

# ÇEŞME-BAĞLARARASI: A NEW EXCAVATION IN WESTERN ANATOLIA

Vasıf Şahoğlu\*

Aegean prehistory became a research subject in the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the work of both travelers and archaeologists and has increasingly continued to draw the attention of archaeologists. Research on mainland Greece, Crete and in the Cyclades has enabled the definition of cultural areas that developed independently but with continuous contact with each other. Archaeological work in these areas has enabled the definition of Helladic, Minoan and Cycladic cultures in mainland Greece, Crete and the Cyclades, respectively.<sup>1</sup> The western coast of Anatolia, on the other hand, has long been ignored in the field of prehistoric research, hindering the development of an equivalent terminology that, in other areas of the Aegean, defines culturally distinct phenomena.<sup>2</sup>

Archaeological research carried out in the past 20 years on the coastline of western Anatolia has shed light on the prehistoric periods in this area and has enabled the definition of a continuous chronology for the area<sup>3</sup> which can now also be correlated with the rest of the Aegean.<sup>4</sup> Troy, Kumtepe and Yenibademlihöyük in the north, Liman Tepe, Bakla Tepe, Panaztepe, Kocabaş Tepe, Ulucak, Bademgediği and most recently Çeşme in the İzmir region and the more southern sites of Ephesos, Miletus and Iasos have started to shed light on the prehistory of the region from the Neolithic period through the end of the Late Bronze Age (LBA).

The Neolithic culture of the region is being defined through the excavations at Ulucak,<sup>5</sup> while the Chalcolithic period has been investigated at Bakla Tepe<sup>6</sup> and Kumtepe.<sup>7</sup> The Early Bronze Age (EBA) has been investigated and interpreted on a regional scale at settlements such as Liman Tepe,<sup>8</sup> Bakla Tepe, Troy,<sup>9</sup> Yenibademlihöyük,<sup>10</sup> Iasos<sup>11</sup> and Ephesos,<sup>12</sup> and the interregional relationships of the western Anatolian coast are being defined.<sup>13</sup> The cultures of the western Anatolian coastline during the second millennium BC continue to be investigated at Troy,<sup>14</sup> Panaztepe,<sup>15</sup> Liman Tepe,<sup>16</sup> Bademgediği,<sup>17</sup> Miletus<sup>18</sup> and Iasos.<sup>19</sup>

The settlement at Çeşme-Bağlararası, where excavations began in 2002, has also started to provide important new data concerning both the sociopolitical structure of prehistoric cultures of the western Aegean littoral and interregional contacts, especially during the first half of the second millennium BC.

The site, close to the modern Çeşme harbor, was discovered in 2001 by chance when foundation trenches were being dug for a new apartment block. The Directorate of Çeşme Museum quickly intervened and further destruction was halted. Excavations at the site are continuing in collaboration with Çeşme Museum under the scientific direction of Prof. Hayat Erkanal<sup>20</sup> within the framework of the İzmir Region Excavations and Research Project

\* Ankara University.

<sup>1</sup> FITTON 1995.

<sup>2</sup> KOUKA 2000.

<sup>3</sup> MANNING 1995; GÜNEL 1999a; ŞAHOĞLU 2002, pl. 116; AYKURT 2004, table I.

<sup>4</sup> See WARREN and HANKEY 1989; MARAN 1998; MANNING 1999; CULLEN 2001.

<sup>5</sup> DERIN *et al.* 2002; DERIN *et al.* 2004; ÇILINGIROĞLU *et al.* 2004.

<sup>6</sup> ERKANAL and ÖZKAN 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000.

<sup>7</sup> KORFMANN *et al.* 1995.

<sup>8</sup> ERKANAL 1996, 1999; ŞAHOĞLU 2002.

<sup>9</sup> BLEGEN *et al.* 1950a, 1950b; BLEGEN *et al.* 1951; KORFMANN and KROMER 1993; KORFMANN 2001.

<sup>10</sup> HÜRYILMAZ 2001, 2002, 2004.

<sup>11</sup> PACORELLA 1984.

<sup>12</sup> EVREN 1996, 1999.

<sup>13</sup> KOUKA 2002.

<sup>14</sup> KORFMANN 1992, 1993, 1995; JABLONKA 1994; MOUNTJOY 1997a, 1997b; PAVUK 2002.

<sup>15</sup> For the most recent report on Panaztepe see ERKANAL and ÖKTÜ 2004; see also GÜNEL 1999a.

<sup>16</sup> For the most recent report on Liman Tepe see ERKANAL *et al.* 2004; see also GÜNEL 1999b, 2004.

<sup>17</sup> MERİÇ and MOUNTJOY 2002, 2003; MERİÇ *et al.* 2004, 296.

<sup>18</sup> NIEMEIER and NIEMEIER 1997; von GRAEVE and NIEMEIER 2002.

<sup>19</sup> MOMIGLIANO 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003; BENZI *et al.* 2000; MOMIGLIANO *et al.* 2001; MOMIGLIANO *et al.* 2002.

<sup>20</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. HAYAT ERKANAL for his support and the permission to study and publish the material from Çeşme-Bağlararası. I am also thankful to various members of IRERP for their assistance in the field and additional cooperation.

(IRERP).<sup>21</sup> The third season of excavation has just been completed and, despite being a relatively new excavation, Çeşme-Bağlararası has started to contribute new information to many aspects of Anatolian prehistory.

Especially toward the middle of the second millennium BC, Cretan traders who were active in the southern Aegean were also extending their influence northward, enabling the spread of Minoan culture through the northern Aegean as well.<sup>22</sup> Settlements that could be termed “Minoan colonies, were formed in the southwestern Aegean, the Cyclades and on the western Anatolian coastline to control the trade networks of the Aegean.<sup>23</sup>

The most northerly settlement displaying intensive Minoan influence on the western Anatolian littoral was, until recently, Miletus.<sup>24</sup> Çeşme-Bağlararası is an important harbor town inhabited during the Middle Minoan (MM) III to Late Minoan (LM) IA periods when Minoan activity was at its peak in the wider Aegean world,<sup>25</sup> and is located farther north than Miletus.

Although the levels that have so far been investigated at Çeşme-Bağlararası date to this relatively short time span, there is evidence that earlier and later levels are extant in the vicinity. Approximately 30 m northwest of the excavation area, levels dating to late EBA II were encountered in trial trenches dug by the Çeşme Archaeological Museum.<sup>26</sup> These levels, contemporary with level V of Liman Tepe,<sup>27</sup> also display close affinities with the pottery tradition of Liman Tepe. Along with dark-faced burnished wares of the western Anatolian coastline, a red-slipped two-handled cup suggests that this settlement was an active participant in the “Early Bronze Age Anatolian Trade Network.”<sup>28</sup>

The latest material from the excavated area northwest of the main excavation derives from a pit that contains material contemporary with the Late Helladic (LH) IIIA:2–IIIB:1 periods. This pit, which

is dug into the Middle Bronze Age (MBA) levels, contains local buff-slipped pottery along with imported painted Mycenaean ceramics. Kylikes, stirrup jars, bowls, and spouted bowls are among the pottery forms found in this pit. These finds indicate the existence of a LBA settlement in the vicinity. Due to intensive modern habitation in the area no traces of this settlement have yet been encountered.

In the main excavation area three architectural phases were investigated, contemporary with the MM III–LM IA periods.

#### CURRENT STRATIGRAPHY AT ÇEŞME-BAĞLARARASI (ÇB)

pit	LH IIIA:2–IIIB:1
gap	
ÇB 1	LM IA
ÇB 2a	MM III
earthquake	
ÇB 2b	MM III
gap	
nearby settlement	late EBA II

#### I. Phase 2b: Architecture

ÇB 2b is so far the earliest phase of the settlement and was founded on sterile soil in most areas. The settlement has a well-organized plan with big house groups separated by streets (Fig. 1). Phase 2b consists mainly of buildings with single rooms in which internal architectural features and their relative positions are almost standardized. The buildings were constructed of mud brick on stone foundations. Locally available limestone slabs were used in the construction of the foundations. Some of the walls are preserved, up to 1.5 m high, but so far there is no indication of multistoried buildings. One of the most striking features of the buildings is the plastered surface of the inner faces of the walls. This plaster covers both the mud brick and the stone foundations.

<sup>21</sup> The Izmir Region Excavations and Research Project is generously supported by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Turkey; Ankara University Scientific Research Fund Project No. 2002-0901010; TÜBİTAK, Project No. SBB-2013; INSTAP Ankara University, Faculty of Letters; INSTAP-SCEC; the Urla Municipality; and the Turkish Historical Society. For brief information on IRERP see [www.geocities.com/irerp\\_tr](http://www.geocities.com/irerp_tr).

<sup>22</sup> See DAVIS 2001, 29 for Ayia Irini, Keos and MATSAS 1991, 1995 and this volume for Mikro Vouni, Samothrace.

<sup>23</sup> See BRANIGAN 1983; NIEMEIER and NIEMEIER 1997, 241–4;

REHAK and YOUNGER 2001, 426 with n. 302; DAVIS and GOROGIANNI, forthcoming.

<sup>24</sup> NIEMEIER and NIEMEIER 1997, 229–40 with figs. 54–80.

<sup>25</sup> For further finds dating to these periods see GUZOWSKA 2002 for Troy; MERİÇ and MOUNTJOY 2003 for Bademgediği Tepesi (Puranda) in the Izmir region.

<sup>26</sup> Systematic excavation of the EBA settlement is planned for 2005 within the framework of IRERP.

<sup>27</sup> ŞAHOĞLU 2002, pl. 116 (chronology chart).

<sup>28</sup> ŞAHOĞLU 2004.

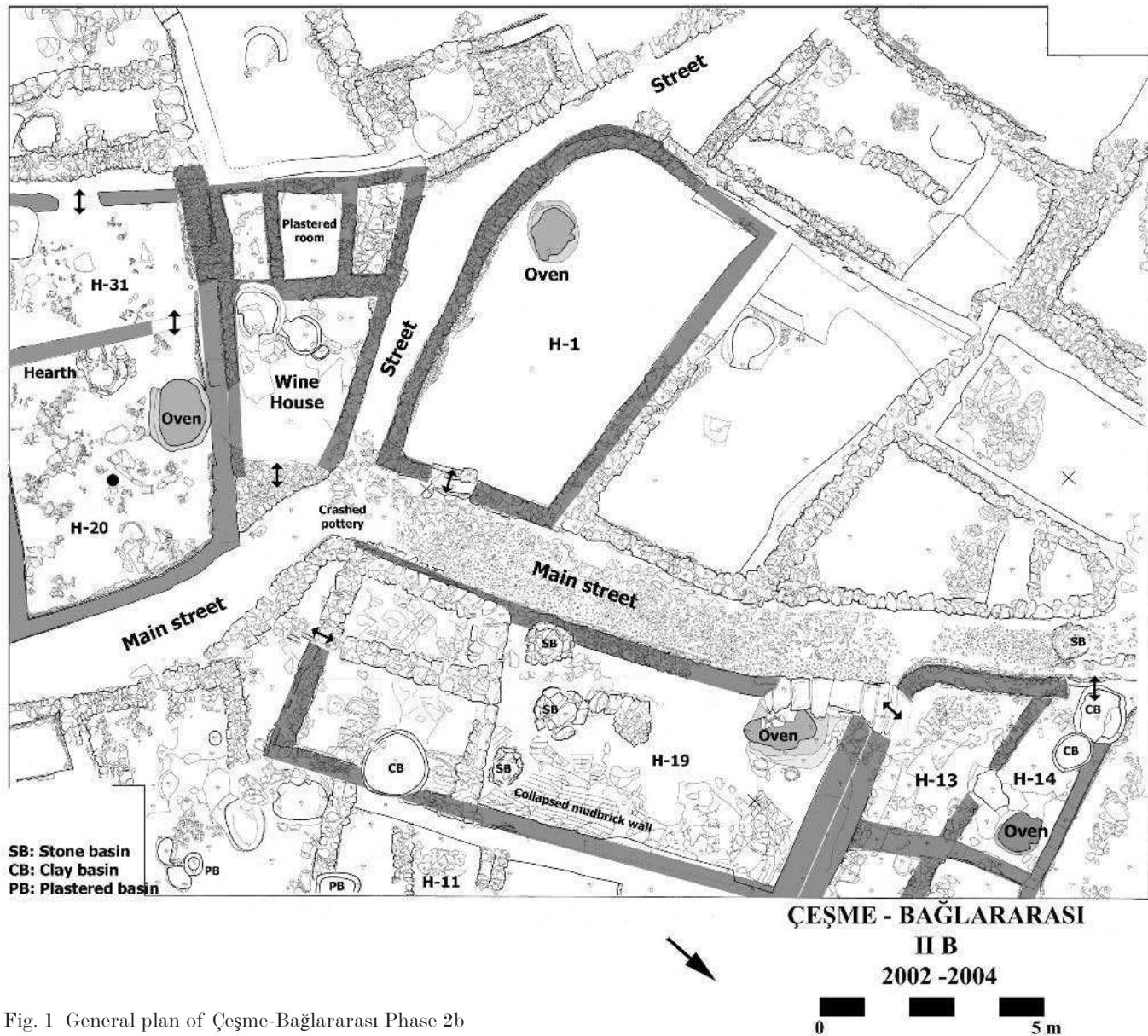


Fig. 1 General plan of Çeşme-Bağlararası Phase 2b (houses mentioned in the text are indicated in darker colour)

Another feature of the architecture is double walls. Although the buildings are tightly clustered within the settlement, neighboring houses were constructed independently of each other and almost every house has its own walls (Fig. 2).

All but a few of the investigated structures belong to domestic units. Beyond the entrance doorway of each building, an oven is located in the far left interior corner. These ovens possess a domed superstructure. In addition, one or two in situ jars were present in almost every house, some of these in secondary use and sunk into the ground. In some houses, a hearth was located next to the oven. Plastered platforms that were used for food preparation were also found beside these areas.

Phase 2b, dated to within the MM III period,

ended with a strong earthquake that affected the entire settlement. The effects of this earthquake could be observed in almost every structure. Mudbrick walls collapsed, mainly into the houses, in some cases covering a relatively large area and sealing it until today (Fig. 1). The exceptionally well-preserved condition of the collapsed mudbrick walls suggest an immediate recovery and new building or reconstruction activities that quickly followed the substantial natural disaster.

#### House 19

House 19 is the largest building so far unearthed at Çeşme-Bağlararası (Figures 1, 2). It is a rectangular structure consisting of one room measuring 11.0 x 4.3 m. The walls of the building are of mudbrick on

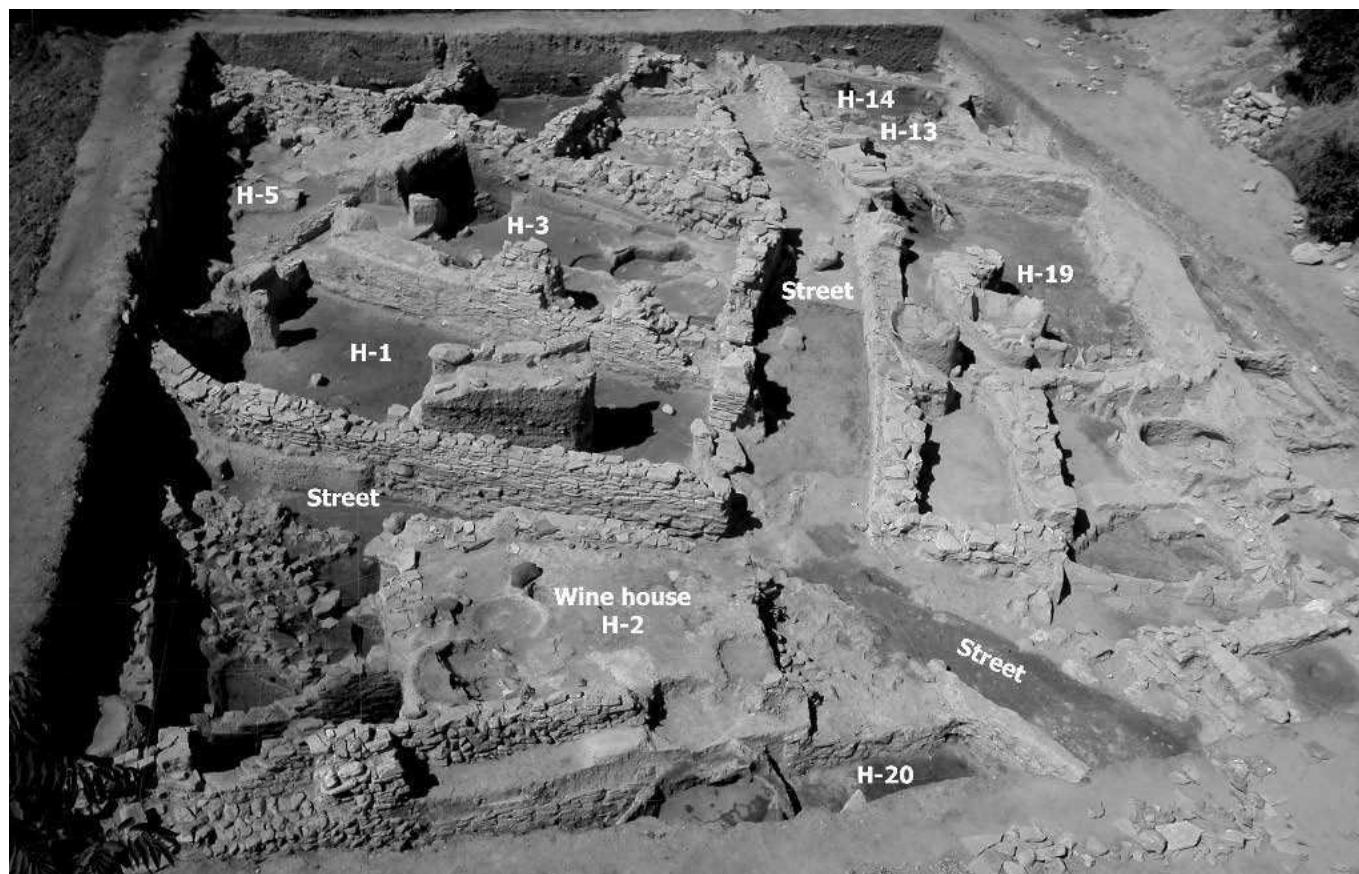


Fig. 2 Aerial view of Çeşme-Bağlararası

stone foundations and were plastered on their inner faces. House 19 is entered from the adjacent street, and inside, a domed oven is located at the far left corner of the building. Close by, two in situ jars, in secondary use, were present. These jars were intentionally buried in the ground next to the oven, most probably for storage purposes. Besides the two jars, various weights and spindle whorls made of stone and clay, associated with textile production, were found.

The northeastern wall of the building had collapsed into the building during the earthquake. After the excavation of this 3.5 m long mudbrick wall, the plaster found beneath the collapse (Fig. 1) was cleaned by a team from INSTAP-SCEC in 2003 and was later lifted by experts sent by the same institution in 2004.<sup>29</sup> At the time of its excavation, a thin layer of red pigment found beneath the plaster was

thought to have been paint. Upon further investigation, the identification was rejected.

After the strong earthquake that marked the end of phase 2b, House 19 was abandoned and no longer used. Some better-preserved wall remains might have been reused in the subsequent phase 2a but this cannot be established on the basis of the surviving data. The doorway of the building was blocked with vertically placed slab stones (Fig. 2), an arrangement that can be observed in almost all of the structures that were destroyed in the earthquake. No conclusions can yet be made as to why these doorways were blocked.

#### *Houses 13 and 14*

Another group of buildings consists of Houses 13 and 14 located to the north of House 19 (Fig. 1). Both of these houses are relatively small and possess doorways facing the street (Fig. 2). The main street

<sup>29</sup> We would like to express our gratitude to the Managing Committee of INSTAP as well as the Director of INSTAP-SCEC, Tom Brogan, and conservators Ephtichia

Papadopoulou, Argyris Konitsidiotis, Kostis and Myron Nikakis for their valuable efforts.



Fig. 3 Çeşme Bağlararası Phase 2b: Finds in situ from H-20

appears to be making a turn toward the north of these houses, and its orientation will be further clarified in future seasons. As in most other houses, an oven is located in the far left corner of House 14, relative to the entranceway. The walls are white-plastered. The earthquake resulted in a fire within this house. There is evidence that these buildings were reused subsequent to the earthquake after undergoing some alterations. For example, the wall that had separated the rooms was demolished and an oven was constructed on top of it during the 2b phase, while the doorways of the buildings were blocked with vertically placed stones.

#### *House 20*

Another domestic structure belonging to this phase is House 20 (Fig. 1). A small part of this building was excavated in 2003, and it was unearthed in its entirety in 2004 (Fig. 3). This structure, which is farther down the main street, adjacent to the wine house, was completely destroyed during the earthquake and its mudbrick walls were discovered collapsed into the building.

This building consists of two square rooms, H-20

and H-31 (Fig. 1). While some of its walls had stone foundations, some were built of mudbrick alone. The first room upon entering (H-31) contained an assortment of kitchen vessels, while some large rounded flintstones ca. 0.10 m in diameter were found next to the doorway that leads into the second room.

The second room, possibly to be identified as a kitchen, is the only room found so far at Çeşme-Bağlararası that is entirely undisturbed (Fig. 3). On the left side of the room, a domed oven was found. Farther along, a hearth was located abutting the wall that separates the two rooms (Figures 1, 3). Finds from within and around the oven suggest that the inventory of the room was in situ. Two rounded flintstones ca. 0.10 m in diameter, found at the mouth of the oven, may have served to light the fire for the oven. Beside the oven were located a large grinding-stone and a grinder (Fig. 3). Between the oven and the grinding-stone was a jar that probably served to collect the processed grain (flour) from the grinding-stone. Adjacent to these was a plastered platform that probably served as a working area (Fig. 3). Within this room was a pottery assemblage consisting of over 20 separate vessels. These included large storage



Fig. 4 Çeşme Bağlararası Phase 2b: Trefoil mouthed jugs from the “Wine House”

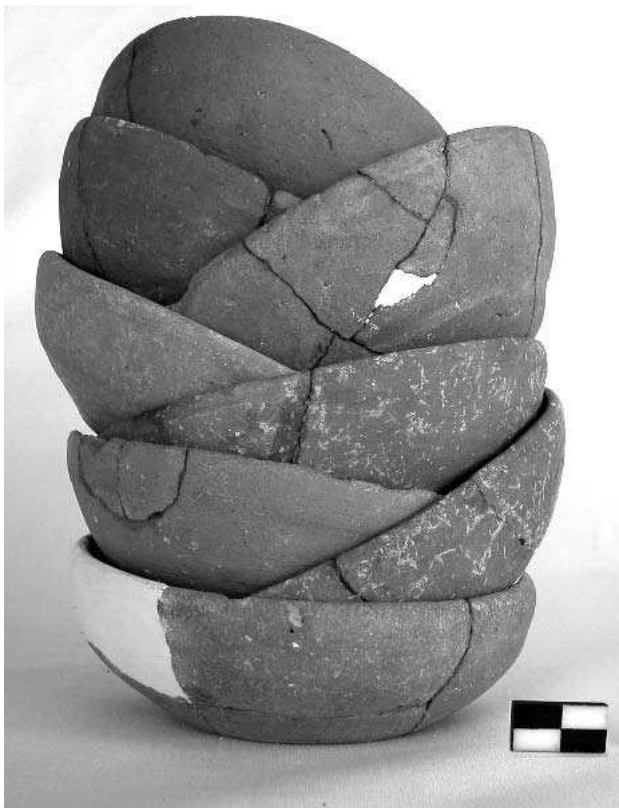


Fig. 5 Çeşme Bağlararası Phase 2b: Hemispherical cups from the “Wine House”

vessels, smaller trefoil jugs, vases with lids, kitchen vessels and bowls. The only imported example within this assemblage is a small cup, which has a soft yellow fabric and worn black slip. Spindle whorls, pointing to textile production, were also discovered in this room. These finds were unearthed in 2004 and their restoration and conservation is underway.

#### *Wine House (House 2)*

House 2, belonging also to phase 2b, reflects an industrial character (Figures 1, 2). The building was a wine production facility, one of the earliest examples indicating wine production and storage in the eastern Aegean.<sup>30</sup> The structure is trapezoidal, consisting of a room at the front with three small subterranean storage areas at the back. In the front room, located at a higher level than the storage areas, a complex of features thought to be associated with wine production was uncovered, including a circular plastered basin linked to a smaller plastered pit.<sup>31</sup> The larger

<sup>30</sup> ERKANAL and KARATURGUT 2004, 156–7, 000 11–2.

<sup>31</sup> ERKANAL and KARATURGUT 2004, 157, 000 11–2.



Fig. 6 Çeşme Bağlararası Phase 2b: Face pots from the “crashed pottery deposit” in the main street

feature must have served as the press, while the smaller one was where the juice was collected.<sup>32</sup>

The storage rooms at the back of House 2 also contribute to the interpretation of this building's function. The southernmost of these storage rooms contained bowls and jars, as well as a lid. Within this room were botanical finds of grape and olive seeds as well as almonds. Fish bones were also abundant. The floor and the four walls of the central room were plastered. This feature probably enabled the storage of liquids inside and the room probably served as a cistern where wine was kept. The northernmost room, on the other hand, was paved with stone slabs and contained numerous trefoil and straight-mouthed jugs as well as semiglobular bowls. The entire assemblage of the building suggests that this was indeed a “wine house”, and served as the area where the grapes were pressed, made into wine, stored and consumed, and possibly some of the wine was transported elsewhere. Thanks to the strong earthquake that

destroyed the city at Çeşme-Bağlararası, the architectural features as well as the associated in situ pottery and small finds enable us to better interpret the character of the settlement and the function of this building.

## II. Phase 2b: Pottery

The majority of the ceramics discovered in phase 2b are local. The second largest group, after buff-slipped and red-slipped vessels of high quality, are coarseware vessels, serving as daily cooking pots. In this early phase, there are not many imported ceramics.

An important assemblage was unearthed in the wine house. Most of the vessels from this context are trefoil jugs (Fig. 4). These are buff- or red-slipped and form the characteristic pottery group known from Liman Tepe,<sup>33</sup> Panaztepe<sup>34</sup> and Kocabaş Tepe<sup>35</sup> in the Izmir region. The semiglobular cups found in the same context were probably used as drinking vessels (Fig. 5). This form, found in large numbers, should be

<sup>32</sup> See KOPAKA 1993 with parallels and bibliography; see also HAMILAKIS 1999 for another construction for wine production at Vathypetro in Crete.

<sup>33</sup> GÜNEL 1999b, 53, fig. 14.16–7, pl. 12.2.

<sup>34</sup> GÜNEL 1999a, 52, 000 106, 162.

<sup>35</sup> AYKURT 2004.



Fig. 7 Çeşme Bağlararası Phase 2b: Imported footed jar from the “crashed pottery deposit” in the main street

interpreted as the functional equivalent on the western Anatolian coastline of the Minoan conical cups.

A group of *in situ* ceramics discovered in the street adjacent to the wine house probably originates from this building and was deposited in its present location during the earthquake when the house tumbled in this direction (Fig. 1). This group consists of an important repertory of shapes, including face-pots. Two face-pots from the area have quite large dimensions and were probably used as storage vessels within the wine house (Fig. 6). In addition to these, large trefoil-mouthed jugs, various bowls, a pyxis, a jar and an imported footed vessel (Fig. 7) were also recovered. The local ceramics of Çeşme-Bağlararası display strong central Anatolian influences, paralleled at nearby Liman Tepe.<sup>36</sup> Other important finds from this level include lids for incense burners, most of these from House 19.

The imported pottery from this earliest phase of the settlement contemporary with the MM III period is yellowish and has a soft fabric. The mottled black slip of the footed vessel that was found together with the face-pots is severely worn (Fig. 7). This vessel has

<sup>36</sup> See GÜNEL 1999b for an account of the second-millennium pottery from Liman Tepe.

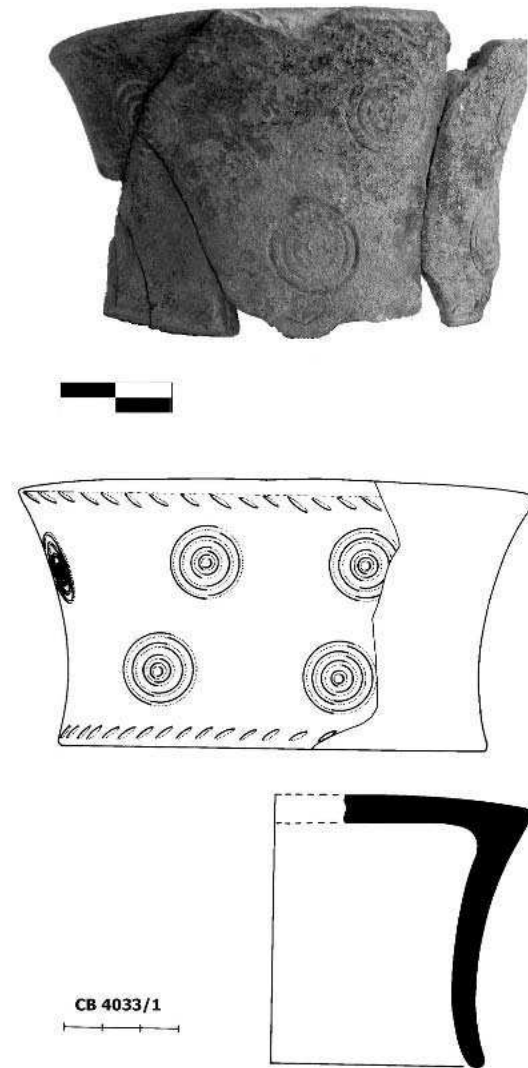


Fig. 8 Çeşme Bağlararası Phase 2b: Imported dark phased incised and impressed pyxis lid from H-11

the same fabric as some other sherds belonging to smaller vessels found in this deposit. These examples also bear a similar thin, red/black mottled slip. The other two imported examples are a cup from House 20, excavated in 2004, and a jug from the wine house.

Another find that can be classified as an import and which is probably of Thera origin belongs to the group of “dark-faced incised pottery”. This example is a dark-slipped lid (Fig. 8).<sup>37</sup> The top of the lid is decorated with impressed concentric circles and incised lines. Sherds of similar lids belonging to the same ware group were discovered in various other

<sup>37</sup> For similar examples from Thera (Akrotiri) and Ayios Nikolaos (near Anavyssos in Attica) dating to the end of EBA III see RAMBACH 2004, 1237–8 with ns. 217–8, pl. 10c.



parts of the settlement. A lid found at Liman Tepe can also be included in this ware group.<sup>38</sup>

Phase 2b, the earliest phase of Çeşme-Bağlararası, ended with a strong earthquake, which resulted in widespread destruction throughout the settlement. The mudbrick walls of the houses usually collapsed into the buildings. Such an earthquake must also have been felt in other settlements in the region.<sup>39</sup> There is, however, evidence that the people of Çeşme quickly recovered and resumed their lives.

#### ÇEŞME-BAĞLARARASI PHASE 2A

This new architectural phase provides evidence that the remaining parts of houses that suffered destruction were reused, while their doorways were blocked with vertically placed stones. Besides a small room, constructed during this phase, many stone (SB), plastered (PB) and clay basins (CB) and hearths belong to this phase (Fig. 1). These finds point to the arrangement of facilities for food preparation, production and, mainly, storage during this phase of the settlement. Phase 2a, which must have been short-lived, represents the continuation of the cultural traits of the previous phase 2b. Phase 2a represents a restructuring phase after the catastrophic earthquake, rather than one in which new developments are evidenced.

In terms of pottery, there are no radical changes. The popularity of the local buff-slipped pottery of western Anatolia continues and no new shapes are introduced. The small number of imported pottery vessels of this phase have the same characteristics as the greyish yellow wares of the previous phase.

The small finds include a cylindrical ivory stamp seal that bears decoration on both of the circular ends.

Although no important metal finds were present in the previous period, phase 2a provides evidence for metal production. A mold for a dagger is important in this respect. A dagger, found within the same context, provides more evidence for the metallurgical activities within the settlement. If phase 2a is considered to have been a continuation of phase 2b, these finds could also be considered to have been salvaged and reused in the later phase.

So far, there is no evidence suggesting the reasons

for the demise of phase 2a. A building destroyed by fire, uncovered in 2004, may provide a clue to the end of the phase. It is still too early, however, to conclude that there was another general catastrophe.

#### ÇEŞME-BAĞLARARASI PHASE 1

Level 1 of phase 1, which lies very close to the surface, preserves only fragments of walls and many pits. Despite the lack of architectural units, the finds, contemporary with LM IA on Crete, from the many pits in this level have provided important evidence for the overseas contacts of Çeşme-Bağlararası.

Another discovery that probably dates to this level was an intramural jar burial. This burial partly destroyed a wall of phase 2a and contained a skeleton in a contracted position. The only grave goods recovered were fragments of bronze.

Many fragments of imported pottery demonstrate the importance of the settlement as a harbor town with extensive overseas contacts and suggest that it was also within the sphere of Minoan influence. These finds also indicate that in western Anatolia, Çeşme-Bağlararası is, so far, the northernmost settlement with such intensive Minoan contacts.

The majority of the ceramics from the pits consist of the characteristic western Anatolian buff-slipped wares. The most common shape is the bead-rim bowl. Anatolian Grey Wares are more common than in previous phases S-profile, cups with flat bases, also characteristic of ÇB 1, are abundant (Fig. 9). These cups replaced the semiglobular cups of the previous phase and must have served the same function.

Incense burners form another important group from the pits.<sup>40</sup> Very similar forms are known from the Thera wall paintings.<sup>41</sup> A lid with many perforations, from phase 2b at Çeşme-Bağlararası, may have been used with such an incense burner.

The imports from ÇB 1 display a wide variety of forms and fabrics. Minoan imports form a small group and include examples distinguished by their high quality. A jug, a cup and some sherds in ripple ware<sup>42</sup> (Fig. 10) belong to this group. Some of these examples may have been produced in central Crete.

Cycladic and southeastern Aegean “Minoanizing” wares dating to the LM IA period form the largest

<sup>38</sup> ERKANAL and GÜNEL 1995, 265; GÜNEL 1999b, fig. 20.51, pl. 14.4.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. NIEMEIER and NIEMEIER 1997, 231–2; GREAVES 2003, 71 for a probable contemporary earthquake in Miletus.

<sup>40</sup> ERKANAL and KARATURGUT 2004, 155, 000 6; for similar

examples in Crete cf. KANTA and ROCCHETTI 1989, 267, fig. 83, nos. 590, 591.

<sup>41</sup> DOUMAS 1994, fig. 113.

<sup>42</sup> ERKANAL and KARATURGUT 2004, 155, 000 5, and n. 11 for similar examples in Crete.

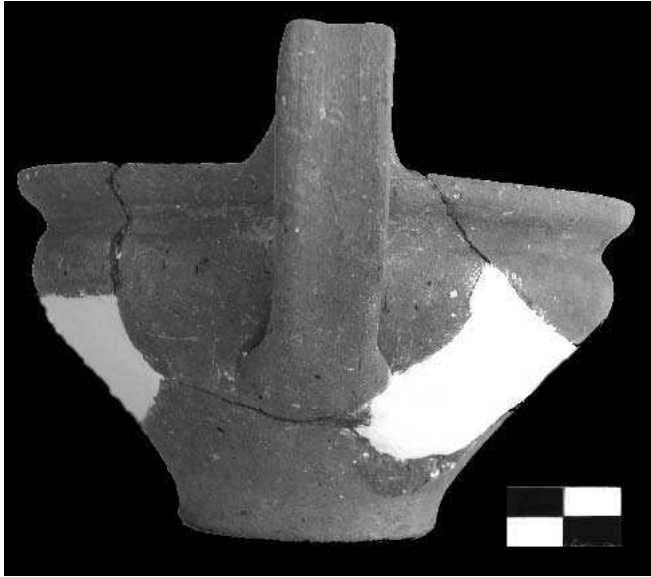


Fig. 9 Çeşme Bağlararası Phase I:  
One handled cup with S-profile

imported pottery group at Çeşme-Bağlararası. Dark-on-light wares are in abundance but some light-on-dark examples also occur (Fig. 11). There are monochrome wares as well as bichrome examples (Fig. 12).

Among the imported pottery are some sherds that are thought to have a Theran origin. These are fine wheel-made examples with brown decoration on a beige slip. There are also some sherds that might be related to the Aeginetan wares. These sherds have a greenish yellow fabric with inclusions. A Cycladic white-slipped jug, bearing geometric motives, is a unique find in this part of the Aegean.<sup>43</sup> The evidence of imported pottery, which displays a large variety of forms and fabrics, suggests that the harbor settlement at Çeşme-Bağlararası did not trade with a single area or center but had strong links with an extensive trade network that included many settlements and areas.

Small finds also provide evidence for the international character of the settlement. Loomweights of Minoan type were found in pits dating to the final occupation phase of the site.<sup>44</sup> A faience bead, a glass bead, an ivory inlay and a gold wire are among other notable finds of this phase.

Çeşme-Bağlararası was abandoned after level I, which is contemporary with the earlier part of the LM IA period. So far there is no evidence to suggest reasons for the demise of the settlement.

<sup>43</sup> ERKANAL and KARATURGUT 2004, 156, 000 7.



Fig. 10 Çeşme Bağlararası Phase I:  
Imported Minoan pottery of ripple ware



Fig. 11 Çeşme Bağlararası Phase I:  
Imported Light on dark (red) handle fragments

Geomorphological investigations undertaken by Eduard Reinhardt and Beverly Goodman from McMaster University, Canada aim to clarify the changes in the coastline and its relationship to the settlement's history. Although still in its initial stages, this research has begun to produce interesting results. A geomorphological core taken about 20 m northeast of the excavation area revealed the presence of tephra. We cannot yet comment on the relationship of this discovery to the stratigraphy of the site nor can we suggest a relationship with the

<sup>44</sup> ERKANAL and KARATURGUT 2004, 156, 000 8.



Fig. 12 Çeşme-Bağlararası Phase 1: Imported Cycladic-Minoanizing dark on light painted cup from Pit 2

eruption of Thera. The results of the analysis of the tephra did not match any of the known sources (Beverly Goodman, personal communication). Future work at the site is hoped to shed further light on this phenomenon.

#### CONCLUSION

The recently discovered settlement at Çeşme-Bağlararası clearly reflects a western Anatolian character with close relations to the central Anatolian and Minoan cultures, in both its architecture and small finds. Due to the lack of settlement data from the first half of the second millennium BC on the western Anatolian coast, the architectural organization of this settlement is, so far, unique. Moreover, it should be noted that, although plastering of the walls is a traditional architectural feature in Anatolian archaeology as early as the Neolithic period,<sup>45</sup> Çeşme-Bağlararası and Miletus are the only sites in western Anatolia found so far that present this feature at the end of the MBA. Therefore, the

application of lime plaster on the house walls of these two settlements could be interpreted as influenced by Minoan architecture. Regarding the ceramics it should be noted that more than 90% of the pottery consists of local wares and shapes reflecting the western Anatolian character of the settlement. In addition to these, imported pottery from the southeastern Aegean, the Cyclades and Minoan Crete, as well as locally produced pottery with decoration inspired by the Minoan and Minoanizing pottery, are present. Finally, the use of loomweights of Minoan type among local types indicates the contacts of the Izmir region with the Minoan world.

Çeşme-Bağlararası was a flourishing harbor site during the period in which Minoan power reached its peak and expanded its influence northward. It is the northernmost settlement on the western Anatolian coast in which contacts to the Minoan world can be traced in architecture, pottery and small finds during the MM III–LM IA periods. The site displays a some-

<sup>45</sup> DERIN *et al.* 2004, 242–3.

what different character from nearby Liman Tepe in terms of Minoan relations of the site.<sup>46</sup> Çeşme-Bağlararası has a stronger link with the Minoan world.

New data from Çeşme-Bağlararası is also helping to clarify the complex dynamics of cultural, political,

social and economic interactions within the Izmir region in particular and the wider Aegean world in general. Future work at the site is expected to further clarify the comparative chronologies of Anatolia and the Aegean during the second millennium BC.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Recent investigations have clearly shown that various settlements throughout the Aegean reflect variability in terms of their character and play a different role within the sphere of the so-called “Minoan Thalassocracy.” For a recent overview of this phenomenon see BROODBANK 2004.

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