

EVALUATION OF RECENT DATA ON THE INITIAL OCCUPATION OF THE ISLAND OF GÖKÇEADA (IMBROZ) AND THE GELIBOLU PENINSULA IN THE NORTH AEGEAN

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This paper examines the latest data obtained from field surveys and excavations in the Turkish part of the North Aegean. The recent archaeological finds namely from Gökçeada (Imbroz) Island and Gelibolu Peninsula at the southern tip of the Turkish Thrace region indicates that the picture about the human population movements may be somewhat different than what we have known until now. Discovered in 2011, for instance Üçdutlar Paleolithic site in the Gelibolu Peninsula shows strong evidence on the human occupation between Upper Paleolithic and Epi-Paleolithic/Mesolithic. Other Lithic sites on the island of Gökçeada like Eskino, display the traces of human groups Middle Paleolithic to Epi-Paleolithic/Mesolithic. Sites like Üçdutlar and Eskino overlooking each other at about 30 km distance indicates some cultural relations even if there is a sea barrier today.

During the Last Glacial Maximum the island of Gökçeada together with the islands of Samothrace, Limnos, Ayos Evstratios and Bozcaada were connected by the mainland. The rapid rise in the sea level observed during the Early Holocene, and most of these islands were either connected to the mainland or were substantially closer to it. Ongoing excavations in Uğurlu on the island of Gökçeada show that the early farming communities were settled the region around 6500 cal. BC. Any testing of ideas related to the importance of island archaeology and Neolithic transition in Southeast Europe will have to take into account the culture found on the island of Gökçeada.