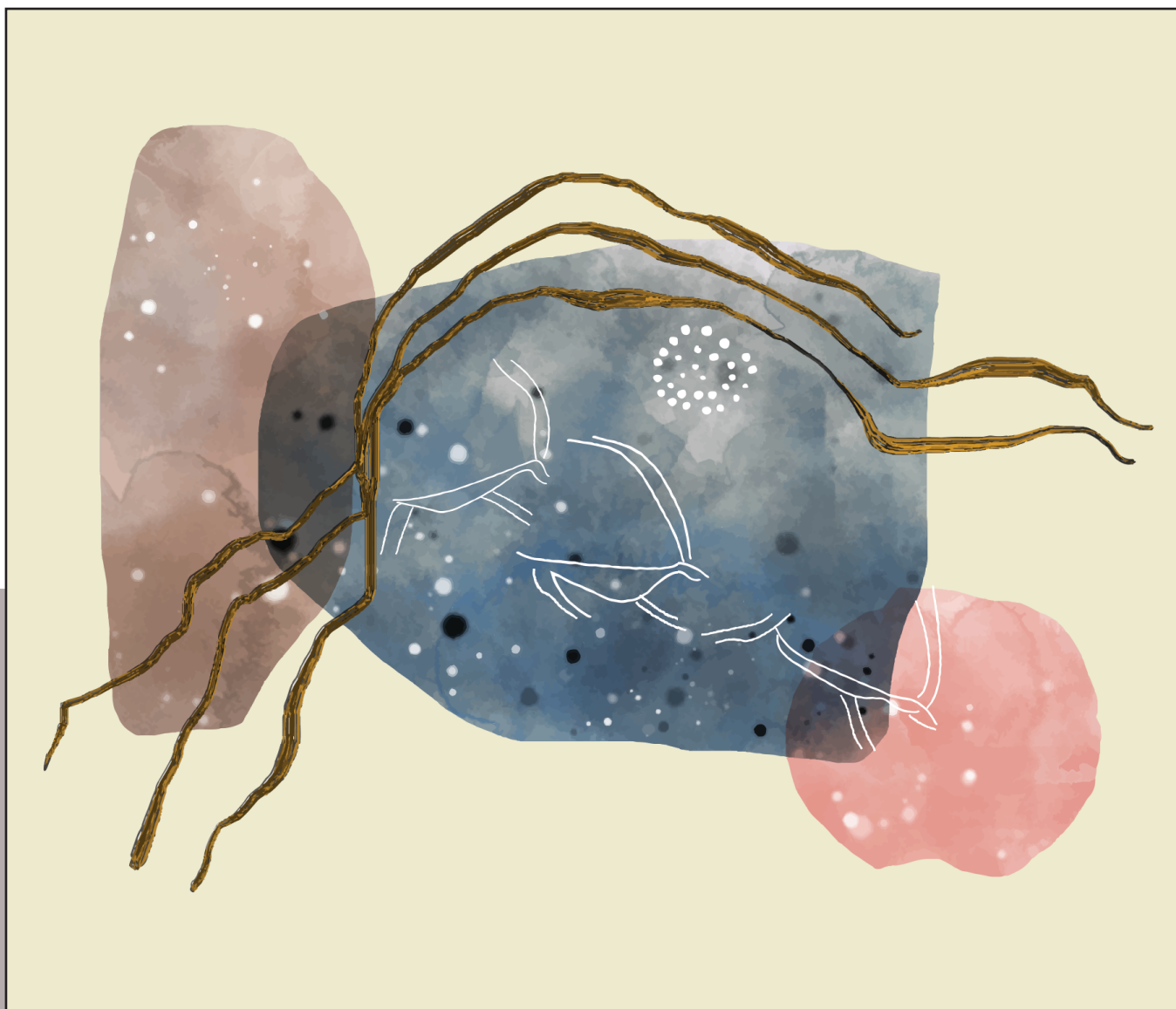


# JOURNAL OF EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN ARCHAEOLOGY AND HERITAGE STUDIES



SPECIAL ISSUE



THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS

VOL. 13 NOS. 1-2 2025





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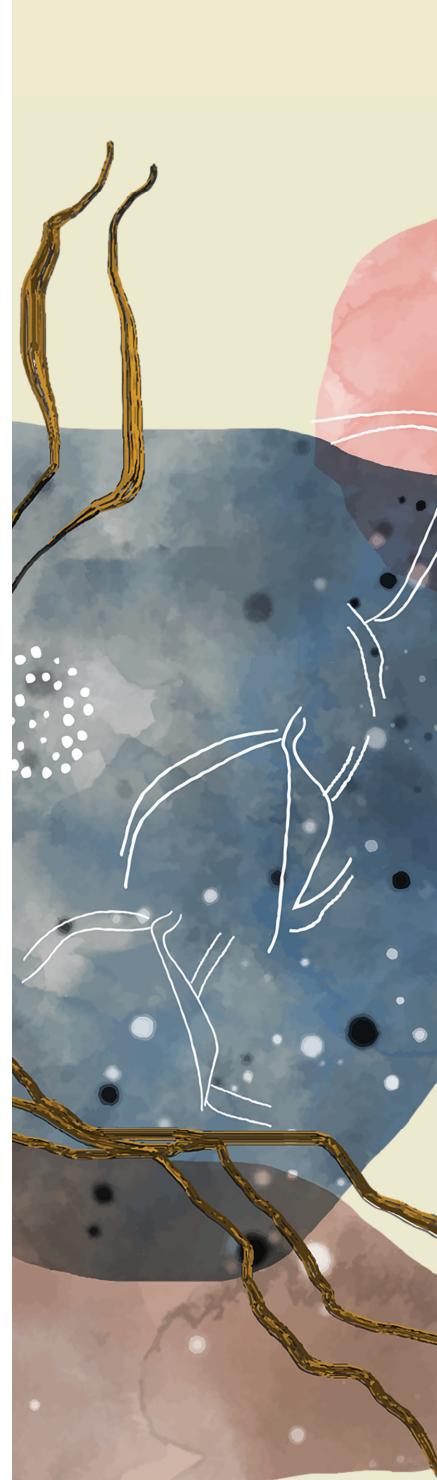
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# EARLY HOLOCENE IN GIRMELER

## Defining Pre-Pottery Neolithic in Coastal Southwestern Anatolia

Burçin Erdoğan

Taner Korkut

Turan Takaoğlu

### ABSTRACT

The site of Girmeler so far is the only excavated Early Holocene site in the Aegean coastal region of Anatolia. Early Holocene Girmeler was inhabited by semisedentary hunter groups living in wattle-and-daub huts with lime-plastered floors, exploiting a broad spectrum of wild animals and plant resources found within the immediate environs of the site. This article argues that Girmeler's Early Holocene occupation of the late ninth and early eighth millennium BC belongs to the Pre-Pottery Neolithic sequence of southwestern Anatolia. In contrast to the Mesolithic insular Aegean sites representing the ninth and early eighth millennium, there are indications that agriculture was practiced at Girmeler. Results of one DNA study applied to a human bone from an Early Holocene grave at Girmeler showed that the occupants of the site possessed a gene also found at the Epipaleolithic populations of Pınarbaşı who lived in the fourteenth millennium BC in central Anatolia.

**KEYWORDS:** southwestern Anatolia, Girmeler, Pre-Pottery Neolithic, Mesolithic

Archaeological excavations conducted at Girmeler as part of the Tlos Excavation Project in Lycia have recently begun to enhance our knowledge of both the cultural transmission and transformation that occurred in the Aegean between the Late Pleistocene and the Early Holocene, and the nature of the Neolithic period on the fringes of southwestern Anatolia. The recovery of data pertaining to the late ninth- and early eighth-millennium BC occupation of Girmeler provides an opportunity to place this part of Anatolia within the theoretical discourse on the mechanisms of the westward expansion of the Neolithic mode of life. The fact that the neighboring Aegean islands in this period were defined by Mesolithic cultures makes Girmeler a much more intriguing site, especially when one considers the similarities and differences observed between the material remains of both regions.

Previous archaeological research has suggested that the Aegean coastal regions of Anatolia were not inhabited by hunter-gatherer communities before the Neolithic period, and that the first sedentary agricultural villages there originated from westward movements of people from central Anatolia and/or the Levant in the early seventh millennium BC (e.g., Özdoğan 2011; Horejs et al. 2015; Brama 2017). This way of thinking has primarily relied on evidence that supported the abrupt appearance of Neolithic life, including the sudden emergence of agriculture, new technological advances such as pottery and architecture, economic developments such as domesticates, and