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Turan TAKAOĞLU

INTERACTIONS IN THE FIFTH MILLENNIUM B.C. EASTERN AEGEAN : NEW EVIDENCE

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Whether the central-western Anatolia and the adjacent eastern Aegean islands during the fifth millennium B.C. were part of the same cultural formation zone or they were two different cultural entities that came into close culture contact with each other through seafaring activities has long been an important consideration for those who view western Anatolia as a bridge between the east and the west. The discovery of a distinctive pottery assemblage at the site of Kulaksızlar in central-western Anatolia provides us with new evidence to interpret the nature of cultural interactions within the eastern Aegean world during the poorly understood fifth millennium B.C. Surface investigation at Kulaksızlar, which is a short-lived flat site that has been renowned with remains of a marble workshop concentrated on the production of pointed beakers and Kilia figurines (Dinç, 1996 ; Takaoğlu 2000, 2001 and 2002) also yielded a homogeneous hand-made pottery that bears strong resemblance to the repertoires of the sites of the eastern Aegean islands, including Emporio (Levels IX-VIII) and Aghio Galo Upper Cave on Chios, Tigani (Levels II-III) on Samos, and Kalimnos, as well as Saliagos near Antiparos in the Cyclades. This is important in view of the fact that, excluding several comparable examples recovered from the southwestern Anatolian sites such as Bağbaşı, Karain Cave and Kuruçay, this pottery tradition is not represented in other parts of western Anatolia during this period. The lack of similar pottery from the sites of the İzmir region, however, remains a very curious issue for the pre-Bronze age eastern Aegean archaeology.

The fact that the pottery tradition in question belongs to the mid-fifth millennium B.C. is important, since this period is one of the least understood stages of western Anatolian cultural history. This is in part due to the culture change observed between the early and late phases of the Chalcolithic period and the minimal number of evidence available on the transitional Middle Chalcolithic period. Late Chalcolithic period reveals a new phase in the cultural history of western Anatolia, characterized by an increase in the number of settlements, changes in the building construction techniques, the development of copper-based metallurgy and its subsequent diffusion, and the replacement of existing pottery traditions such as the sophisticated red-on-cream ware of the Hacılar culture with an inferior monochrome pottery tradition (Yakar, 1985 : 121 ; Mellaart, 1999 : 62). Archaeologists have proposed a number of theories favoring both endogenous and exogenous factors to explain the changes that occurred in this period. Whether these changes reflect local cultural development or the arrival of newcomers remains open to debate. The impetus behind these cultural changes may be internal, generated by factors such as population growth, social reorganization, or technological change, or may equally be the result of external stimuli at the regional or super-regional level, such as trade or the arrival of new peoples. Because Kulaksızlar pottery does not resemble the pottery of the both Early and Late Chalcolithic periods in western Anatolia, it can be used to interpret the nature of interactions that occurred during this vaguely known stage of the fifth millennium B.C. The presence of this particular hand-made pottery tradition at contexts indicating short-term occupation in western Anatolia makes the nature of interactions very significant.

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Fig. 1.

By establishing the similarities between the pottery recovered from the sites of western Anatolia and the eastern Aegean islands in terms of style and manufacturing techniques, I attempt to demonstrate that the village communities of western Anatolia and those of the eastern Aegean islands were in close culture contact with each other through an exchange mechanism that involved both land-based and seabourne trade activities during the fifth millennium B.C. The evidence overall is suggestive of complex interactions between western Anatolia and the eastern Aegean islands, implying that this period was not a static one and it was the rise in the level of cultural interactions that prepared the grounds for changes in the Late Chalcolithic period in western Anatolia. The dearth of excavations at pre-Bronze Age sites in western Anatolia remains a serious impediment to furthering our knowledge of the cultural interactions. In light of the minimal number of evidence, it is hoped that this short essay will shed new light one of the least known aspects of the eastern Aegean during the fifth millennium B.C.

EVIDENCE FOR INTERACTION

The analysis of pottery and lithic evidence may enable us to interpret the nature of interactions. For instance, evaluation of the similarities among the basic pottery features such as shape, fabric, decoration, and manufacturing techniques between the pottery recovered from Kulaksızlar and other western Anatolian sites and those of the eastern Aegean islands provides significant information on this issue. The pottery from Kulaksızlar is hand-made and chiefly dark surfaced and has mainly an olive gray to black fabric. There are also brownish-red and orange-brown fragments, which had no noticeable differences in fabric to the other pots. In addition to the manufacturing techniques, the shapes of the pots also display considerable homogeneity. Wide bowls with up-raised handles set on top of the rim and large globular jars with collar-necks are the main two distinctive shapes that prevail in the Kulaksızlar repertoire.

The wide bowl with up-raised large handles set on top of the rim is widely represented in the Kulaksızlar pottery assemblage. Most of these uprising handles have knob-like projections at base (Fig. 2: 1-3). These wide bowls with large handles that stood more or less upright above the rim find their closest parallels at Emporio and Tigani in the eastern Aegean islands. When mentioning this type of pottery from Emporio on Chios, Hood (1981 : 278, fig. 134) states that "one of the most striking features in the pottery of these early periods at Emporio was the occurrence of surprisingly large handles on bowls. These handles were set on the tops of bowl rims and rose from them. Large bowl handles of this type were apparently most at home during Period IX, but handles on bowls. These handles were set on the tops of bowl rims and rose from them. Many fragments of them were recovered from levels of VIII, and some from pure deposits of X." In additon to the shape, there are also some similarities in manufacturing techniques. The presence of handle fragments with a hole through it at both Emporio (Hood, 1981 : no. 311) and at Kulaksızlar (Fig. 2: 7) implies that the potters of these cultures adopted similar manufacturing techniques. In a similar way, twisted bowl-handles belonging to same type of bowls with upraised large handles comparable to the ones from Kulaksızlar (Fig. 2: 4) have also been reported from Emporio VIII and Tigani II (Felsch, 1988 : no. 47.2,5 and 74.5 ; Hood, 1981 : no. 321).

This distinctive type of bowl with knobbed uprising handles is strikingly not widely represented in western Anatolia and finds parallels only at the southwestern Anatolian sites such as Kuruçay and Karain Cave. Kuruçay excavations provided three fragments of bowls with knobbed uprising handle and one twisted uprising handle that are identical to those found at Kulaksızlar (Duru, 1994 :

pls. 67.5-6 ; 102.10-13). The recovery of such fragments from Kuruçay is quite striking in view of the fact that they constitute the nearest parallels of those Kulaksızlar pottery found anywhere in western Anatolia so far. These fragments from large bowls with upraised handles were found in Level 11 of Late Neolithic Kuruçay. Noting that they were different from the local products in terms of shape, surface treatment, and manufacturing technique, as well as their rarity, the excavator of the site also considered the idea that they might have been introduced to Kuruçay (Duru, 1994 : 39). The presence of stumps of bowls with upraised large handles in a Late Neolithic level at Kuruçay probably has probably something to do with the geomorphological deformations at this part of the site or the disruption caused during the rebuilding activities during the succeeding periods. There is evidence from the excavations at Karain Cave that this distinctive type of bowl could be dated to the fifth millennium B.C. Indeed, the bowl rims with the stumps of handles were recovered from the level II at Karain Cave (Kökten, 1955 : 288, pl. 2.7).

Large globular jars with a collar-neck constitute the second major type represented at the site of Kulaksızlar. Their bodies are basically globular, while the necks are more or less differentiated from the shoulders. Rims normally either stand upright or slope inwards. The bases were probably flat, since the base fragments found on the surface were flat. Handles appear to have varied in form. Jars with upright and inward-sloping collar necks have a pair of small vertical handles (sometimes knobbed) joining the neck to the shoulder. This type of jar with a pair of handles joining neck to shoulders were very prominent at Emporio VIII (Type 41) and Tigani II-III. Similar upright rims with clear differentiation between the neck and shoulder also occur at Saliagos in small quantities (Hood, 1981 : no. 346 ; Felsch, 1988 : pl. 78 ; Evans and Renfrew, 1968 : Fig. 44 and 53). Such use of vertical handles on jars is known to us from level VIII at Emporio, level II at Tigani, and Saliagos. One other form of handle associated with this type of globular jar is the vertical strap handle with pinched up ridge at top. Such a handle form with pinched up-ridge was also found at Tigani, Saliagos, and Lower Bağbaşı (Evans and Renfrew, 1968 : Fig. 45.6 ; Felsch, 1988 : Fig. 58 ; Eslick, 1992 : pl. 64.9 and 15).

The decorations observed on these jars can also be used to establish culture contacts. Several fragments with *pointillé* recovered at Kulalsızlar (*e.g.* Fig. 2: 5) display similarities to the ones recovered from the sites of the Aegean islands such as levels II-IIIA at Tigani, Aghio Gala Upper Cave, and Kalimnos (Heidenreich, 1936 : pl. 29.2 ; Felsch, 1988 : no. 248 and 251 ; Hood, 1981 : no. 286 ; Furness, 1956 : pl. 22.23). There are also occasional cases where these bowls are adorned with relief decorations such as knobs with rounded sections (*e.g.* Fig. 2: 6) and crescent lugs (*e.g.* Fig. 2: 9). These projections, or special types of ledge lugs, which seem to have served as handles, are also common at Emporio and Karain Cave (Hood, 1981 : 291, Fig. 137, no. 2 ; Seeher, 1987 : Fig. 8.5-6). Crescent lugs, on the other hand, were at home at Saliagos, Emporio IX, and at Karain Cave (Evans and Renfrew, 1968 : Fig. 47 ; Hood, 1981 : no. 128 ; Seeher, 1987 : Fig. 2.22).

In addition to pottery, there is lithic evidence confirming that the communities of western Anatolia and the Aegean islands were in close culture contact. The discovery of one rim and a wall fragment of marble pointed beakers at Tigani on Samos (Felsch, 1988 : pl. 48) is also striking in view of the fact that there is archaeological evidence showing their place of manufacture at Kulaksızlar in western Anatolia. Getz-Gentle briefly evaluated the western Anatolian-Aegean connection with regard to pointed beaker forms and stated that an Anatolian origin of the beaker type ought to be seriously considered (Getz-Gentle, 1996 : 286, note 96). It is possible to argue that the mechanisms responsible for the presence of similarities in the pottery assemblages between the sites of the eastern Aegean islands and that of Kulaksızlar must also be responsible for the presence of the marble pointed beaker type in the Aegean islands. I assume that marble pointed beakers found on the Aegean islands such as Samos, Keos, and Naxos may be viwed as local imitations of Kulaksızlar marble pointed beakers that arrived there through exchange. Likewise, the marble Kilia figurines with jutted heads manufactured at Kulaksızlar may well have served as prototypes for the Cycladic types of the succeeding periods. Therefore, lithic evidence is also in accord with the one derived from the analysis of several pottery types common at both regions confirms that western Anatolia and the Aegean islands shared similar cultural asemblages through exchange.

DISCUSSION OF EVIDENCE

Kulaksızlar pottery assemblage can provisionally be placed into mid, fifth millennium B.C. on the basis of synchronization with other pottery found at sites with stratigraphically proven dates,

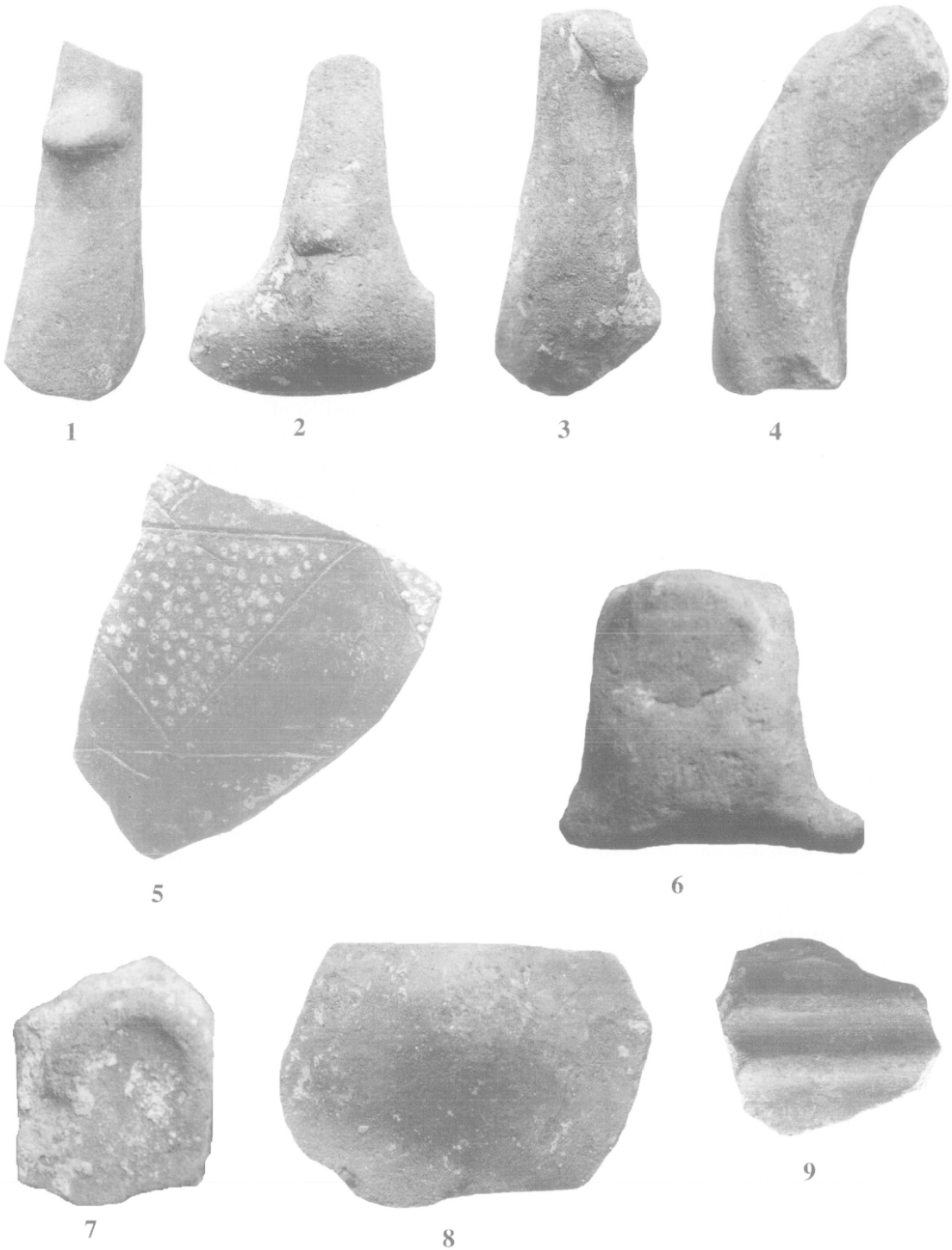


Fig. 2.

1. Large bowl handle with projection at base, circular in section with a hole through it; medium-fired, olive-gray to black clay with lightly burnished exterior [Pres. H. 9.1 cm]; **2.** Stump of a large bowl handle with a knob-like projection, circular in section; medium-fired, olive-gray to black clay with inclusions [Pres. H. 8.7 cm, Pres. W. 6.4 cm]; **3.** Stump of a large bowl handle with projection at base, circular in section; medium-fired, olive-gray to black clay with inclusions; the exterior is lightly burnished [Pres. H. 10.3 cm]; **4.** Twisted bowl handle with circular section; medium-fired, gray-black clay; the exterior is lightly burnmished [Pres. H. 7.3 cm]; **5.** Wall fragment of a jar; medium-fired, olive-gray to black clay with inclusions; lightly burnished gray-black exterior has incised chevrons filled with white-paste-filled punctuated dots [Pres. H. 9.4 cm, Pres. H. 8.3 cm]; **6.** Jar fragment with vertical handle with pitched upright ridge, thin-oval in section; brown clay with unburnished exterior [Pres. H. 6.2 cm, Pres. W. 6.3 cm]; **7.** Wall fragment of a jar with crescent lug; medium-fired, brown clay with inclusions, the exterior is partially eroded [Pres. H. 5.6 cm, Pres. W. 4.7 cm]; **8.** Wall fragment of a jar with rounded relied decoration; medium-fired, gray-black clay; lightly burnished exterior [Pres. H. 5.7 cm, Pres. W. 7.7 cm]; **9.** Wall fragment of a jar with relief decoration; medium-fired, gray-black clay with finely burnished exterior [Pres. H. 4.3 cm, Pres. W. 4.7 cm].

as well as the dating offered for the marble figurines and conical beakers found along with the pottery on the surface of the site of Kulaksızlar (Takaoğlu, 2000 : 96). Level VIII at Emporio on Chios, which yielded the closest parallels for the Kulaksızlar pottery, is often synchronized with the pottery of Kumtepe 1a horizon in the Troad (Hood, 1982 : 716). Pattern-burnished ware has been used to date the Kumtepe 1a horizon. It occurs at sites such as Kumtepe 1a and Beşiktepe in the Troad, Tigani on Samos, and Toptepe 1 and Hocaçeşme in Turkish Thrace. Özdoğan presents archaeological evidence from excavations at Hoca Çeşme and Toptepe in Turkish Thrace for the existence of a considerable time gap between Kumtepe 1a and 1b phases, which pushes the date of Kumtepe 1a pottery back almost a millennium before that of Kumtepe 1b pottery (Özdoğan, 1993 : 183). Özdoğan documented pattern-burnished ware in phase I at Toptepe along with Karanovo III/IV sherds, which contradicts the traditional approaches of seeing Kumtepe 1a and 1b as successive chronological phases. This evidence may indicate a date for Kumtepe 1a pottery (and hence for pottery of Emporio VIII, Tigani II, and Kulaksızlar) possibly somewhere in the mid-fifth millennium B.C. This relative date obtained for Kulaksızlar pottery through syncronization is in accord with the C^{-14} date proposed for the two marble Kilia figurine fragments from Aphrodisias and two rim fragments of marble pointed beakers from Beşik-Sivritepe. Excavations at prehistoric Aphrodisias provided three C^{-14} dates (two from level VIIIA and one from level VIIIB), which can be useful for the dating of the two Kilia figurine torsos found in level VIIIA. Joukowsky (1986 : 164). proposes a calibrated 4360-4100 B.C. date for level VIIIA, in which these two Kilia figurine torsos were found.

There are additional calibrated C^{-14} dates from Troad. The analysis of six samples from grid PP82 and one sample from grid QQ82 from Beşik-Sivritepe gave calibrated dates that fall into the first half or the mid-fifth millennium B.C. (Korfmann and Kromer, 1992 : 145, Table 4). This dating is important because it provides a date for the pattern-burnish and Kumtepe 1a wares, which are nearly contemporary to pottery from Emporio VIII, Tigani II-III, and Kulaksızlar. In light of these stylistic comparisons of pottery and the C^{-14} dates, the pottery tradition represented by Kulaksızlar and other sites may fall into a period somewhere in the mid-fifth millennium B.C. This may correspond to the earlier stages of Late Chalcolithic and perhaps parts of the vaguely understood transitional Middle Chalcolithic period in Anatolian chronology.

Christine Eslick (1980 : 12) presents evidence from the Elmalı Plain in southwestern Anatolia that may also belong to this transitional stage. Eslick also demonstrates that Middle Chalcolithic pottery tradition of the Elmalı Plain is closer to that of the preceeding Neolithic and Early Chalcolithic horizons rather than to that of the Late Chalcolithic. Thus, she argues that there is no need to hypothesize a theory favoring the introduction of a fully developed Late Chalcolithic culture into the southeast Anatolia from outside and states that a more gradual replacement of the Early Chalcolithic culture is possible (Eslick, 1980 : 13). Eslick also observed a cultural link between this pottery tradition of the Elmalı and that of the eastern Aegean islands during this period. She proposed two geographical routes by which this interaction could have taken place. The first one could have involved a land-based route northwards to the Burdur area and then reached to the coast through the Büyük Menderes (Meander) River valley, while the second route would have been a coastal one. Kulaksızlar pottery now adds a new dimesion to the extend of these cultural interactions in the eastern Aegean. It is possible that the land-based route through the river valleys also involved the Gediz (Hermos) River route, which was already serving a natural trade route that tied the western Anatolian coast with the hinterland ever since the Neolithic times. Thus, it would appear from the foregoing discussion that certain artifacts or related ideas moved along the already established trade networks involving both land- and maritime-based routes. This in turn indicates that the cultural pace of the centuries following the Early Chalcolithic in western Anatolia was not as slow as one may assume.

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T.T.

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