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Bronze Age Settlement and Cemetery in the Ulubey Canyon in Inland Western Anatolia: Mehmet Bey Dere, Uşak, Turkey

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ABSTRACT
Mehmet Bey Dere is an Early Bronze Age (EBA) settlement and cemetery located in the Ulubey Canyon in inland western Anatolia. This place is unique in western Anatolia with its settlement in the middle terraces of Ulubey Canyon and the cemetery at the bottom of the canyon. The settlement and cemetery are dated to the EBA 2-3 (2700-2000 BC) and the Middle Bronze Age (MBA) (2000-1600 BC). Various sherds, an idol, and other finds were evaluated with an emphasis on the reasons why the settlement and cemetery were preferred over the canyon. Mehmet Bey Dere is a settlement that provides information about the western Anatolian settlement model, cemetery relationships, topography, and how EBA people used the geography in this region, and sheds light on understanding these things.
Keywords: Early Bronze Age, Middle Bronze Age, western Anatolia, Ulubey Canyon, settlement and cemetery, idol

Introduction

The Early Bronze Age (EBA) surveys that we have conducted in Uşak province and its districts have been ongoing since 2013 with the permission of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Early Bronze Age surveys in Uşak Province). During the research we conducted in Ulubey district in 2018, Mehmet Bey Dere (Mehmet Bey's Creek) settlement and cemetery were identified in the region where Ulubey canyon is located. This settlement and cemetery area, which we visited again in 2019 and 2020, differs from other EBA settlements in the region because of its location.

Geographically, Uşak is on the threshold of inland western Anatolia. The region acts as a threshold between central Anatolia and the western Anatolian coasts. The city of Uşak is on the edge of the plain known by its name at an altitude of 900 m. The altitude gradually decreases from east to west of Uşak. While the east of Uşak's geography is at an altitude of 1300m, the west falls to an altitude of 450 m (Oy, 2018a). Numerous EBA settlements have been identified in our previous research in Uşak (Oy, 2017a; 2018a; 2022; Oy et al., 2019). There are also EBA settlements on the banks of the Gediz River (Hermos) (Oy, 2017a). In some of these settlements, cemeteries were also identified (Oy, 2018a).

Some surveys covering prehistoric periods have been conducted in Uşak (Oy, 2014, 2022; Yılmaz, 2019; Yılmaz et al., 2019). The earliest finds in the Uşak region date back to the Middle Palaeolithic Age and were discovered in Banaz-Sürmecik (Taşkıran et al., 2021). Because of the excavations, it was determined that it was an open-air settlement. In addition, settlements dating back to the Neolithic and Chalcolithic ages were identified through surveys carried out throughout the province (Oy, 2019a, 2019b, 2021; Yılmaz, 2020, 2022). There are many prehistoric and protohistoric settlements throughout Uşak. The studies carried out reveal the archaeological richness of the region.

Considering the geographical location of Uşak, it has a connexion with the two important rivers of western Anatolia: The Gediz River and the Büyük Menderes River (Maiandros). The Gediz River passes through the west of Uşak (Oy, 2018b). The largest river in western Anatolia is the Büyük Menderes River. The Banaz Stream passes through the Ulubey region in the southwest of Uşak and connects to the Adıgüzel Dam and from there to the Büyük Menderes River.

The Ulubey Canyon, located in the Ulubey district and one of the longest and most important canyons in Turkey, has also been inhabited since prehistoric times. The Mehmet Bey Dere settlement and cemetery are separated from their contemporary Early Bronze Age settlements in western Anatolia because they are located very deep in the Ulubey canyon. The main difference is that the inner part of the canyon was preferred for the settlement and cemetery, not the plateau.

Western Anatolia can be evaluated in two regions: coastal and inland western Anatolia (Fig.1) (Fidan et al., 2015). Detailed studies have been conducted at sites such as Demircihöyük (Korfmann, 1983), Seyitömer (Bilgen, 2015; Ünan, 2022), Kusura (Lamb, 1937, 1938), and Beycesultan (Lloyd and Mellaart, 1962; Dedeoğlu and Abay, 2014) in inland western Anatolia. The cemetery areas of some of these settlements were identified and archaeological excavations were conducted. On the western Anatolian coasts, Troy is a very important centre for EBA research (Easton, 1976; Blegen et al., 1950; Korfmann, 2000; Easton et al., 2002; Pernicka et al., 2016; Horejs and Weninger, 2016; Numrich et al., 2023). Again, settlements on the Limantepe (Şahoğlu et al., 2022) and Baklatepe (Day et al., 2009; Gündoğan et al., 2019) coasts shed light on the relations with the Aegean islands and Greece (Şahoğlu, 2008). Western Anatolian settlements have strong relations and connexions with the Aegean islands and Greece (Wright, 2008; Şahoğlu, 2008). Analyses of obsidian unearthed in the Limantepe and Baklatepe excavations revealed that it mostly originated from the island of Melos (Yegingil et al., 2020). The existence of a small amount of obsidian originating from central Anatolia indicates an interregional relationship. In addition, strong commercial relations between the western Anatolian coasts and the Cyclades in EBA I-II (Yegingil et al., 2020). During the EBA, there was a process in which trade developed in western Anatolia. Especially on the Aegean coasts, port cities were formed and maritime trade was very developed in the EBA. Mining and obsidian trade have also intensified. The coasts of western Anatolia are in a position where land trade is combined with sea trade. Limantepe is an important port city in the region. These commercial activities spread over a wide area from central Anatolia to the western Anatolian coasts and from there to the Cyclades and Greece (Şahoğlu, 2004; Rahmstorf, 2016; Kouka, 2016).

The Büyük Menderes, Küçük Menderes (Kaystros), Bakırçay (Kaikos), and Gediz rivers in western Anatolia flow into the Aegean Sea. The Büyük Menderes and Gediz rivers originated from the inner regions of western Anatolia and formed fertile plains in the valleys they passed through. These rivers form natural transportation routes and lead to the establishment of important settlements. While settlements such as Troy, Ephesos, Miletos, and Panaztepe used to be coastal settlements and port cities, they have now lost this feature (Kayan, 1997, 2019). Many settlements that were located on the coast in the past are no longer connected to the sea (Kayan, 1999; Öner et al., 2019).

East-west extension valleys were formed in western Anatolia. These valleys contain rivers. In terms of transportation, natural roads follow these valleys (Semiz et al., 2015). The inner parts of western Anatolia have higher land than the coast. Therefore, the region in which Uşak is located is geographically expressed as the inland western Anatolian threshold (Darkot and Tuncel, 1978).

The Beycesultan mound, which is one of the most important settlements of inland western Anatolia, is essential for Uşak region research. The south of the Uşak region is geographically connected with the upper Meander valley. In addition, Uşak has cultural connexions with Beycesultan (Oy, 2018a). Beycesultan culturally affected a large region in inland western Anatolia during the EBA (Lloyd and Mellaart, 1962; Abay and Dedeoğlu, 2009; Türkteki, 2020).

The Early Bronze Age was an era in which great economic, commercial, and cultural developments occurred. During this period, with the increase in population, there was an increase in production, and trade was highly developed (Guzowska et al., 2015; Schwall and Horejs, 2020; Blum, 2022; Schwall et al., 2023). The number of settlements throughout western Anatolia in EBA (3000 BC) is quite high. The increase in population and the formation of new settlements explains this situation. With the increase in the production and use of mines, the increase in the demand for metals is important in this age (Oy, 2017b). Over time, the settlements that controlled the trade became a power and authority controlling the region, and in the later stages of the Bronze Age, local kingdoms were formed (Klaunzer, 2013; Dardeniz and Yıldırım, 2022). Trade has increased in a more systematic and organised manner in the interior of western Anatolia, and on the coasts and the Aegean Sea. Thanks to natural harbours, the existence of coastal settlements connected to the sea has become more evident. Not only did commercial activities develop, but there were also great developments in agriculture, animal husbandry, and professions in other fields (Kouka, 2009; Yılmaz, 2009; Gündem, 2012; De Vincenzi, 2015). The settlements are surrounded by walls, and megaron-type structures have become widespread in western Anatolia (Warner, 1979; Steadman, 2000; Düring, 2011; Fidan, 2018; Massa, 2021). Thanks to developments in weaving, pottery, architecture, and social and cultural fields, great development was experienced in the Bronze Age.

Local cultures developed because of the rapid increase in production and trade during this period. Agriculture and animal husbandry continued to develop (Shin et al., 2021). In the growing settlements, in addition to the ruling class, occupational groups specialised in various jobs such as weaving, trade, and mining were formed and social stratification developed. This situation further developed settlements. Settlements that developed politically and economically became active in wider areas. The village settlements in EBA I have an economic structure based on agriculture and animal husbandry, including livestock as a key economic activity in the EBA Anatolian societies (Özdoğan, 2006; Çevik, 2007; Arbuckle, 2014). Animals play a very significant role in transportation, trade, and nutrition. During EBA II, trade and mining as well as agriculture and animal husbandry were significant economic activities that served as both occupational activities and a source of lively hood for all settlements in the villages and small towns. As trade developed, more caravan routes sprouted and gained more importance. Inter-regional relationships also improved. The most

significant commercial and cultural communication was noticed in the Mesopotamia and Anatolia regions (De Ryck, 2005; Skourtanioti et al., 2020).

In the EBA, there is a trade network stretching from Mesopotamia to the interior of Anatolia and western Anatolia (Şahoğlu, 2005). This trade network was used intensively with large caravan routes (Efe, 2007). A trade network has developed from western Anatolia to the Cyclades and Greece. Although these commercial relations began in earlier periods, they continued increasingly after EBA II. It is seen that at the end of the EBA (1900 BC), many settlements were abandoned for cities. During this period, the number of abandoned settlements increased due to fire incidents (Mellaart, 1958).

This article aims to reveal the relationship between settlements and cemeteries in the region, specifically Mehmet Bey Dere, a Bronze Age settlement and cemetery located in the Ulubey canyon in Uşak. This settlement, which is different from other Bronze Age settlements on the plains and hilltops in the region because of its location in a very deep canyon, will contribute to archaeological research and literature in the region.

Ulubey Canyon

Canyons formed due to the characteristics of the geological structure in the south and southwestern parts of Uşak Province. These canyons were formed as a result of erosion of the calcareous land in the region by the rivers (Yalçınlar, 1955). The Ulubey Canyon is an example of a canyon valley formed in karstic areas because of the collapse of the Büyük Menderes graben and the chemical and mechanical erosion of the limestone structure. The total length of the canyon formed by the Kazancı Stream (Ulubey Stream) and Banaz Stream, located to the east of the Uşak-Karahallı highway in the Ulubey District, is 75 km. The bottom of the canyon and valleys is 200 m lower than the plain. Its width reaches 100-500 m (Fig. 1).

The region through which the Ulubey canyon passes consists of Neogene limestones (Ulubey Formation) (Ercan et al., 1978). Therefore, the canyon was formed in this calcareous region. Neogene limestones led to the formation of very long, steep, and deep valleys. It consists of a main canyon that continues along Kazancı Stream (Ulubey Stream) and Banaz Stream and dozens of large side canyons connected to it (Oy, 2021). The Ulubey Canyon is an interesting area in the inland western Anatolia region in terms of showing the relationships between vertical ground movements and river erosion (Polat and Güney, 2013).

The Ulubey Canyon and its surroundings have rare geological, geomorphological, scientific, and cultural characteristics (Çilek et al., 2019). The formation of the canyon is related to the karstic formation process because of the collapse of the Büyük Menderes Graben. With the collapse of the Büyük Menderes Graben at least three times, ground erosion

movements started, and thus deep meandering valleys, hills surrounding the old valley, and terrace shapes were formed in these regions where the Kazancı Stream (Ulubey Stream) and Banaz Stream pass. In the vertical direction of the canyon, there are at least three terraces at the levels of 10-30 and 50-55 metres above the canyon floor. In addition, funnel-shaped karst hills along the steep slopes of the valley emerge as a result of karst formations. The depth of the canyon system is related to vertical tectonic movements and the collapse of the Büyük Menderes Graben (Çukur et al., 2019).

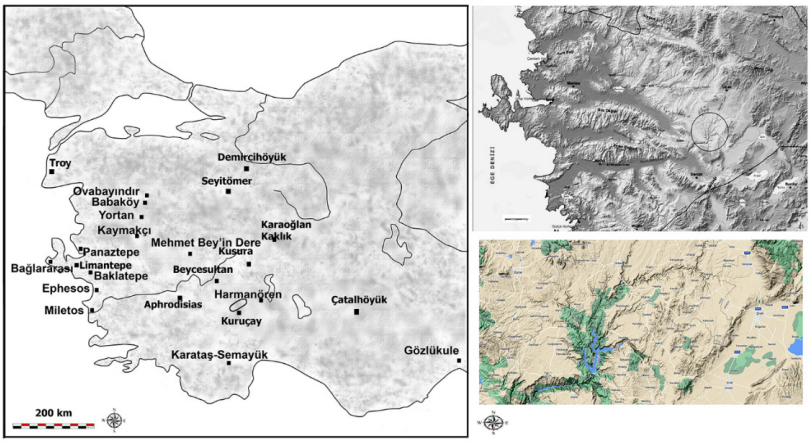

Figure 1: Western Anatolian EBA settlements, cemeteries and Ulubey Canyon.

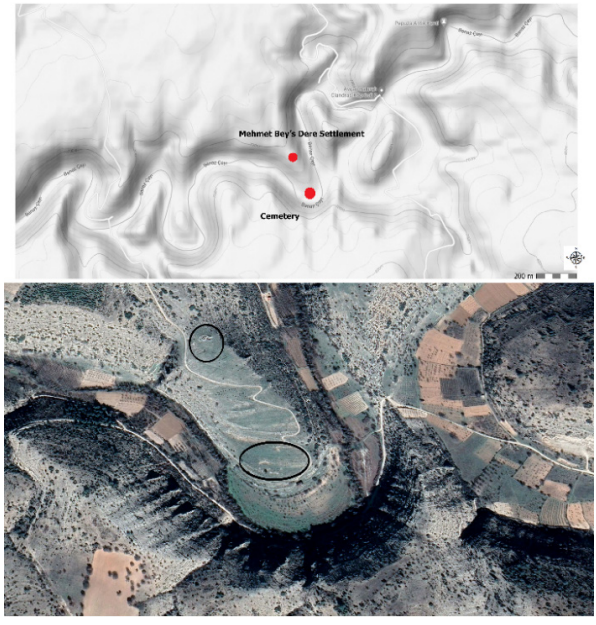

Figure 2: Mehmet Bey Dere settlement and cemetery.

Mehmet Bey Dere Settlement

The Mehmet Bey Dere settlement is within the Ulubey Canyon, 5 km east of the Avgan village of the Ulubey district. The Mehmet Bey Dere location refers to a large area on the banks of Banaz Stream that belongs to a person named Mehmet Bey. There is a two-storey adobe house here. This house is called Mehmet Bey's roof. The settlement is located on the upper part of the Mehmet Bey Dere area and Mehmet Bey's roof. The Mehmet Bey Dere settlement is located on the inclined terraces in the middle of the canyon as it descends from the plain level to the terraces inside the canyon. The Mehmet Bey Dere settlement is at an altitude of 706 metres. There is a cemetery at the bottom of the canyon. The cemetery is on the banks of the Banaz Stream (Fig. 2). The settlement, which spread over a very large area, was completely destroyed, and the ceramics were scattered over a very wide area from the slopes to the Banaz Stream. The settlement remains within the canyon, and Early Bronze Age (EBA) and Middle Bronze Age (MBA) ceramics have been found in the settlement (Oy et al., 2019).

The Mehmet Bey Dere settlement measures 60x60 metres. These borders may be wider due to the sloping nature of the land and the fact that the ceramics found in the settlement are distributed over a wider area (Fig. 3-4). The settlement is not very large and mainly contains EBA II sherds. The few MBA sherds found in the Mehmet Bey Dere settlement show that it was not inhabited intensively during this period. MBA sherds are few but of good quality. This place does not have much importance or effect as an MBA settlement. However, because of the presence of dense soil and stone, we can assume that the houses were built with stone foundations and mud brick walls (Fig. 5).

Figure 3: Mehmet Bey Dere settlement, the cemetery and Banaz Stream in the canyon.

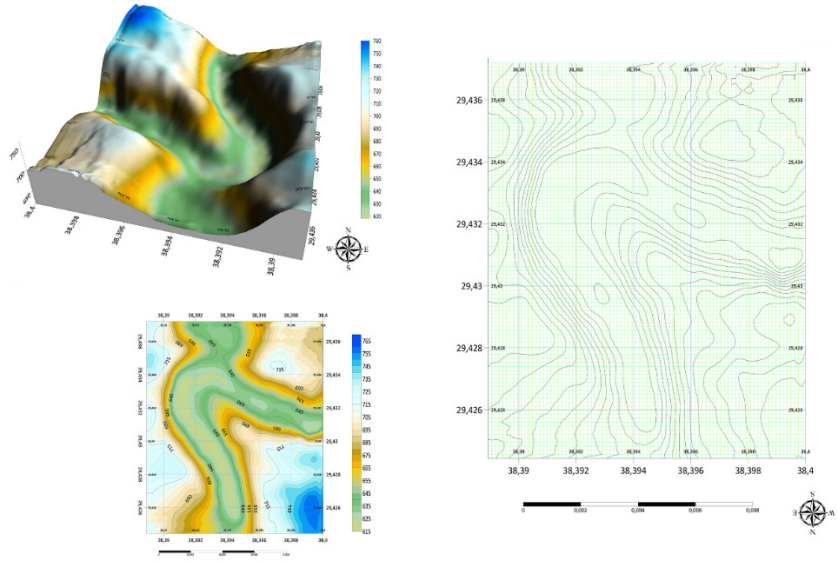

Figure 4: Mehmet Bey Dere settlement plan.

Figure 5: Mehmet Bey Dere settlement.

In EBA II, a process of urbanisation developed in western Anatolia. While the settlements that were on important road routes and organised production and trade became urbanised, some of them existed in the form of small villages as more rural and small settlements. With urbanisation comes centralisation (Vandam et al., 2013, 2019). Later, these settlements emerged as local central kingdoms (MBA and LBA) (Yakubovich, 2022; Vignolini, 2022). Surely, western Anatolian EBA settlements are rather small in area compared with their contemporary Mesopotamian or eastern Anatolian settlements (Çevik, 2007). The areas of EBA settlements expanded further in the MBA and Late Bronze Age (LBA). Fortified systems are found in EBA settlements (Blum, 2022). However, it is difficult to say such a thing for Mehmet Bey Dere. The settlement has been destroyed by illegal diggers, and its situation is

not clear due to the vegetation. However, the remains of some building foundations made of stone can be selected.

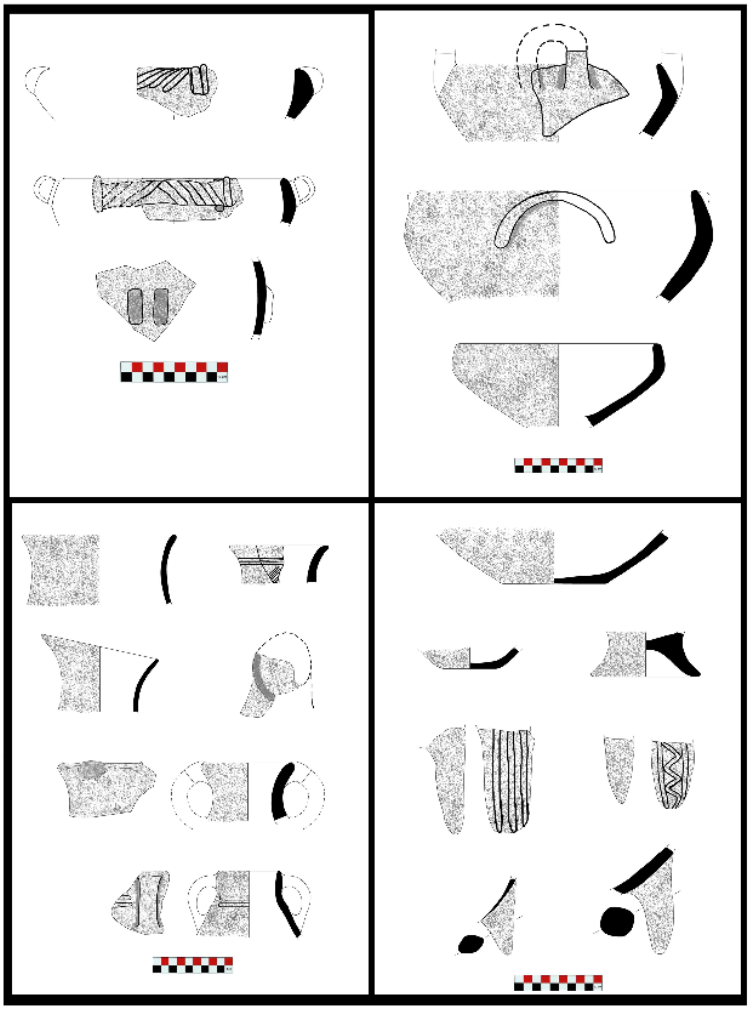

Figure 6: EBA sherds at the settlement.

Intensive surveys were conducted at the settlement. Sherds, which are densely located in the destroyed parts, were systematically collected and studied. Forty-two samples, such as sherds, stone axes, and grinding stones, were collected from the settlement (Fig. 6-7). An idol and five pithoi sherds were examined from the cemetery area (Fig. 9-10). EBA sherds are handmade, brown and red slippers. Plant, lime, grit, and mica additives are found in various proportions in the paste. MBA sherds are wheel-made. These wares have red and brown slips and contain lime, grit, and mica inclusions in their paste.

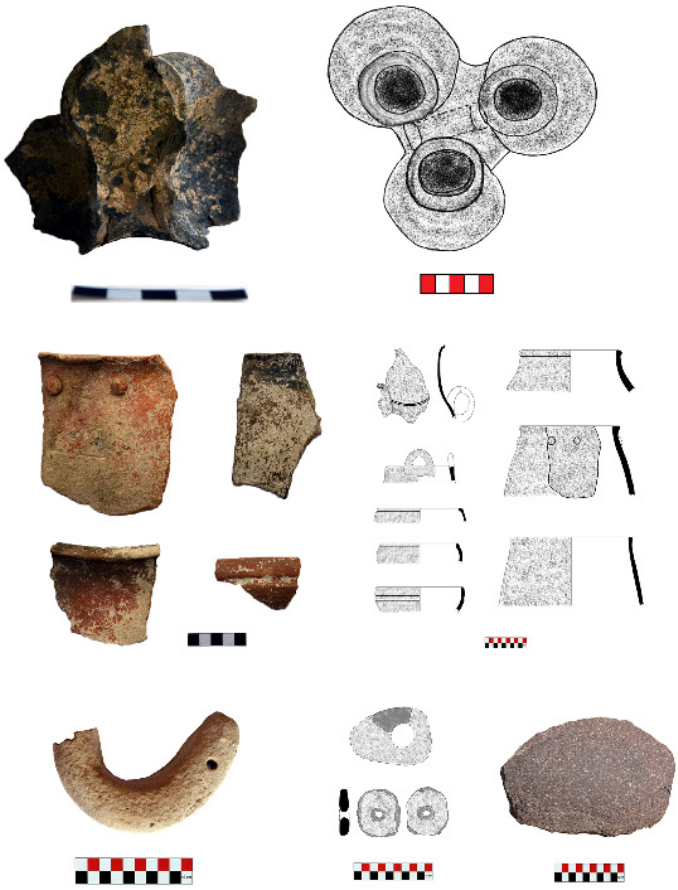

Figure 7: Triple combined vessel (EBA), MBA sherds, loom weight, grinding stone, stone axe and spindle whorl.

The EBA sherds collected during the research we conducted in the settlement are generally compatible with other contemporary centres in the region. Handled bowls, necked jars, spouted jugs, double-cuped jugs, and jars were found in the settlement (Fig. 6). A similar pitcher with a double handle and a short neck is found in Yortan (Kamil, 1982, pl. 227, Fig. 70). Similarly, pedestals and feet are intensely observed in the EBA layers of Troy (Blegen et al., 1950, pl. 235-39). A similar example with groove decoration was found in Aphrodisias Pekmez 2 (Joukowsky, 1986). The pedestals and foot forms are intensely seen in Beycesultan EBA II (5th layer in the new stratigraphy), and similar examples are found in the Mehmet Bey Dere settlement (Lloyd and Mellaart, 1962, 152-56; Dedeoğlu and Abay, 2014, 37).

One of the important vessel forms found in the settlement is the triple composite vessel (Fig. 7). Although it was broken, this vessel was formed as a result of the combination of three separate vessels. This black-lined, thin-walled, finely crafted vessel is combined with a ring handle at the top. It is handmade, well burnished, and well fired. Despite the shape of the triple-combined vessel, it is clearly evident that it has not been determined whether it was decorated or not. Triple composite vessels are known in some centres in western Anatolia. However, they are not very common (Kuru, 2016). In the Yortan cemetery, the shape XV forms belong to triple composite vessels. There are zigzag band and chevron decorations on the Yortan samples (Kamil, 1982, 46-47, pl. XV, Fig. 74). In the EBA II graves of Laodikeia, a triple composite vessel was found as a whole (Oğuzhanoğlu, 2014). There is also a similar decorated triple compound vessel in EBA Baklatepe (Efe, 2003). In addition, although they are not exactly similar, their close counterpart is seen in Gözlükule. There are double, triple, and quadruple combined vessels in Gözlükule, and they are dated to the EBA III period (Goldman, 1956, pl. 278, 366).

Although MBA sherds could not be detected to a large extent in the Mehmet Bey Dere settlement, some samples are clearly dated to MBA (Fig. 7). These wheel-made vessels are similar to the Beycesultan MBA vessels. Beycesultan, which is close to the area where Mehmet Bey Dere is located, was an important centres for the Middle Bronze Age.

Mehmet Bey Dere MBA sherds are similar to Beycesultan V (MBA) bowls (Lloyd and Mellaart, 1965, 86, Fig. P. 2-3). The sherds are also similar to the second millennium BC bowls in the Afyonkarahisar region (Koçak et al., 2019). The Mehmet Bey Dere MBA sherds have many similarities with the bowls in the Panaztepe, Limantepe (Aykurt, 2020, 113-22, pl. 152), Kocabaş Tepe and Çeşme Bağarasi and Troy (Aykurt, 2013).

A loom weight, stone axe, and grinding stone were also found in the settlement (Fig. 7). These findings are important in terms of showing the production activities of the settlement. The loom weight found is large in size, although it is broken. Its large size is related to the dimensions of the loom and the quality of the fabric to be woven (Oy, 2019c). This example, which is related to textile production, is dated to MBA. There are similar studies in Afyonkarahisar (Koçak et al., 2019, 104-6). It is possible to see Beycesultan Level II (5th layer in the new stratigraphy) (Mellaart and Murray, 1995, 169-73; Dedeoğlu and Abay, 2014, 38, Fig. 32) and Demircihöyük V (Kull, 1988, Fig. 43-48) (MBA) equivalents in Kusura Level C (Lamb, 1937, 34, Fig. 15) and Aphrodisias Acropolis MBA layers (Joukowsky, 1986).

Mehmet Bey Dere Cemetery

The cemetery area is at the bottom of the canyon by the Banaz Stream (Fig. 8). A cemetery area that spreads over a very wide area has been identified in the area where Mehmet Bey's roof is located on the bank of the Banaz Stream at the bottom of the canyon. A marble idol was found on the land surface above Mehmet Bey's roof. The graves were destroyed due to the ploughing of the land here by a tractor, and this find must have come from one of these pithoi. There is a 400 m inclined land towards the bottom of the canyon between the settlement and the cemetery. Mehmet Bey Dere cemetery covers an area of approximately 170 m in the east-west direction and 130 m in the North-South direction. The cemetery area exclusively comprises pithos graves. The mouth of the pithoi faces east.

Figure 8: Mehmet Bey Dere Cemetery.

Five selected sherds were collected from the cemetery and they belong to EBA pithoi. There is also one EBA idol and one MBA goblet from the cemetery. Some pithos fragments found in the cemetery are plain, but some are decorated with grooves on their rims (Fig. 9). These data provide an important insight into the dating of the cemetery area. This type of pithos dates to the EBA II period. It is widely available in Beycesultan and centres in southwest Anatolia (Lloyd and Mellaart, 1962, 149-50, p. 26). In the cemetery, large pithoi were used as burial containers. Because of the ploughing of the cemetery with a tractor by the field owner, many pithoi were broken. The pithoi here are the same as those in period B in Kusura (Lamb, 1938, 218-73). In addition, similar pithoi are seen in Beycesultan (Lloyd and

Mellaart, 1962, 168, Fig. p. 35). Similar pithoi with handles are found in the Demircihöyük EBA levels (Efe, 1988, pl. 37).

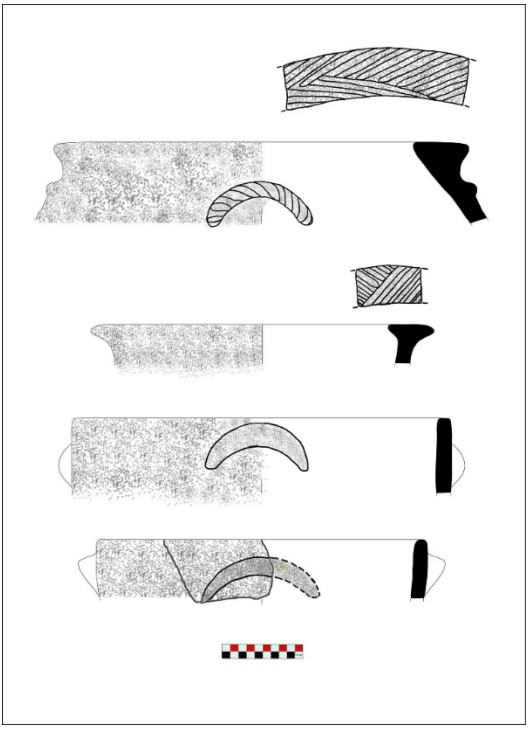

Figure 9: Cemetery pithos sherds.

It is seen that cemeteries were created in an area that was not far from the settlement area during the Early Bronze Age. Grave types such as simple graves, pithos graves, and stone/cist graves are used in EBA. In addition to single burials, there are graves where multiple burials are made. The dead are placed in the grave in the hocker position. As gifts are placed inside the grave for the dead, various grave gifts are placed outside the grave. Items such as pottery, tools and weapons, stone and metal objects, and idols, which were placed in graves as a dead gift, are associated with the afterlife. Some graves contain many gifts, whereas others contain fewer or no gifts. This should be related to the wealth of the individual.

It was determined that the EBA cemeteries in Uşak were established in places close to the settlement. The cemeteries identified in the province of Uşak consist of pithos graves. In some places, it was determined that graves were made from local slate stones (Oy, 2018a). Therefore, the EBA cemeteries in the region consist of pithos graves and stone/cist graves (Oy, 2018a). A Yortan-type cemetery in the Gavurkuyusu locality of Uşak was illegally excavated and destroyed in 1969 (Fıratlı, 1970).

Figure 10: Marble idol and goblet (MBA).

Although there are many EBA cemeteries in western Anatolia, Sarıket, Yortan, Babaköy, Ovabayındır, Harmanören, Karataş-Semayük, Kaklık and Baklatepe cemeteries are the main ones (Uhri, 2006). In western Anatolia, the dead are buried in cemeteries near settlements. Intramural burials decreased significantly in the mid-EBA (Wheeler, 1974; Selover and Durgun, 2019).

From EBA I to EBA II, cemetery areas are growing in western Anatolia. The tradition of burial in pithos graves outside settlements is very common in western Anatolia. The mouths of the pithoi generally face east. The mouths of the pithoi were closed with a flat stone or another pithos. The dead were buried in the hocker position (Derin, 2009; Vandam et al., 2013).

In the Yortan pithos cemetery, the dead are placed in a pithos, and the mouth of the pithos is covered with a large flat stone. The mouth of the grave generally faces east. Various pottery, spindle whorls and metalware, and some graves were found on idols (Kamil, 1982). Sarıket Cemetery, which is the cemetery of the Demircihöyük settlement, is located 250 m from the settlement. Sarıket cemetery is dated to EBA II and MBA. Although there are simple graves and stone cist graves, most of them consist of pithos graves (Seeher, 2000; Selover and Durgun, 2019). Pottery, metalware, weapons, and some stone and terracotta statues were found in the graves as burial gifts. No metal finds were found in the Mehmet Bey Dere cemetery, perhaps because it was a survey investigation (Seeher, 2000). The same cemetery area in Sarıket is also used in MBA. The same area is preferred as a cemetery. Some pithoi in Mehmet Bey Dere Cemetery are believed to be MBA graves. Baklatepe EBA I cemetery reveals the existence of different types of burial practises and different cultural practises (Şahoğlu and Tuncel, 2012). Local people said that there is no different application in Mehmet Bey Dere cemetery. Of course, we do not know how accurate and valid this information is. Harmanören Cemetery is also a pithos cemetery belonging to the EBA II and III periods. After Demircihöyük and Semayük, the Harmanören cemetery is the largest Bronze Age cemetery known to have been settled in western Anatolia. It was concluded that there were pithos in various forms and different sizes in Harmanören and that no special pithos were built for burial, but that the deceased was buried by placing it in one of the pithoi used in daily life. There are also some MBA graves in the Harmanören Cemetery (Özsait, 2003).

During the 2018 survey, an idol was found in the Mehmet Bey Dere cemetery. This idol is made of white marble, has a round head, a long neck, a semicircular body, and is thin and flat. The idol found is dated to EBA and is of the Kusura type. Height: 7.7 cm, trunk diameter: 4.6 cm (Fig. 10).

Kusura-type idols have a disc-shaped head, long neck, and angular or round body. Kusura-type marble idols do not have arms and are made abstractly. Kusura-type idols are very common in western Anatolia. Those unearthed during the excavations are dated to EBA II and EBA III. The idol found in Mehmet Bey Dere cemetery should be evaluated in the same way. Although it is not exactly similar, it is similar to Denizli-Kara Hisar (Akdeniz, 2002). A Beycesultan-Kusura-type idol, although not exactly similar, was found in Uşak Kızılhisar Höyük (Yılmaz, 2019). Idols are rarely placed in graves as gifts compared with objects such as pottery, jugs, and metal. Similar idols are found in the Uşak Museum (Ekiz, 2006).

Marble idols were found in the Karataş-Semayük cemetery. These examples are made of marble and are described as shovel-shaped (Mellink, 1964). The Mehmet Bey Dere idol is not like the ones in Semayük. It is not identical to the Karataş-Semayük examples because it is not in the form of a shovel. A idol placed in the pithos as a burial gift in the Harmanören

EBA cemetery is similar, but not the same. The Harmanören idol is larger. They are similar to form and contemporary in terms of period (Özsait, 2003, 99, Fig. 7).

An example of a goblet dated to MBA was also found in the cemetery area (Fig. 10). Similar goblets were found in Afyonkarahisar second millennium BC settlements. It is mostly seen around the Upper Menderes (Koçak et al., 2019). A similar one exists in Kusura layer C (Lamb, 1937, pl. VIII-9).

Chalices were found in large quantities in Beycesultan. Chalices are considered to be associated with cult rather than daily use. It is also thought to have been used at feasts, banquets, ceremonies, and social events (Dedeoğlu, 2016a). Beycesultan chalices show quality production. It is wheel-made and red in colour. Mehmet Bey Dere also has the same characteristics. It is noteworthy that chalices were numerous in the Beycesultan, especially in the Late Bronze Age (LBA) (Dedeoğlu, 2016a). Mehmet Bey Dere is represented by an example and is dated to MBA. In particular, it must belong to the second millennium BC. It can be used for cult, ceremonial, or private use and for ceremonial or daily use. Examples of this type are common in Beycesultan II (5th layer in the new stratigraphy) and are compatible with its close counterparts (Mellaart and Murray, 1995; Mac Sweeney, 2010; Dedeoğlu and Abay, 2014).

Discussion and Conclusion

Mehmet Bey Dere is a unique Early Bronze Age settlement within the Ulubey Canyon, which has no other example in western Anatolia due to its location. Being located of the settlement on the middle terraces of the canyon, not at the top or bottom, shows that it was deliberately preferred as a settlement area. Due to the EBA II-III and MBA finds in the settlement, it was inhabited during these periods.

There are many EBA settlements, especially around Denizli, where the Büyük Menderes valley is located (Abay, 2011). These settlements are found in plain areas and in mountainous and rugged areas (Dedeoğlu, 2013; 2014; Dedeoğlu et al., 2016). There are EBA and MBA settlements in the mountainous and plain areas around Afyonkarahisar (Oy, 2011). Compared to these settlements, the Mehmet Bey Dere settlement stands out because of its location within the Ulubey canyon. By moving south from the location of the settlement, the Denizli-Adıgüzel dam can be reached via the Banaz stream. The canyon is connected to the Büyük Menderes Valley and contemporary settlements in the region (Dedeoğlu, 2013; 2015, 2016b).

The Mehmet Bey Dere settlement is not in the position and size of EBA settlements such as Küllüoba or Karataş. Compared to the second millennium BC settlements such as Beycesultan and Kaymakçı (Roosevelt and Luke, 2017), Mehmet Bey Dere should be seen as a settlement that is not very large and does not have a central location. It is in the canyon and is not a very large settlement.

Archaeological excavations and surveys conducted in western Anatolia revealed significant results in terms of settlement and architecture. Although many cemeteries have been excavated, knowledge of settlement and cemetery relationships is limited. Settlement and cemetery excavations mostly concentrate on the finds. However, the dimensions of the connexion, relationships and social differences, different practises, and factors in the creation of cemeteries were not emphasised. Most examples and reviews provide similar data. The cemeteries of most settlements in western Anatolia have been identified and excavated, but the cemeteries of many settlements have not been identified (Seeher, 2000; Özsait, 2003; Uhri, 2006; Derin, 2009; Vandam et al., 2013; Selover and Durgun, 2019). In this context, the Sarıket cemetery of the Demircihöyük settlement, the Semayük cemetery of the Karataş settlement, and the Harmanören cemetery of Göndürle Höyük are the main ones. These are usually the cemetery areas in the immediate vicinity of settlements located in the plains. The fact that the cemeteries are located in such a close area is based on the strong social and family ties.

Mehmet Bey Dere was preferred for settlement on the benches located in the middle part of the canyon. Instead of settling in the large and fertile plain area at the top, a dominant point in the canyon was preferred for settlement. Likewise, no area was chosen for the cemetery in the upper part of the settlement. In fact, the slopes on the suitable side of the settlement could have been used as a cemetery. However, the plain area on the bank of Banaz Stream on the valley floor in the canyon was preferred as a cemetery. Certain reasons must be effective in choosing this area. They could have been used as a cemetery on the other side of the Banaz Stream. Although the land on the opposite side was suitable, they did not prefer it. There is a wide and sloping area between the settlement and the cemetery, and they did not use it. As a conscious choice, the area at the bottom of the canyon, which is currently a cemetery, was preferred. They could have settled in the area used as a cemetery, but they did not do that either.

Considering the area of the Mehmet Bey Dere settlement, it is not a huge settlement. Therefore, it could be established on the banks of the Banaz Stream. It would be easier to reach the water needed in this way. There would also be an area for agricultural production and other needs, but they deliberately used this place as a cemetery. The area that was used as a cemetery is also a suitable place for settlement. This place is also in an advantageous position in terms of raw material supply. The facilities of Banaz Stream can be used, and it is also suitable for hunting. This area offers many options for agricultural production and transportation. However, despite all these, the settlement is on an elevation on a bench that is neither at the top nor at the bottom of the canyon. It would have been more advantageous to prefer the plain above for settlement. The plain is very rich in terms of agriculture and animal husbandry. It would have been more practical to benefit from the opportunities offered by the river if it had been settled on the bank of the Banaz Stream on the canyon floor.

There are also finds such as pottery, grinding stones, and stone axes in the settlement. In our research, it has been observed that the canyon is suitable for the life of many wild animals and birds, especially partridges, and offers richness in terms of nesting and shelter, as well as reproduction and life. Similarly, in terms of plant and tree diversity, the canyon and Banaz Stream offer great wealth. Although the upper plain area outside the canyon is flat, plant diversity is low. Wheat farming and animal husbandry are mostly done. There are vineyards and gardens inside the canyon that are very green. It is also rich in plant and animal life. Perhaps, considering all these, it may have been preferable to deliberate about the advantages of settling at a point that can be easily reached from both sides in order to be close to the wide plains and to benefit from the richness of the Banaz Stream in the canyon.

Approximately 200-300 metres above the settlement is a plateau that is more suitable for settlement. This location is likely to be preferred to benefit from the possibilities of both the plateau and the Banaz Stream. But why did they choose the riverbank for the cemetery? The above plateaus are an easier area for settlement and cemetery.

Mehmet Bey Dere is a settlement that was established in the Ulubey Canyon in inland western Anatolia during the EBA II-III (2700-2000 BC) and MBA periods (2000-1600 BC) and has no other examples for now. Other settlements are located in mountainous regions and plains. However, the situation of the settlement and the cemetery in the canyon is important in terms of showing the relationship between the settlement and the cemetery.

Mehmet Bey Dere is different from his contemporary places in his choice of cemetery and residential area. It is different both in its own region and in Uşak and western Anatolia, and there is no example in Turkey. The settlement is not large, but it provides information about the community's attitude when creating the cemetery. The relationship of the EBA society with settlement-cemetery and death affected the creation of cemeteries.

Just as the location of the settlement was chosen, the location of the cemetery was also consciously selected. Considering the opportunities offered by geography, they preferred the ideal area for settlement. Livestock, agriculture, hunting, pottery production, access to water, and the canyon's facilities are important and are preferred for settlement.

Loom weights, spindle whorls, grinding stones, and stone axes are important finds that show the existence of production in the settlement. Spindle whorls perform activities such as weaving and textiles, grinding stones using grain, and making bread. It can be concluded that they are engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry.

The idol found in the cemetery is one of the most common marble idols in western Anatolia. This is important for revealing interregional connexions. Although they are in the canyon, it is concluded that they do not lead an isolated life. The idol found in Mehmet Bey Dere is

a Kusura-type idol, of which there are many examples in western Anatolia. It is difficult to explain whether this is locally produced or outsourced. However, marble deposits are common in the region. This place is very close to the Afyonkarahisar region and Kusura settlement. These areas have rich marble deposits. The cemetery must have been used during the earliest EBA II and the latest MBA period and was extensively used during EBA II-III period.

Owing to the topographical features of the Uşak region, there are prehistoric settlements on the plains, mountainous areas, and on the tops of the hills. Mehmet Bey Dere settlement and cemetery, on the other hand, is a different locality in the Uşak region and the inland western Anatolia region, with its location within the Ulubey canyon. This settlement constitutes a small sample for future research and studies on settlements with different topographical features. Mehmet Bey Dere is a settlement that provides information about the Uşak region, as well as the settlement model in the Ulubey canyon, cemetery relations, topography, and how the EBA people used this geography and sheds light on understanding these. For this reason, at least a salvage excavation should be carried out in the settlement and cemetery.

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