

Building B at the Thessaloniki Toumba settlement, Northern Greece. A building biography approach.

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Abstract

During the Late Bronze Age (LBA, 1600-1000 BCE) in Central Macedonia, Greece, habitation was almost exclusively taking place in in small, high, and steep-sided tell-type settlements, known locally as *toumbes* (sing. *toumba*). Excavation at Thessaloniki Toumba demonstrates a distinctive fixation of the community on the faithful reproduction of the settlement's layout and the external boundaries of individual buildings for several centuries. The walls of new buildings were constructed right on top of the partly standing mudbrick walls of the preceding architectural phase using similar materials and building techniques.

Tell-type settlements have been widely associated with a social organization model centred on the household. The LBA households have been described as self-sufficient and autonomous social units, which at least at some settlements, included a large number of individuals. The types and distribution of finds display a great variety of activities taking place inside the buildings. There is suggestive evidence, however, that the types and intensity of these activities differed between households and from one settlement horizon to the next.

The present paper will present the results of the systematic reconstruction and analysis of the building biography of one building (Building B) at the settlement of Thessaloniki Toumba correlated with the distribution through time of the different categories of finds (artifacts and ecofacts) located at the various spaces of the building. The analysis is performed within a 2D and 3D GIS environment which facilitates the reconstruction of the biography of individual buildings as structures and as social spaces within which various fields of action (i.e., domestic economies, production, storage and consumption of foodstuffs) provided an arena for the emergence of intra-settlement rivalries and social differences in the community over the three last centuries of the 2nd millennium BC.