

Outside the Residential Place at the Neolithic Settlement of Toumba Kremastis Koiladas, Northern Greece

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Abstract: Toumba Kremastis Koiladas is a Late Neolithic settlement situated in Western Macedonia (northern Greece). The excavations on the margins of the settlement uncovered 462 pits, seven ditches, 23 cremation burials and two inhumations. The finds suggest a variety of non-domestic uses of the space, from rubbish deposition to the disposal of the remains of diverse ritual activities. The site represents some of the best examples of structured deposition in the Greek Neolithic, including burials of humans and animals, houses and house models, intact vessels of miniature and regular size, flutes made of human femur, and other objects and materials. This work presents the finds from this area and discusses the activities related to them.

Keywords: *Late Neolithic, northern Greece, off-settlement area, structured depositions, ritual activities*

Introduction

Toumba Kremastis Koiladas (hereafter TKK), which was discovered in 1985, is situated at the southeastern edge of the Kitrini Limni (Sarigiol) basin, close to the swamp, in the Prefecture of Kozani (northern Greece) (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 1986; Fotiadis 1991; Ziota 1996, 539–40; Chondroyianni-Metoki 2001; 2009; 2010; 2015; Andreou et al. 1996, 568–70; Fotiadis et al. 2000). The basin stretches for 35 km at an altitude of 656–80 m (Figure 5.1). The lowest part was a marsh, which must have already been present during the Neolithic and was artificially drained in the 1950s (Fotiadis and Chondroyianni-Metoki 1997, 21, 26). This basin was inhabited throughout the Neolithic period, from the middle of the 7th millennium BC onwards, and more densely during the Late and the Final Neolithic.

From 1995 onwards, as part of the works by the Public Power Corporation, a considerable number of large-scale surface surveys and rescue excavations were carried out. These uncovered more than 35 prehistoric settlements¹³ that date from the 7th to the 2nd millennium BC, 19 of which belong to the Late and/or Final Neolithic periods. Six of these settlements have been excavated. One of them, Toumba Kleitos, has been completely excavated, revealing well-preserved remains of houses and burials, thus providing data for the site's extent, organisation and use of space (Ziota et al. 2013a; Ziota et al. 2013b). In addition, excavations at three sites dating to the Early and Middle Neolithic have enriched our knowledge of the Neolithic period, giving an insight to the cultural background of the Late Neolithic period in this area (Karamitrou-Mentesidi

2002, 626–30; 2007, 523–32; Karamitrou-Mentesidi et al. 2014; Chondroyianni-Metoki in press).

The settlement at TKK is a low tell, inhabited during the Late Neolithic, which was established on alluvial deposits of pale yellowish clay, at an altitude of 661 m. The surface material was scattered in an area of ca. 0.35 ha but the excavations indicate that the extent of the settlement was at least 0.8 ha and the original height of the tell approximately 2–2.50 m (Figure 5.3).

The site

In 1998–1999, as part of the construction of the new Egnatia highway (Figure 5.4), extensive rescue excavations were conducted at the northeastern edge of the settlement, outside the established residential areas (Figure 5.3), covering an area of ca. 0.7 ha. In this area the archaeological material that would have indicated the use of the space in antiquity was not present on the surface. The excavation uncovered 462 pits, seven ditches, 23 cremation burials and two inhumations in pits (Figure 5.2), all dating to the early phase of the Late Neolithic period. This area is contemporaneous with the nearby settlement according to pottery from the excavated part of the settlement (Chondroyianni-Metoki 2009). Four archaeological layers with thicknesses varying between 10–20 cm and 35–50 cm were discovered above the natural clayey bedrock. The stratigraphy indicates intermittent use of this area throughout the early phase of the Late Neolithic, with small lateral shifts in the location of activities and changes in the use of space. The excavations confirmed that activities of ritual significance were taking place in this area.

Radiocarbon dates from the 19 charcoal samples place the use of the site between years 5340 and 4930 BC,

¹³ Finds from the wider area increase this number to 50. See Karamitrou-Mentesidi 2014; Chondroyianni-Metoki et al. in press; Chondroyianni-Metoki in press.

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which corresponds well with the earlier phase of the Late Neolithic in the region.¹⁴ Dates for each distinguished layer in the excavated part of the site are as follows:

TKK 1 = layer D = 5340–5200 BC

TKK 2 = layer C = 5210–5060 BC

TKK 3 = layer B = 5060–4930 BC

TKK 4 = layer A = radiocarbon dates are not available for this phase, but according to pottery it could be dated to shortly after 4930 BC and before the beginning of the Final Neolithic (i.e. before 4700/4500 BC) (Andreou et al. 1996, 538).

The site is contemporaneous with other settlements in northern Greece such as Kleitos I (Ziota et al. 2013a, 51; Ziota et al. 2013b), Megalo Nisi Galanis (Fotiadis et al. 2000, 217; Andreou et al. 1996, 568–70), Dispilio (Anagnostou et al. 1997, 14), and Avgi (Stratouli 2010, 8) in Western Macedonia; Makriyalos I (Pappa and Besios 1999, 180), and Stavroupoli I (Grammenos and Kotsos 2002, 328) in Central Macedonia; Promachonas – Topolnica I–II (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki et al. 1997b, 756–58), Sitagroi I–II (Renfrew 1986, 173) and Dikili Tash I (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki et al. 1997a, 681) in Eastern Macedonia; Makri II in Thrace (Efstratiou and Kallintzi 1997, 886); with the Arapi phase (the second Pre-Dimini phase) in Thessaly (Gallis 1992, 49–61); and the settlements Anza IV (Gimbutas 1976, 29), Divostin II (McPherron and Christopher 1988, 468), Selevac I (Tringham and Krstic 1990, 3, 54) and Vinča A–B (Tasić N.N. et al. 2015) in the Balkan hinterland.

The finds

Pits and ditches are the two main types of construction identified in this part of the settlement, which had diverse and sometimes multiple functions. There is also a certain chronological difference between discovered features, as initially only pits were dug in this area, while ditches were made somewhat later. Given the presence of a series of cremations, the area was used as a burial ground during its final phase, though a few burials were found in earlier phases as well. These numerous contexts, precisely defined in both time and space, provide assemblages of material which we have studied according to the principles of a contextual theoretical approach. This approach contributes to a better understanding of the meaning of material culture within specific, unique and ‘historically’ determined frames of reference (Hodder 1982, 213–17; 2002, 38, 202–49; Kotsakis 2002, 21, 23; Chondroyianni-Metoki 2009, Vol. A’, 632–36).

The pits

The 462 excavated pits were analysed with the following parameters taken into account: size, construction details, individual stratigraphy and finds. The data was analysed

within each context and in close relation to the chronology. The results, however, revealed mostly general trends and variations through time rather than clear characteristics of any particular phase.

The *size* of the pits varies according to maximum diameter/length, between 0.30 m and 3.75 m, and depth, 0.10 m to 2.90 m, measured from the surface from which they were originally dug out. The location of the maximum diameter varies depending on the shape of the pits – sometimes it is at the mouth, sometimes at the belly, and sometimes at the bottom. In order to determine their primary function, the pits were classified into categories: small (less than 2 m in diameter) and large (more than 2 m in diameter) – the latter may have served as buildings; and shallow (up to 1 m depth) and deep. According to these criteria, the small and shallow pits dominate in all phases of the use of the area, but their depth gradually decreases and their size increases from the earlier to the later phases.

In terms of the *construction characteristics*, pits of circular and ellipsoidal ground plan were identified, with the former being dominant. According to their cross sections they were classified into bell-shaped, hemispherical, barrel-shaped, cylindrical, conical and convex types. The dominant shape in all phases was the hemispherical. The bell-shaped pits were more common during the earliest phase (TKK 1), while their number gradually decreased during the later phases. The convex pits dominated in the last phase (TKK 4). All other shape types appeared in some phases, but are always rare. More specifically, pits with a barrel-shaped cross section were found in TKK 1, 2 and 3; those with a conical cross section in TKK 2 and 3; and the cylindrical and hemispherical pits appeared sporadically in all four phases. The deepest pits are barrel- and bell-shaped (Figure 5.7), while the largest in extent are the hemispherical (Figure 5.5). In many cases, the initial shape of the pit was altered by erosion, re-digging or disturbance from later constructions. Several pits were deliberately re-dug between use episodes, especially in layer B, which implies both that the pits remained visible for some time after they were dug and that there was a desire to reuse them. The bottoms of the pits are flat in most cases and rarely concave or irregular, although a few pits in layer C have one or two steps or small pits instead, which are features usually related to buildings (Figure 5.5). Their surfaces did not show traces of fire, apart from rare examples that had a reddish (burnt) surface on the bottom.

The *stratigraphy* of the pits was analysed in relation to their number of use episodes, the sealing of the content after each use, the existence of erosion between use episodes, the composition of the deposits, and the presence of finds in deposits above the level from which they were dug out. According to the stratigraphy, it appears that, in all chronological phases, single-use pits occurred much more frequently than two- or multiple-use pits. The greatest number of pits with their contents sealed after each use, either single, two- or multiple use, is recorded in the earliest layer, D, indicating a particular use of this area during

¹⁴The Late Neolithic in Northern Greece spans the period from 5400/5300 to 4700/4500 BC (Andreou et al. 1996, 538)

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the initial phase. This practice of sealing the pit contents gradually decreased over time, pointing to some changes in the use of space. Of particular interest are the multiple-use pits, which are predominant in layer C. The number of use episodes is directly related to the dimensions of the pits. Their distribution suggests that pits of larger volume (and multiple-use episodes) belong to the second phase of the use of space (layer C) and that the digging of large pits for repeated use was practised especially in that phase. The frequent presence of clay layers from the erosion of the walls, especially at the periphery of the large pits, suggests that they remained open longer and were gradually filled in over time. Another interesting characteristic of the pits of layer C is that they were also sealed with a heap of soil mixed with archaeological material, creating a small 'tumulus', which implies an intention to mark their position.

The composition of the deposits in multiple-use pits are either uniform or vary from layer to layer. The basic distinction is related to the presence or absence of burnt materials. Deposits that include such materials are fewer and belong to the two earlier phases (D and C). The absence of burnt walls in the pits, however, is a proof that burnt material was transferred from another part of the settlement. Some pits have deposits, either only in the deepest layer or throughout, formed by eroded material, suggesting that the reason for their opening is connected with the extraction of clay. They were clustered in a specific area, suggesting a difference in the use of space. Furthermore, they were not used secondarily for rubbish disposal, despite the large dimensions of some of them, which further supports the assumption that the pits vary in terms of their use and that these uses seem to have been pre-planned.

The pits show significant variation in their content. Categories of material found in large quantities within the pits appear to be of crucial importance in identifying their use. The dominant category of material is pottery, which includes intact vessels or parts of them in a more or less fragmentary state (Figures 5.7, 5.9, 5.15) (Kotsakis 2010, 71, εκ. 5-4.α). The level of pottery fragmentation and the proximate location of cross joins indicate that the content of each pit, or of each use episode, was formed at a different time and is associated with a different event (see chapter 6 in this volume). Zooarchaeological material also represents a bulk category, but was present in large quantities in some pits, while in others the quantity was small (Tzevelekidi 2012, 72–73; Tzevelekidi et al. 2014). In addition to unarticulated bones, burials of whole animals (two dog skeletons in pits 76 and 110, two sheep skeletons in pit 225, a nearly complete pig skeleton in pit 132) (Figure 5.10), or parts of them (four pits with goats and pigs) were also found. The largest quantities of both pottery and animal bones, including intact vessels and burials of whole or partially whole animals, were found in the two earliest layers, D and C. Human burials were also found in this area, while some of the pits contained scattered human bones (see below). The architectural remains (burnt

daub) from the superstructure (mainly) or floors (rarely) of the buildings found in many pits, primarily from layers C and B, suggest the existence of post-framed buildings throughout the settlement lifespan, and their destruction (possibly deliberately) by fire (Figure 5.11). Lithic material, comprised of ground stone (Stroulia 2005; 2014; Chondrou 2010; Stroulia and Chondrou 2013) and chipped stone tools, was also abundant. The archaeobotanical material from this area is mainly related to processing waste, apart from a large storage vessel with four kilograms of burnt grass pea seeds found in pit 314 together with some burnt clay from a wattle-and-daub building (Figure 5.12) (Karathanou 2009; Karathanou and Valamoti 2011; Valamoti et al. 2011; chapter 6 in this volume).

It is interesting to note the way the basic content of the pits was composed, which implies specific associations and exclusions of materials and objects: not only during deposition, but also in pre-deposition activities, which reflect the variety of sources and ways of formation of the pit deposits. Pits containing large quantities of pottery and zooarchaeological material predominate, followed by those which combine pottery and burnt daub, or pottery, zooarchaeological material and burnt daub, while pits containing only zooarchaeological material together with burnt daub were not recorded.

Other finds that point to specific content and activities of special character related to the formation of the pit deposits include clay objects, with miniature vessels being the dominant category. Miniature vessels comprise the basic content of 15 pits and were found in groups or along with vessels of regular sizes, with animal (and in one case, human) bones or with querns (Figures 5.13–5.15). Other clay objects include seals and fragmented anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines found in various contexts. One of the most important finds is a rectangular two-storey house model with a pitched roof (Chondroyianni-Metoki 2014), which points to the existence of similar types of buildings and advanced architecture in the settlement (Figure 5.16). Another clay house model was found in another pit, but is poorly preserved. There are also bone tools, and *Spondylus* shell and stone jewellery. Equally important are four bone flutes made from human femurs, attesting at the same time to the development of music in the settlement and the inhabitants' relationship to the deceased (Figure 5.17).

Up to 90 per cent of some categories of the small finds are fragmented, suggesting that the pits were filled with waste. However, their coexistence with intact or/and unused objects indicates that these assemblages were formed on the basis of criteria other than their suitability (or not) for use.

The analysis of the distribution of pits shows the existence of two large pits in the vicinity of the settlement. The size, contents and position of these pits suggest semi-subterranean or subterranean buildings, used as workshops or for some other auxiliary purposes such as storage. One

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is hemispherical, with an opening 3.20 m in diameter and with two steps into its interior (Figure 5.5), while the other is almost cylindrical, 2.40 m in diameter and with one step at the bottom (Figure 5.6). Both belong to layer C. A few other larger pits (over 3 m in diameter) scattered in different areas may have also been subterranean parts of buildings, but the characteristics of their construction and the lack of hearths and floors would allow only for temporary or seasonal use. Importantly, the archaeological record from the region, including the neighbouring settlements (Ziota et al. 2013a), clearly shows that rectangular, above-ground buildings, rather than pit-huts, are the region's usual architectural type of Neolithic house. To this should be added the fact that the two largest pits (nos. 344 and 27) of the earliest layer D at TTK, with diameters of 3.20 m and 2.60 m respectively, contained burials, which suggests that the initial use of the area was not related to habitation (Figure 5.8). Several lines of evidence suggest, therefore, that if the large pits were part of semi-subterranean buildings they were not used as permanent houses.

Furthermore, the study of the pits' content in relation to their shape and size shows differentiation, especially between open- and closed-shaped pits. The open pits (hemispherical, cylindrical, convex) are associated with the architectural remains and the material of daily life activities, such as fragmented pottery, bones and loom weights. Some of those pits must have been formed by the extraction of clay, while others were dug to support large vessels. Closed-shaped pits (bell-shaped, barrel-shaped) are closely related to burials of humans and animals, and with depositions of material which seem to have been formed during periodic events of particular importance to the community rather than by the daily activities of the residents. These include ceremonies related to burials or to events of a more secular character, including the biography of the houses (i.e. displacement and burial of burnt old houses or the construction of new ones, in terms of the extraction of clay to built them).

To summarise, the data indicates a differentiation in the use of the pits which correlates to their shape, with the open-shaped ones being associated mainly with life-related activities and the closed-shaped ones with death. However, each pit was formed for a particular reason, including both the open- and closed-shaped. The construction of the closed-shaped pits must have been pre-planned according to both their contents, which are associated with a variety of non-residential activities, and their limited secondary use. Their contents are obviously related to ceremonial and ritual activities of diverse character, and are related to the ideological sphere of the TTK community.

The ditches

Seven ditches were revealed in the excavated part outside the residential area of the settlement. They run east–west or north–south (Figure 5.2), have either V- or U-shaped cross sections and are related to different phases of the use of space. Ditch B has been excavated to its total length,

reaching 74 m (Figures 5.19, 5.20). It is of orthogonal ('Γ') shape, with the two parts equal in length (37 m each) and a V-shaped cross section. The width of the bottom of both parts is uniform, but their initial width and depth are not. The east–west section is 1.40–3 m wide and 1.50–2.45 m deep, while the north–south one is 1–1.6 m wide and 1–1.4 m deep, deepening abruptly at the point of their connection. During its opening, the ditch cut through many earlier pits and another ditch (C1).

According to the stratigraphy the earliest of the ditches seems to be C1 (layer D), followed by ditch C (layer D or C) and then ditch D (layer C). Ditch B is later and belongs to layers C and B. Layer B also includes ditch A, and probably E and Z.

The presence of the ditches in almost all phases of the use of this area suggests that they coexisted with the pits, but are not related to the initial use of this area, since the earliest ditch cuts through the earliest pits. None of the ditches surrounds the settlement or any group of buildings or pits outside the residential area. The available evidence shows that they were formed gradually, without any effort to maintain them, and were filled gradually with a variety of materials, suggesting that they were not constructed according to a single concept, but were formed over time.

The material found in their deposits supports neither the interpretation of the ditches as burial places, nor as places for the deposition of remains related to ritual/ ceremonial activities, nor for the collection of water. Similar uses were secondary and occasional. Most probably they were formed by the extraction of building material. If this reading is correct, the length of ditch B's sections and of the other ditches (the shortest measures 5 m) may reflect the size and number of structures for which the extracted material was intended, justifying both the partial and the successive formation of the ditches. Thus, the archaeological data strongly suggests that the function of the ditches is different from that of the pits (especially of the closed-shaped ones), as their formation was determined by practical needs.

Burials

Based on the manipulation of the deceased, human burials at Toumba Kremastis Koiladas fall into three categories: a) cremations; b) inhumations; c) scattered bones. Burials are not located in a particular part of this area but are scattered across it.

Cremations

Cremation, as a burial practice, is attested from the second phase (layer C, 5210–5060 BC) of the use of this area, but characterises the final phase (layer A), in which 22 of the 23 cremated burials were found (Figures 5.22, 5.23). The archaeological record shows that these cremations are secondary burials, located in various parts of the excavated area, either in groups or in a single grave (Chondroyianni-Metoki 2010). Two types of burials can be distinguished

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on the basis of their elaboration. One type consists of one or two burial pots that were covered with fragments of one or more other vessels. The other consists of burials in which ceramic fragments mixed together with burnt bones and ash formed a small pile. The dominant type of burial pot is represented by a variety of common open-shaped, medium-sized vessels (*fialae*). Notable is the practice of cutting large amphorae to turn them into *fialae*, despite the common occurrence of the latter, suggesting the conceptual significance of the former vessels (see chapter 6 in this volume). The vessels used in burials are the standard pottery for the TKK settlement, except for one, which is not a container but a model of a table (*trapeza*). The very poor state of preservation and the traces of burning which all burial pots display attest that they were placed in the fire and burnt together with the deceased.

Another characteristic of cremations is the funereal use of jewellery. These are mainly *Spondylus* shell beads and some stone ornaments, which bear traces of burning indicating that they accompanied the deceased in the pyre (Figure 5.18). Notable also is the presence of a stone axe as a burial offering, which adds a symbolic connotation to the object.

Inhumations

Two undisturbed burials in pits were found in layers D (burial 25) and B (burial 24) respectively. Burial 24 belongs to a 4-year-old child, whose skeleton is articulated and partially preserved. It appears that the body was placed on its left side, oriented north–south with the head to the south. Burial 25 belongs to a 12-year-old child and is connected with the second (or third) layer of use of the multi-use pit 76: the deceased was buried in a small pit dug out in the pre-existing fill of pit 76, at its western edge. The body in burial 25 was placed on its right side in a slightly contracted position, oriented north–south with the head to the north. The skeleton is well preserved, though some parts of the hand and left foot bones are missing, either due to slight disturbance or because they were deliberately removed (Figure 5.21).

Scattered human bones

A total of 123 unarticulated human bones, representing a minimum of 14 individuals, which include both females and males of all ages, have been unearthed in this area. The bones come from different parts of the skeleton, but the prevalence of long bones is discernible. The scattered bones are not a result of disturbed burials but represent selective secondary burials, placed in this area long after the initial disposal of the body, where it decomposed. At least 46 of the pits scattered throughout the excavated area contained unarticulated human bones, and the data supports their deliberate deposition. Many of these pits contain either human bones in multiple layers together with other objects, or appear to have been used only for the purpose of the disposal of human bones. These pits may hold symbolic or ritual value, perhaps linked with rituals

honouring the ancestors, as they were systematically used as a place for secondary burials of selected human bones.

The anthropological material of Toumba Kremastis Koiladas indicates systematic (or at least occasional) use of the space on the margins of the residential area for the disposal of human bones. Some contexts show clear ritual connotations related either to the primary burial of the deceased (inhumations) or of the ancestors (unarticulated bones), while the cremations that also represent secondary burials confirm the specific use of this area throughout the settlement lifespan.

The coexistence of two or more burial practices in the same settlement occurs at many sites in Greece during the Neolithic period. The practice of cremation is characteristic of Thessaly (Gallis 1982) and the region of Western Macedonia, where it appears to have been especially practised during the Late Neolithic (P. Chrysostomou 2012; Chourmouziadis et al. 2001, 626–28; Stratouli 2013; Ziota et al. 2013a, 49; Chondroyianni-Metoki 2009, 451, 453). The use of pits for disposal of the deceased was frequent in the earliest periods in the area of Kitrini Limni (Karamitrou-Mentesidi 2002, 627; Papathanassiou and Richards 2011). The practise of the secondary treatment of the dead, which is common at TKK, is also found in Neolithic settlements of the wider region (Ziota et al. 2013a, 47; Papathanassiou and Richards 2011; Karamitrou-Mentesidi 2000, 472–74; Chourmouziadis et al. 2001, 626–28; P. Chrysostomou 2012; Triantaphyllou 2008).

Conclusions

According to the excavation data, the settlement at Toumba Kremasti Koilada is characterised by continuity in the location of the houses on the tell and the diversity in the use of space on the margins of the residential area. Similar organisation and use of space is recorded at the neighbouring and contemporary settlement of Kleitos, where pits with remains of ritual activities including burials were found outside both the residential area and the ditch which encircled it (Chondroyianni-Metoki 2011; Ziota 2014). The tendency to delineate settlements with one or more ditches characterises the Neolithic in southeastern Europe (Bailey 2000, 153), especially its later periods (Late and Final Neolithic), and this also holds true for northern Greece (Ziota et al. 2013b; Stratouli 2007, 596–98; Pappa and Besios 1999; Grammenos and Kotsos 2004, 16–17, 20–21, 145–46). At TKK, however, a ditch encircling the settlement has yet to be found; but, the settlement itself has not been systematically investigated.

The finds outside the residential area at TKK suggest variety in the non-domestic uses of space, from rubbish deposition to the disposal of the remains of diverse ritual activities, including human and animal burials. TKK offers some of the best examples of ‘structured deposition’ in the Neolithic period, not only in Greece (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki et al. 2005, 101–105; Pappa et

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al. 2004; Chondroyianni-Metoki 2011), but also in the Balkan hinterland (Chapman 2000a, 61–63; Hill 1995, 95; Chondroyianni-Metoki 2009, 502–503, 647–51, with all the relevant bibliography; Chondroyianni-Metoki 2015).

The contents of the pits and ditches, with the observed correlations of different material categories and the types of objects (and indeed the exclusion of others) which repeatedly occur, in some cases in patterns, indicates the existence of structured deposition.¹⁵ This reflects different pre-depositional paths and ideological correlations between objects and materials. The evidence for structure in the deposition of refuse, and even more so of the assemblages of intact vessels and other objects at TKK, is found in their correlation within the individual contexts; in the activities that produced such contexts (e.g. funeral) and their distribution (e.g. types of contexts located close to one another); the types of objects that comprise deposits linked to ritual activities; and in the ‘biographies’ of the objects themselves. The remains of daily or recurring activities that ended up in this area suggest intense ritual activity connected to various aspects of the life of the inhabitants. The house and the activities related to it, the burials of the deceased and the associated rituals, and a variety of other communal ceremonies appear to be the principal sources of the content of the pits at TKK. At the same time, the level of preservation of the finds and the coexistence of intact and broken objects at TKK support the importance of the practice of intentional fragmentation suggested for the prehistoric societies of southeastern Europe (Chapman 2000b).

This area is characterised by intense ritual activity which, to a significant degree, is funerary in character and involves primary and secondary burials, with some of them related to the community’s ancestors, the public nature of these activities and the location on the margins of the settlement. They would reinforce social cohesion and stability, and the maintenance of the social structure (Hodder 1982, 162, 182–83; Dietler 2001, 65; Parker Pearson and Richards 1994, 24–29). Actual burials of humans and animals, and symbolic burial of houses (both real ones and models that underline the significance of the house), and of the variety of objects, all receiving similar treatment, comprise a specific public cemetery. The ideological perceptions and the practices of the inhabitants appear to be based on the general dichotomy of life and death and on the concept of fertility, while echoing the concepts of purity, catharsis and social equality.

This ritual activity must have been important for the community as a whole reflecting the inhabitants’ need for protection from the various real and symbolic threats

¹⁵ The existence of structured deposition is demonstrated by all the separate studies of material from Toumba Kremastis Koiladas which have been conducted so far. See Stroulia and Chondrou 2013; Stroulia 2014; Tzevelekidi 2012; Valamoti et al. 2011; chapter 6 in this volume. For burial remains, see Triantaphyllou 2008, who also identified the material of all four flutes as human bone.

embedded in the lives of individuals and communities in the bordering zone of the Kitrini Limni basin.

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Key: Sites in the Sarigiol (Kitrini Limni) located up to 1990 (after Fotiades 1988, 42; Kalogirou 1996, 265-6): 1. Toumba Mavrodendriou, 2. Toumba Pontokomis, 3. Toumba Drepanou, 4. Toumba Akrinis, 5. Mikro Nisi Galanis, 6. Chamboula Toumba Akrinis, 7. Keramidia Akrinis, 8. Megalo Nisi Galanis, 9. Megali Toumba Agiou Dimitriou, 10. Mikri Toumba Agiou Dimitriou, 11. Toumba Xeropigadou Koiladas, 12. Toumba Tetralofou, 13. Toumba Kremastis Koiladas, 14. Toumba Kleitou

Figure 5.1. Map of the Kitrini Limni basin, with the location of the Toumba Kremastis Koiladas settlement and of other settlements in the area known before 1994 (based on a Military Geographic Service map).



Figure 5.2. Site plan with pits, ditches and cremation burials discovered on the margins of the Neolithic settlement of Toumba Kremastis Koiladas.

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Figure 5.3. The location of the Neolithic settlement of Toumba Kremastis Koiladas (on the left) and of the excavation on the north-east margins of the settlement (on the right).



Figure 5.4. The 1998 excavation area on the margins of the settlement (with the old national highway on the left and the new Egnatia highway on the right).

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Figure 5.5. Large hemispherical Pit 11, with two steps that provide access to its interior and a small pit on the bottom, which may have served for storage (layer C).



Figure 5.6. Row of aligned pits (nos. 12, 13, 14, 15) of possible auxiliary or storage function. A step that provides access to the interior of the central pit is visible, as well as a row of postholes, which probably supported a timber roof or floor that covered the pit (layer C).

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Figure 5.7. Large bell-shaped Pit 4, which contained a substantial quantity of vessels and animal bones (layer D).



Figure 5.8. Large bell-shaped Pit 344, with multiple-use episodes that contained a variety of materials including the bones of human infants. The pit was sealed after its last use (layer D).

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Figure 5.9. Large barrel-shaped Pit 42, with fragments of pottery on the bottom (layer C).



Figure 5.10. Pit 225, which contained interments of entire or parts of animals (sheep) and pottery (layer C).

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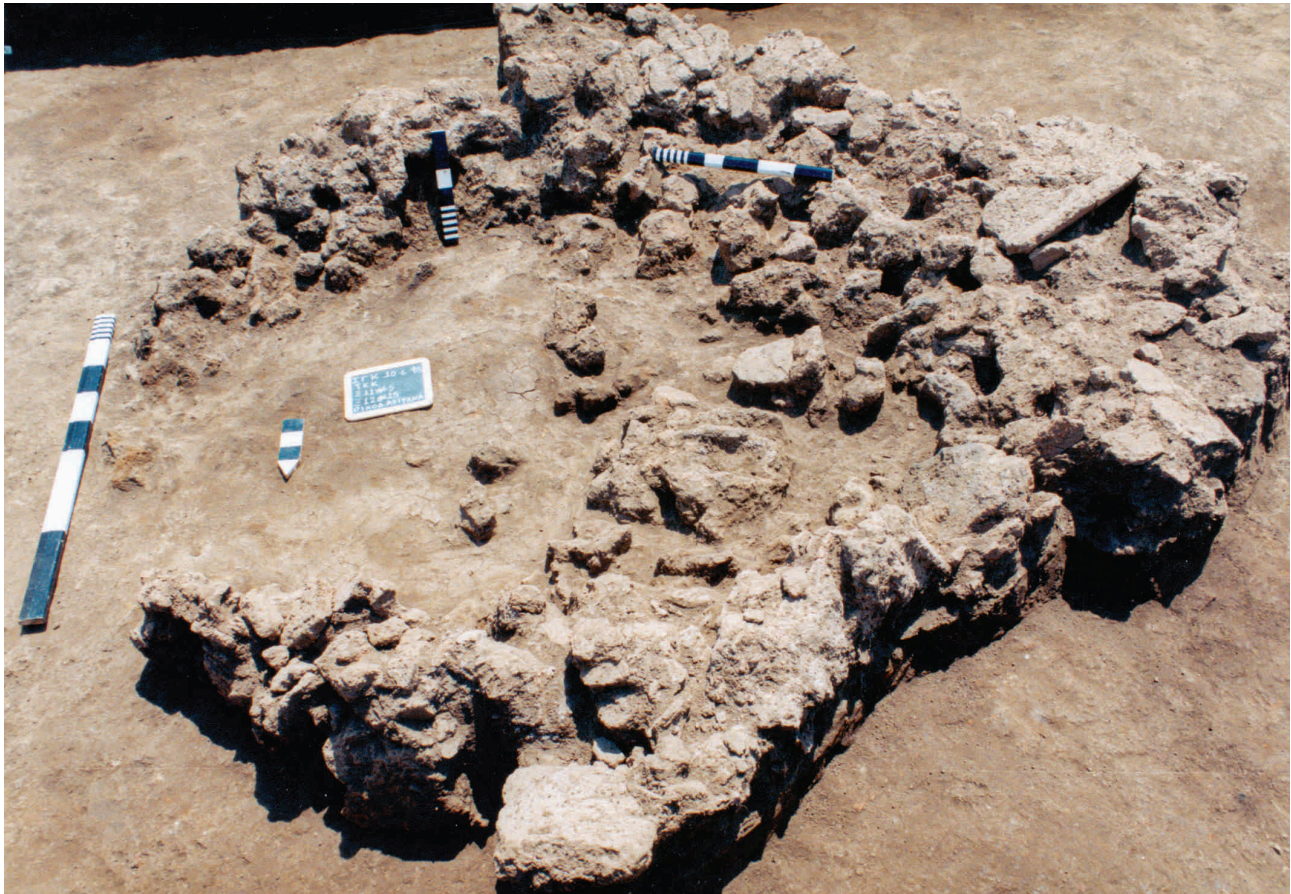


Figure 5.11. Large hemispherical, single-use Pit 430, which contained burnt architectural remains (layer C).



Figure 5.12. Pit 314, which contained burnt architectural remains of a post-framed building and a storage vessel filled with burnt grass pea seeds (layer C).

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Figure 5.13. Pit 389, with remains of ritual activity (miniature vessels and a quern stone) (layer C).



Figure 5.14. Pit 388, with remains of ritual activity (miniature vessels and bones) (layer C).

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Figure 5.15. Pit 387, with remains of ritual activity, probably of funerary character, which contained numerous vessels of both standard and miniature size, a quern stone, animal bones and a single human bone (layer C).



Figure 5.16. Two-storey clay house model from Pit 296.

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Figure 5.17. Flutes made of human bone.



Figure 5.18. Beads made of *Spondylus* shell from a necklace probably worn by the dead woman (cremation burial no. 21).



Figure 5.19. Pits and ditches B, C1, D.



Figure 5.20. Part of ditch B, which cut earlier pits (134, 186, 187).

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Figure 5.21. Child inhumation in Pit 76 (burial no. 25).



Figure 5.22. Cremation burial no. 3.



Figure 5.23. Cremation burials nos. 18 and 19.

