Ma-a-la; a fragment in Hittite with unknown content: VBoT 135, 3'] x ^{ID}Ma-a-la [; a fragment in Luwian: KBo XIII 263 rt. col.x+1 []x-i ^{ID}Ma-a[-l^o (for this fragment see Starke, *StBoT* 30, p. 217, 256).

⁵⁰ A. Götze, *Die Annalen des Muršiliš*. Leipzig 1933, pp. 170-173.

⁵¹ Ertem, *Boğazköy Metinlerinde*, pp. 48, 49; del Monte - Tischler, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen*, pp. 111-112; del Monte, *Die Orts- und Gewässernamen*, p. 40.

An ancient Assyrian tablet discovered in the excavations of Kültepe refers to the Mala River. In the text of Kt. 87/k.275 (9-136-87), a court document on the return (sale?) of a female slave who could not be sold in the land of Kaniš, the defendant talks about wanting to take the woman across the Euphrates. Based on the content of the text, property bought in or near Kaniš cannot be sold to another. The sale is only permitted on the other side of the Euphrates. In the seventeenth line of the text, the Euphrates River (*Pu-ra-tám*) is mentioned for the first time in the Kültepe documents. In the light of the information in the tenth-fifteenth lines of the text, it is assumed that the reference is to the river beyond the borders of Anatolia⁵².

As can be seen, the Mala River was of great importance to the Hittites, both religiously and politically. The Euphrates River was considered a “natural border” by the Hittites. Old Hittite kings - Hattušili I and Muṣili I - and king Šuppiluliuma I, a king of the imperial period, attempted to conquer all the territory as far as this river. This was also confirmed by Hattušili III. In the reign of Tuḫaliya IV, the Assyrian king mentioned the same. On the other hand, Gilgameš and Enkidu, who had set off from the city of Uruk, offered a sacrifice to the Euphrates River when they reached its source. In cuneiform texts from pre-Hittite Anatolia which make little reference to geographical names and to rivers in particular, the Euphrates is mentioned as the *Puratam* only once. The Hittites, probably in conformity with the religious traditions of a Hurrian background, offered sacrifices to this river as had Gilgameš and Enkidu, organized festivals, and often referred to it, particularly in texts of a religious nature. All these indicate the importance of the Mala River in Hittite belief.

⁵² K. Hecker, *ArAn* 3 (GsBilgiç), (1997), pp. 165-167 and n. 16.