

Çaltılar Archaeology Project 2014

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This article is dedicated to the memory of Ali Ocakçı Amca

The main objective of our project has been to conduct intensive surface analysis of the two prehistoric settlement mounds of Çaltılar and Seki-Eceler in the mountainous *yayla* region of western Lycia. In 2008–2010 we completed a total surface survey of the site of Çaltılar (Momigliano et al. 2011) and in 2012–2014 we collected and analysed samples from a series of transects laid out across the surface of the much larger site of Seki-Eceler, 12km south of Çaltılar (Greaves et al. 2013). Both sites are located in a discrete mountain basin with distinctive environmental characteristics that affected the agricultural and economic base of these two pre-Classical communities. In 2014, we therefore conducted geomorphological studies to build up a full picture of the ancient environment and achieve our overall aim of a comparative settlement history of the sites of Çaltılar and Seki-Eceler and the micro-regions that they occupied.

Çaltılar is located among flat fields, whereas Seki-Eceler is situated beside a flood-prone river. In order to relate the two sites to their immediate environs better and to build computer flood models for Seki-Eceler, in 2014 we completed topographic survey of the fields around Çaltılar and the riverbed adjacent to Seki-Eceler using a Magellan Pro Max 500 GPS system. In total, 250 points were taken at Çaltılar and 350 at Seki-Eceler. This new information will be added to our GIS database and will greatly enhance our understanding of the physical shapes of both sites, their histories and their environments.

In order to understand further the ancient environments of both sites, Namık Çağatay of Istanbul Technical University (ITU) directed a programme of geomorphological core sampling. Drilling operations in Çaltılar were carried out south of the *höyük*, and a 7.5m-long core with 11m penetration was recovered. The sedimentary drill-hole



Coring at Çaltılar.

section probably represents a marsh environment. At Seki-Eceler two sites were drilled. Northeast of the *höyük*, due to the predominance of gravel and sand layers in the river sediments, only 4.7m penetration was possible with poor core recovery. South of the *höyük*, the drill penetrated to a depth of 5.5m with a core recovery of 4.8m. The upper 4.65m of the sedimentary section consists of brown silty mud and the lower 15cm consists of pebbly sand. The cores were transported to the EMCOL labs of ITU for sedimentological and geochemical analyses, and will be used for palaeoenvironmental reconstructions.

Neyir Kolankaya-Bostancı of Hacettepe University analysed the lithics collected from both sites. The 24 lithic artefacts collected during the Çaltılar survey include one piece of obsidian, four pieces of radiolarite, five pieces of quartz, four pieces of quartzite and ten pieces of flint. The Çaltılar assemblage is dominated by flint employed to manufacture blades by indirect percussion, many modified into sickle blades, knives and a notched bladelet. Points are represented by a complete radiolarite arrowhead and the base of a quartzite spearpoint. From Seki-Eceler, 38 Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age lithics were found, including three pieces of quartz, seven pieces of quartzite, seven pieces of radiolarite and 21 pieces of flint. No obsidian was found during the survey. Just like the Çaltılar lithic industry, local materials were used for stone tool manufacture. The presence of a flint core fragment, radiolarite platform rejuvenation flake, unretouched blades, bladelets, flakes and waste products indicate local knapping on site. The Seki-Eceler assemblage is also dominated by flint employed to make blades by indirect percussion, but, unlike Çaltılar, only one flake is attested. Again sickle blades and notched blades dominate the assemblage, demonstrating the important role agriculture played in the economies of both sites.

An analysis of the post-Bronze Age pottery was undertaken by Andrew Brown and focused on two main objectives: completion of pottery catalogues for final publication and comparison of the material from the two sites. All the Seki-Eceler survey material (about 9,000 sherds) was examined and sorted to remove any diagnostic material that would aid in the identification of ceramic groups and,



Aerial view of Çaltılar Höyük.

potentially, chronologies (268 pieces in total). These pieces were photographed and selected diagnostic material from the ca 35,000 sherds found at Çaltılar was re-photographed where required – in total, 1,947 photographs were taken. The Seki-Eceler material was then sorted and described, using the same methodology previously employed for the Çaltılar material, giving two comparable diagnostic groups of material.

The initial results of our comparative analysis are, of course, preliminary, but several tentative conclusions can be made. It is clear from examining the Seki-Eceler material that not only does the site run much later than Çaltılar, into the Late Roman period and perhaps later, but that its earliest phases of the Iron Age are less well represented. The abundant local Iron Age wares seen at Çaltılar are present at Eceler, but they are fewer in number and with a smaller range of form and decoration. Equally, the quality of the sherd material from Eceler is poorer; unlike Çaltılar, decorated finewares and imports form a fraction of the assemblages. The sherds are generally more abraded and in a worse condition than those from Çaltılar, and, as a consequence, we have much more undiagnostic or as yet unidentified material from Seki-Eceler. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify material, in addition to the local Iron Age wares, present at both sites. Most obvious is a small group of finewares with well-refined grey clay and streaky black or brown glazes. At Çaltılar these are assumed to be later Iron Age/Archaic in date and are perhaps similar to those at Seki-Eceler, although the clear longevity of the latter site means they could well run into later periods. During the 2014 season, further examples of vessels with thick white or cream slips and geometric decoration, perhaps imports from western Anatolia, were also identified.

In addition to our archaeological research, we held an educational event attended by 150 adults and children from the local village. This was our biggest event since we began our public meetings in 2008. We also further developed the archaeological research facilities at our centre in Çaltılar with the addition of a new drinking fountain and carved stone plaques to guide visitors into the education centre. We also installed new steel shelving units, purchased furniture, painted and undertook other small repairs and building works.

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Iron Age imported ceramics from Çaltılar.

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References

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 Momigliano, N. et al. 2011: 'Report on the Çaltılar Archaeological Project 2008–2010' *Anatolian Studies* 61: 61–121



Ali Amca Ocakçı in the grounds of the restaurant he owned in Çaltılar, with his cook Şerefe.