

# Handling of death at the end of the Late Bronze Age: the case of Faia Petra, 13th c. BC, Eastern Macedonia, Greece<sup>1</sup>

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## Zusammenfassung

DER UMGANG MIT DEM TOD AM ENDE DER SPÄTBRONZEZEIT: DAS BEISPIEL VON FAIA PETRA, 13. JH. V. CHR., OSTMAKEDONIEN, GRIECHENLAND. Der Beitrag stellt das Gräberfeld von Faia Petra vor, welches zur Präfektur von Serres, Ostmakedonien, gehört und 15 km südlich der griechisch-bulgarischen Grenze liegt. Das Gräberfeld datiert an das Ende der Spätbronzezeit (1300–1200 v. Chr.) und ist hinsichtlich der Beisetzung der Verstorbenen und der Nachbegräbnisfeierlichkeiten von besonderem Interesse. Fünf mit Steineinfassungen umgebene Gruppen von Einzel- und Mehrfachbestattungen, von denen drei nahezu intakt waren, und ein Einzelgrab wurden ausgegraben. Körperbestattung war die bevorzugte Beisetzungsform für beide Geschlechter

und alle Altersklassen. Es gibt nur eine einzige Brandbestattung. Der mit dieser Bestattungsform verbundene hohe Aufwand deutet auf eine herausgehobene soziale Stellung der Verstorbenen hin. Leichenbankette, inklusive Fleischkonsum, waren Teil des Begräbnisrituals und implizieren, dass ein über die Angehörigen der Verstorbenen hinausgehender Sozialverband an den Begräbnisfeierlichkeiten beteiligt war.

## Abstract

This paper presents the cemetery of Faia Petra, which is located in the prefecture of Serres, Eastern Macedonia, 15 kilometers south of the Greco-Bulgarian border. The cemetery is dated to the end of the Late Bronze Age (1300–1200 BC) and has particular importance in regard to the mode of disposal of the deceased and post-funerary activities. Five enclosed groups of single and multiple burials, of which three were almost intact, and a single grave were excavated. Inhumation was the prevalent mode of disposal for both sex groups and all age categories. A single cremation, requiring high expenditure of energy and specialized knowledge, may have been associated with special treatment of a significant member of the community perhaps of specific sex and age. Funerary meals involving consumption of meat constituted part of the primary burial ritual and arguably imply active

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Fig. 1. Map of Greece: burial sites mentioned in the text. Key: 1. Faia Petra – 2. Exochi-Potamoi – 3. Thasos – 4. Ayios Mamas – 5. Kriaritsi – 6. Nea Skioni – 7. Toumba Thessalonikis – 8. Makriyalos – 9. Korinos – 10. Pigi Athinas – 11. Spathes – 12. Treis Elies – 13. Goules – 14. Aiani – 15. Xeropigado Koiladas – 16. Toumba Kremastis Koiladas – 17. Avgi.

participation therein of a larger social group than the close kin of the deceased.

Extramural cemeteries, mainly including inhumations, are the rule in Greek Macedonia throughout the Bronze Age, while cremations appear more frequently during the Early Iron Age. The latter practice started to appear in the Neolithic, however, either as cremations placed in clay pots *within* the settlement (as at Makriyalos in Pieria<sup>2</sup> or Goules<sup>3</sup> and Avgi<sup>4</sup> in Western Macedonia) or *outside* the settlement in the form of organized extramural cemeteries (e.g. Toumba Kremastis-Koiladas in Western Macedonia<sup>5</sup>) (Fig. 1). In the Early Bronze Age, both inhumation and cremation oc-

cur, but inhumation is clearly predominant in the cemeteries of Ayios Mamas<sup>6</sup> and Nea Skioni<sup>7</sup> on Chalkidiki and in the cemeteries of Xeropigado Koiladas<sup>8</sup> and Goules<sup>9</sup> near Kozani. On the other hand, at Kriaritsi on the Chalkidiki peninsula, the rule is cremation in urns that were located in well organized tumuli, giving a clear emphasis on family links.<sup>10</sup>

Inhumations and cremations continue to co-occur in the Late Bronze Age at Aeani<sup>11</sup> and on the island of Thasos,<sup>12</sup> while

2. BESIOS, PAPPÀ 1994. – TRIANTAPHYLLOU 1996.

3. ZIOTA, HONDROYIANNI-METOKI, 1993, 36. – ZIOTA 2007.

4. STRATOULI, TRIANTAPHYLLOU, BEKIARIS et al. 2010.

5. HONDROYIANNI-METOKI 2001. – HONDROYIANNI-METOKI 2009.

6. PAPPÀ 1992.

7. TSIGARIDA, MANTAZI 2003.

8. ZIOTA 1995, 92. – ZIOTA 1998. – ZIOTA 2008.

9. ZIOTA, HONDROYIANNI-METOKI 1993. – HONDROYIANNI-METOKI 1998. – ZIOTA 2007.

10. ASOUCRIDOU, MANTAZI, TSOLAKIS 1998. – ASOUCRIDOU 2001.

11. KARAMITROU-MENTESIDI 1989. – KARAMITROU-MENTESIDI 1990. – KARAMITROU-MENTESIDI 2000.

12. KOUKOULI 1992, 641.



Fig. 2. Part of the terrace where the LBA cemetery of Faia Petra is located, interrupted on the east by a steep gorge.

cremation predominates in the tumulus cemeteries of Exochi and Potamoi near Drama<sup>13</sup> in Eastern Macedonia.<sup>14</sup> During the Late Bronze Age, however, extramural cemeteries with inhumations appear to be the most common areas of disposal of the deceased.<sup>15</sup> A standard funerary programme in grave type, additional furnishing equipment, burial type, position and orientation, and associated artefacts is cross-cut by the variable deposition of wealth within the cemeteries including carved seal stones, jewellery, pots and bronze weapons – often of Mycenaean type – together with artefacts of exotic material. While single burial is the rule in earlier phases of the Bronze Age in Greek Macedonia, in the Late Bronze Age, there is a growing interest in multiple and secondary burials, that in-

involved re-opening of the grave, as at Spathes, a few cases at Treis Elies on Mount Olympus, and in cemeteries on Thasos.<sup>16</sup>

This paper presents the cemetery of Faia Petra, which is dated to the end of the Late Bronze Age (1300–1200 BC)<sup>17</sup>

13. GRAMMENOS 1979.

14. For a thorough survey of LBA cremation burials in Southeastern Europe: JUNG 2007.

15. Late Bronze Age *extramural* cemeteries with inhumations are known from the broader area of Mount Olympus and Pieria in central Macedonia, such as at Spathes (POULAKI-PANTERMALI 1987a. – POULAKI-PANTERMALI 1987b), Treis Elies (POULAKI-PANTERMALI 1988), Pigi Athinas (POULAKI-PANTERMALI 2003), Makriyialos (BESIOS, KRAHTOPOULOU 1994), Korinos (BESIOS 1993) and from Western Macedonia, such as at Aeani (note 10), Ano Komi (KARAMITROU-MENTESIDI 1998) and Kriovrisi Kranidion (HONDROYIANNI-METOKI 1997). More recently, a group of seventeen *intramural* burials from LBA Toumba Thessalonikis was excavated and preliminary results were presented at the Annual Meeting of Thessaloniki (AEMTh) (ANDREOU, EFKLEIDOU, TRIANTAPHYLLOU in press).

16. See above n. 11 and 14. For a discussion on mortuary practices in LBA Greek Macedonia, based on associated skeletal remains, see TRIANTAPHYLLOU 2001, 25 f., 55–57 and figs. 5/12–14 while a more recent and fruitful discussion of LBA mortuary practices in their social context is provided in ANDREOU 2010, 651.

17. The absolute chronology of the cemetery is based on radiocarbon dates from five human bone samples. One bone sample was analysed with the conventional <sup>14</sup>C dating method (Gas Proportional Counting) by the Laboratory of Archaeometry of NCSR Demokritos in Athens while AMS analysis was applied to another four bone samples by the Curt-Engelhorn Centre of Archaeometry at Mannheim. Radiocarbon dates from charcoal samples also analysed at NCSR Demokritos at an earlier stage of the study gave a range of 1600–1400 BC (calibrated date, probability 95,4 %). The dates from human bone samples give a range of 1400–1200 BC, where the highest probabilities of all five samples accumulate. A statistical analysis model applied to the five bone dates gives the earliest modeled dated event (First) in 1410–1309 BC and the latest (Last) in 1375–1264 BC, both with 95,4 % probability. These dates confirm the short duration of use of the cemetery but they are earlier than the relative chronology, based on the associated Mycenaean type pottery (LH IIIB), which dates the burial assemblage in the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC. Recent discussion on issues of absolute chronology of the late Bronze Age in northern Greece: JUNG 2007. – JUNG, WENNINGER 2004. – WARDLE, NEWTON, KUNIHOLM 2007. – JUNG, ANDREOU, WENNINGER 2009.

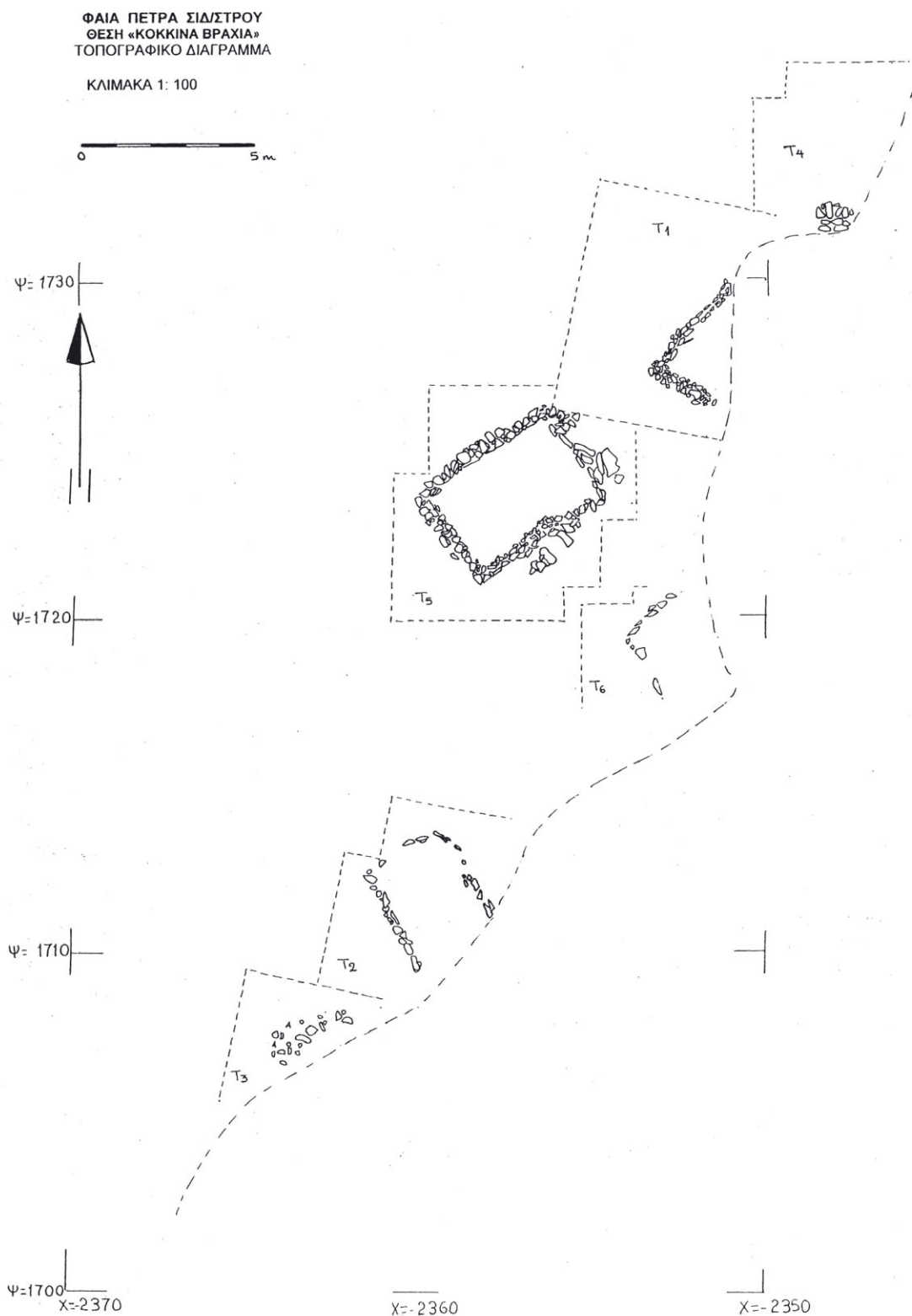


Fig. 3. Plan of the cemetery with the rectangular Burial Enclosures.



Fig. 4. Burial Enclosure 5.

and has particular interest with regard to the mode of disposal of the deceased and post-funerary activities. The cemetery is located in the prefecture of Serres, Eastern Macedonia, 15 kilometers south of the Greco-Bulgarian border. It lies on a terrace in a semi-mountainous area and is abruptly interrupted by a deep and steep gorge (Fig. 2). The location of the cemetery at high elevation on a terrace with very distinctive red clay soil may have been critical to the selection of the site as a burial ground clearly visible from the area of the settlement below.<sup>18</sup>

Five groups of single and multiple burials, of which three (nos. 2, 5 and 6) were almost intact, and a single grave<sup>19</sup> were excavated. Each of the five groups of burials was bounded by a rectangular surround, comprised mainly of upright stones (Fig. 3). The construction of enclosure 5 deviated slightly from the rule, being surrounded by compact stone side walls

with inner façades and two entrances (Fig. 4). The floor area of the enclosures varied between six and nine square metres. Each enclosure was covered by stone piles packed with earth which, although not forming a clear tumulus, were probably visible on the ground (Fig. 5). The regular spacing between and similar orientation of the enclosures suggest a well organized cemetery (Fig. 3). The layout of the Faia Petra cemetery does not have close parallels in Greek Macedonia except for the occurrence of a similar type of LBA tombs in the Kentria cemetery on Thasos.<sup>20</sup> The rectangular shape of the enclosures is usually associated with domestic architecture and, in a mortuary context, is better known in EBA southern Greece, in the Cyclades and in the ‘house tombs’ of the north coast of Minoan Crete.<sup>21</sup>

18. Ethnographic, as well as archaeological, examples suggest that the choice of “places of the dead” often conceals an underlying meaning and reason (PARKER-PEARSON 1999, 125–141), as has been argued in the case of tombs in the Cretan Mesara (BRANIGAN 1998) or in the Peloponnese (BOYD 2002).

19. The grave was found on the edge of the gorge and was originally interpreted as part of an enclosure similar to the others, VALLA 2002. – VALLA 2007.

20. The enclosures built with stone side walls are similar to those of tombs K1 and K2 in the Kentria cemetery, KOUKOULI-CHRYSANTHAKI 1992, 37–50, 371 f. and fig. 71.

21. SOLES 1992. – Although the ground plan of stone enclosures in Faia Petra is not consistent with a closed building but rather with a hastily constructed boundary to the disposal area, thus recalling the Late Neolithic tombs at Kephala, on the island of Kea, or Middle Bronze Age tumulus F at Nidri on the island of Leukas (SOUYOUDZOGLOU-HAYWOOD 1999, 31. – DÖRPFELD 1927, pl. 15).



Fig. 5. Burial Enclosure 6 during excavation with covering stone piles.

Burial Enclosure	Male	Female	Adult	Subadult	Total
1	1				1
2	2			1: 10-11 yrs	3
3			1		1
4				1: 0-12 mos	1
5	1	1		1 (1-6 yrs)	3
6		1		2: a) 4-5 yrs, b) 10 yrs	3

Fig. 6. List of the individuals accommodated in the burial enclosures. Key: yrs = years, mos = months.

Analysis of the human skeletal remains provided the minimum number of twelve individuals of both sex groups – with a slight over-representation of men over women – and all age categories (Fig. 6). It is worth noting the presence of subadults, including one neonate recognized only from deciduous tooth crowns. The distribution of the deceased within the enclosures does not reveal any clear pattern with regard to sex or age. The best preserved enclosures, that is 2,

5 and 6, provided three individuals each. More particularly, Enclosure 5, the most complete and elaborate structure, appears to have accommodated a couple with a 4 year old infant. The overall sample of the cemetery population, however, is too small to provide any secure clues to the composition of the population unit – whether it represents a nuclear family or a group defined by sex and/or age.

Two more issues of particular interest in the Faia Petra cemetery concern the disposal of the deceased and the occurrence of a variety of post-funerary actions suggesting manipulation of the deceased.

Starting with the mode of disposal, although inhumation is the prevalent practice in the cemetery, there is also one clear case of cremation. Inhumations vary with regard to the degree of articulation of the human skeletal remains as a result of later manipulation of the deceased. The position of the deceased,<sup>22</sup> therefore, can be inferred in only three cases:

22. Both contracted and extended positions are common in LBA cemeteries from this region: e.g. *contracted* at Makriyalos (BESIOS, KRAHTOPOULOU 1994), Korinos (BESIOS 1993), Pigi Athinas (POULAKI-PANTERMALI 2003) in Pieria and Ano Komi (KARAMITROU-MENTESIDI 1998); and *extended* at Spathes (POULAKI-PANTERMALI 1987a. – POULAKI-PANTERMALI 1987b) and Treis Elies (POULAKI-PANTERMALI 1988) on Mount Olympus, while both positions are attested at Aeani in Western Macedonia (KARAMITROU-MENTESIDI 1989. – KARAMITROU-MENTESIDI 1990. – KARAMITROU-MENTESIDI 2000).



Fig. 7. The child of burial Enclosure 6 in contracted position.

1) in Enclosure 6, a 10 year old child laid in contracted position on the right side (Fig. 7),

2) in Enclosure 5, a young adult man laid in extended position, and

3) in Enclosure 2, a 10 year old child of which the legs are in extended position but the rest of the skeleton was intentionally disturbed during secondary manipulation activities.

Primary inhumations are frequently associated with funerary meals, at least sometimes involving the consumption of meat.<sup>23</sup> In particular, Enclosures 1, 5 and 6 each contain disarticulated and unburnt remains of probably a single animal: a young calf (Fig. 8), a young yearling sheep (Fig. 9) and an older yearling sheep (Fig. 10) respectively. All three animals had been butchered, dismembered and stripped of

23. Special structures or piles of stones in LBA cemeteries from this region may be related to feasts or other funerary rites. Archaeological evidence for such activities comes from Aeani, in Western Macedonia, where a large pyre with animal bones and broken vessels has come to light (KARAMITROU-MENTESIDI 1990), Pigi Athinas, in southern Pieria, where broken vessels were found dispersed among the stones that covered the main burial (POULAKI-PANTERMALI 2003) and the island of Thasos, where rituals involving consumption of meat seem to have been performed in the anteroom or outside the tombs (KOUKOULI-CHRYSSANTHAKI 1992, 644 f.).

meat, presumably *after* skinning – of which no trace has survived – with a small knife. The calf in Enclosure 1 bears traces of dismembering on the left humerus and left pelvis, and of filleting on the left humerus, right radius and right pelvis. The younger yearling sheep in Enclosure 5 has traces of filleting on the left humerus. The older yearling sheep in Enclosure 6 has traces of dismembering on the left humerus. The animals had thus apparently been butchered for consumption, presumably (given the archaeological context and the indications [below] of rapid deposition) at some form of funerary meal. The animals consumed were not large but probably provided enough meat potentially to cater for a gathering of at least an extended kin group. In contrast to normal settlement refuse, the bones in the Faia Petra enclosures had not been broken to extract marrow and had been collected up for rapid burial (i.e. without gnawing by scavengers), underlining the significance of these episodes of consumption.<sup>24</sup> Such deposits, in which the remains of

24. Cf. ISAAKIDOU, HALSTEAD, DAVIS et al. 2002. With regard to the social aspects of feasting in Mycenaean society and in burial rites: KILLEN 1994. – HAMILAKIS 1998. – HAMILAKIS 2008. – WRIGHT 2004. – BENDALL 2004. – BORGNA 2004. But also CAVANAGH, MEE 1998, 111 f. – GALLOU 2005, 91–105, 124.

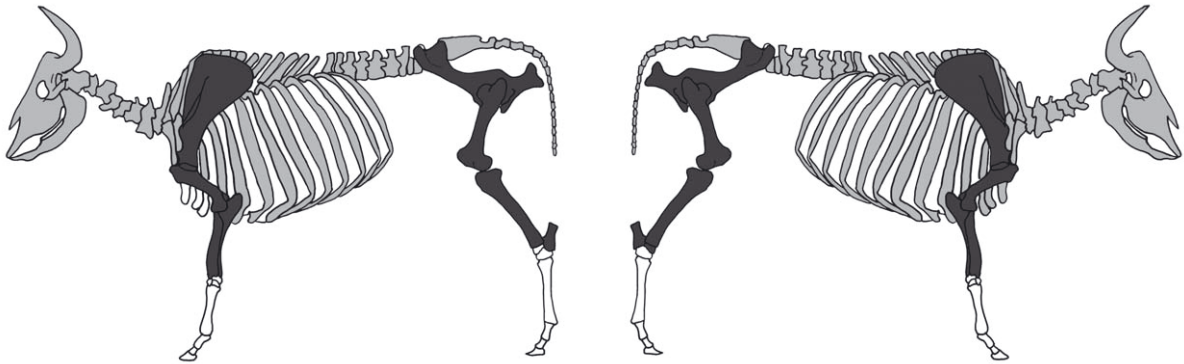


Fig. 8. Anatomical representation of young calf in Enclosure 1. Key: black = present, white = absent, grey = partly present but difficult to quantify or to identify with precision, left side and right side.

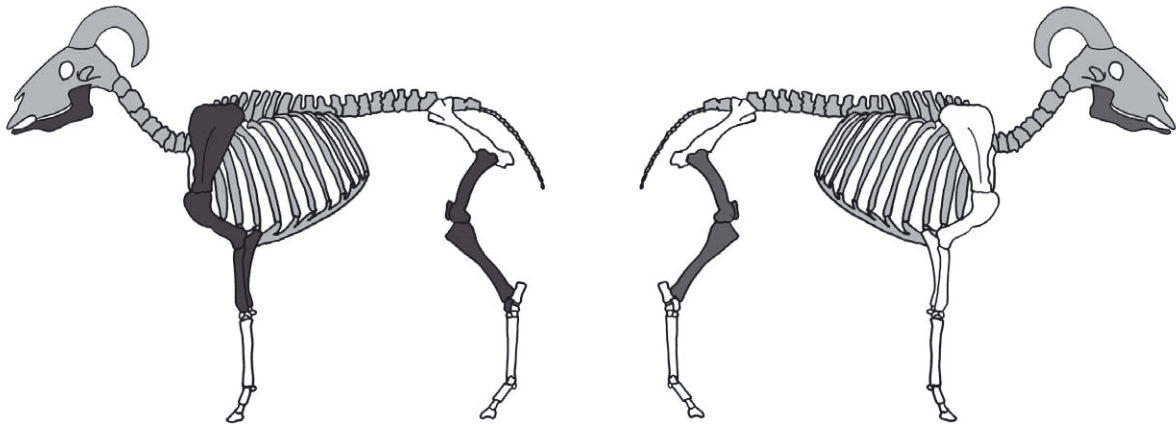


Fig. 9. Anatomical representation of young yearling sheep in Enclosure 5. Key as for Fig. 8.

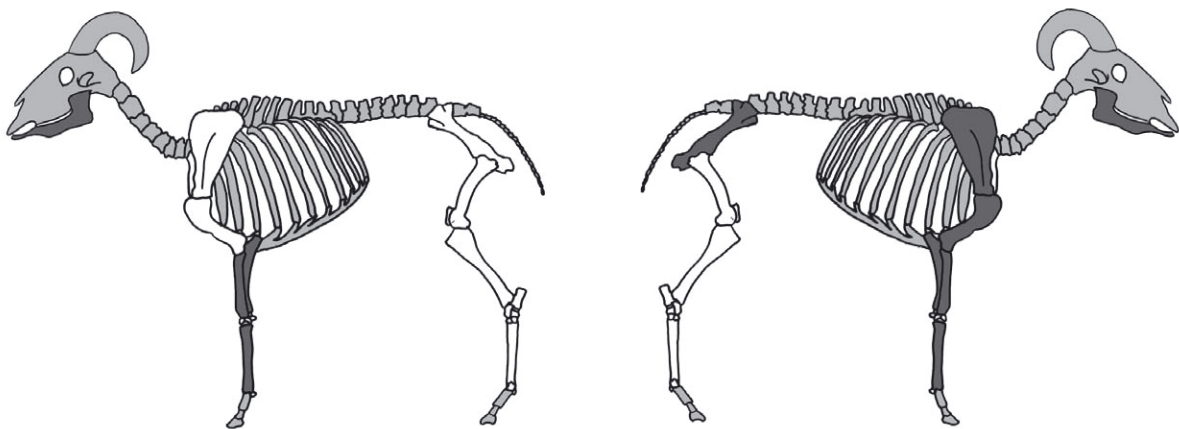


Fig. 10. Anatomical representation of older yearling sheep in Enclosure 6. Key as for Fig. 8.





Fig. 11. A four handled bowl with incised decoration filled with white paste.

single consumption events were rapidly and separately buried, are quite common in the Bronze Age, but scarce in the Neolithic of Greece. As well as adding formality to the funerary meal, careful discard adds a further stage to the *chaîne opératoire* of slaughter-cooking-consumption.<sup>25</sup> *Inter alia*, segregation of the funerary ceremonies into discrete stages created multiple opportunities for differential participation and thus for creation or reinforcement of social distinctions. No other food remains were traced although water flotation was applied to the soil contents of all vessels.

In contrast with the elaborate and time-consuming construction of the burial enclosures, the type and amount of associated grave goods are rather modest, involving mainly plain clay pots. A total of 28 vessels were recovered, of which 22 belong to the incised ware decorated with bands of irregular incisions filled with white paste (Fig. 11), which is typical of Northern Greece at this time.<sup>26</sup> In addition, two Mycenaean-type stirrup jars were recovered, as well as several bronze items (e.g. knives, a spearhead, arrowheads, a bracelet, hair spirals (Fig. 12), part of a clothing accessory), clay spindle whorls, amber beads and two gold discs. Significantly, the burial enclosures always included large clay vessels, particularly of two standard shapes: the four-handled amphora with a flat base and the four-handled skyphos with

25. HALSTEAD, ISAAKIDOU 2011.

26. Incised ware decorated with bands of irregular incisions filled in with white paste is quite common in settlements of eastern and central Macedonia in LH IIIB and IIIC, in particular at Angista Railway station (KOUKOULI-CHRYSANTHAKI 1980, 54–85), Kastanas (HOCHSTETTER 1984, 64), Assiros (WARDLE 1980, 244–248. – WARDLE 1989, 455–463) and Toumba Thessalonikis (ANDREOU, PSARAKI 2007). More information concerning especially the pottery of Faia Petra can be found in VALLA 2007, 368 f.

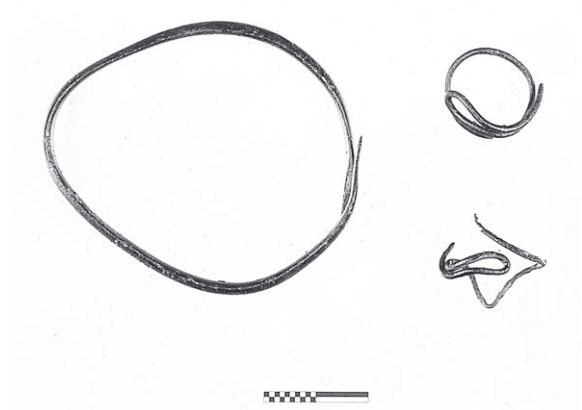


Fig. 12. Bronze bracelet and hair spirals.

a tall, conical foot. No shape was strictly associated with any particular sex or age group except for spindle whorls and weaponry, which accompanied female and male burials, respectively.

Although inhumation was the normal mode of disposal in LBA Faia Petra, cremated human remains were found in a four-handled amphora, placed in an upright position and wedged with stones against the wall of Enclosure 5. The urn was covered with a bowl with wishbone handles (Fig. 13). The cremated remains were of a woman in her thirties – one of two women (and the only adult woman) recognised in the study population.

Examination of these remains provides interesting insights into the process of cremation. Changes in bone colour, shape and texture, combined with patterns of fragmentation and skeletal representation, offer valuable information on both conditions of burning and the collection and disposal of the remains of the deceased.<sup>27</sup> White colouring of the bone surface, frequently associated with alterations to bone texture due to firing (e.g., cracking, severe warping),<sup>28</sup> is consistent with lengthy exposure of the corpse in fresh condition (i.e. shortly after death) to an intense and well controlled fire which reached up to 800–900° C. High fragmentation of the human remains suggests continuous stirring of the cremated material during firing to ensure flow of oxygen.<sup>29</sup> The presence within the pyre debris of large pieces of charcoal, presumably belonging to the fuel, along with a few burnt animal bones, possibly derived from a fu-

27. For a general bibliography on cremation in archaeological populations as well as on forensic contexts see MCKINLEY 2000. – SCHMIDT, SYMES 2008. – UBELAKER, RIFE 2007, 11–16. – UBELAKER 2008.

28. BUIKSTRA, SWEGLE 1989. – CORREIA 1997.

29. MCKINLEY 1993. – MCKINLEY 1994.

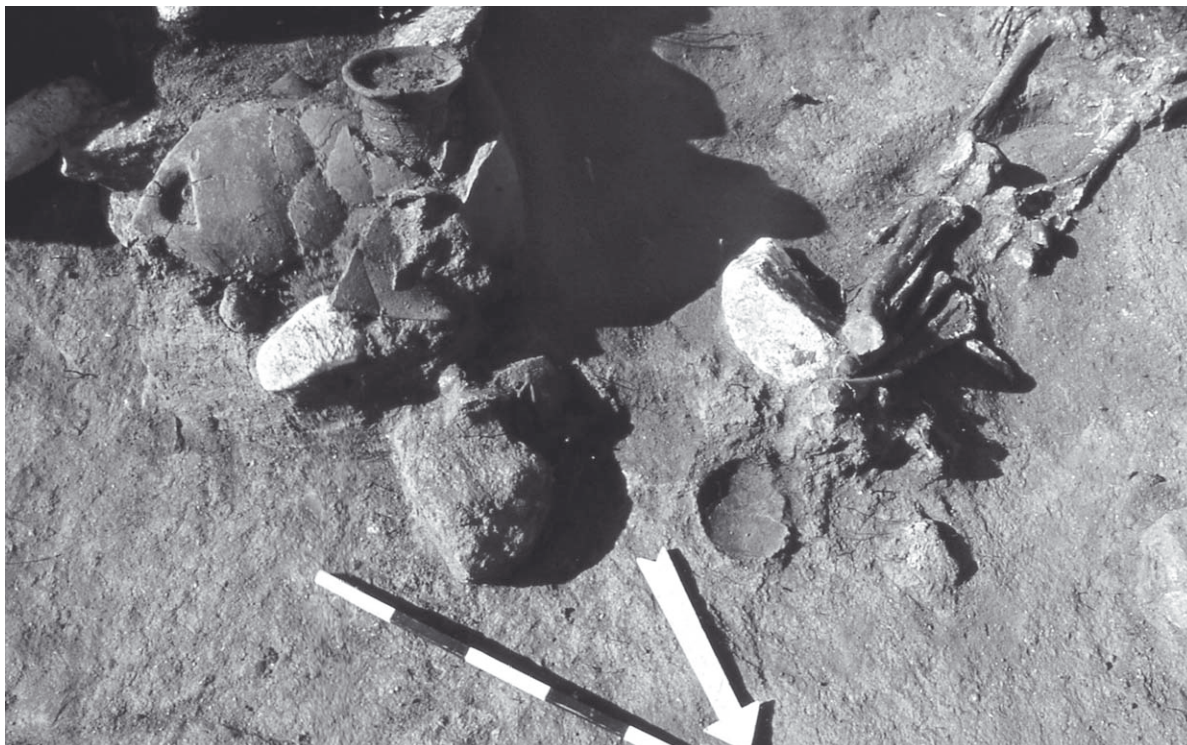


Fig. 13. The urn during excavation: a four-handled amphora.



Fig. 14. Grave goods associated with the urn.

nerary meal, suggests that cremated remains were collected by scooping up rather than careful manual selection of human remains only. Skeletal representation (including all anatomical units, even small hand and foot bones) and the total weight of cremated bone (916 grams) together reinforce the scenario of thorough scooping up of the pyre debris. It is worth noting the associated *unburnt* grave goods, a small bronze knife and a clay spindle whorl (Fig. 14), which had

been placed inside the urn after collection of the cremated remnants.

The single cremation recovered in the Faia Petra cemetery was the outcome of a lengthy process involving the collection of fuel, the building of a pyre suitable for complete cremation of the human corpse, and the collection of the cremated remnants and their placement in the urn. Arguably, therefore, cremation was not a 'cheap' solution to the disposal of the deceased, but a mortuary practice that required a high level of labour investment and considerable knowledge of pyrotechnology. Although the sample is very small, it is tempting to suggest that the cremated woman – given the as yet unique nature of her burial at Faia Petra – may have held special status in the living community.

Burning seems to have held broad symbolic significance in the Faia Petra cemetery, since all the enclosures have yielded traces of fires that occurred, possibly at the time of the primary disposal of the deceased, directly on the ground or in clay vessels (Fig. 15). Although some of these fires might have been associated with the preparation of funerary meals, similar traces of fire in cemeteries on Thasos have been interpreted as part of a purification ritual,<sup>30</sup> while

30. KOUKOULI-CHRYSANTHAKI 1992, 647.



Fig. 15. Burial Enclosure 5: traces of fire in the area of the burial and an associated vessel.



Fig. 16. Burial Enclosure 6: relocation of bones in a bowl.

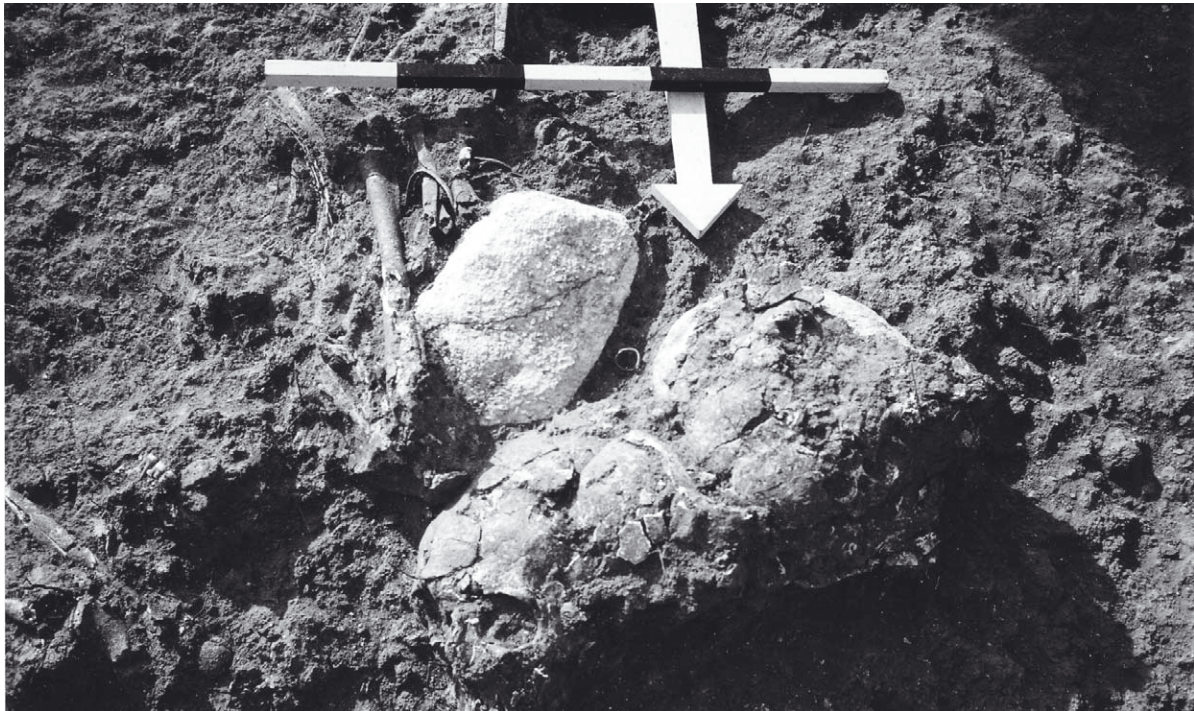


Fig. 17. Burial Enclosure 2: gathering of skulls.

burning episodes – fumigations – are well known in several Bronze Age burial assemblages in southern Greece such as the pre-palatial tombs of Crete<sup>31</sup> and the Mycenaean tholos and chamber tombs of the Greek mainland.<sup>32</sup> Faia Petra has yielded considerable evidence for manipulation of the deceased after the complete or partial decomposition of the body, a phenomenon discussed to date mainly with regard to collective burial assemblages from southern Greece and in particular, clearance episodes in LBA chamber tombs on the Greek mainland and pre-palatial tombs on Crete.<sup>33</sup> Hu-

man remains appear to have been systematically rearranged and relocated at Faia Petra, since skeletal material in most enclosures (Enclosures 1, 2, 3, 5, 6) was found extremely disturbed – to the degree that only a few primary burials could be recognized. In certain cases human bones had been removed from the articulated skeleton and placed in clay vessels (Fig. 16), while some bones had been rearranged while only partly decomposed.

Skulls were usually gathered in the centre of the burial enclosure (Fig. 17), indicating that these post-funerary activities paid particular attention to certain anatomical units. Moreover, in addition to the relocation of human bones, in some cases artefacts were also (re)deposited during manipulation of the deceased. In Enclosure 6, for example, there is evidence that one clay vessel and a piece of clothing decorated with small bronze studs were carefully deposited next to a gathering of skulls during the post-funerary activities.

Finally, in four individuals (two adult men, one adult of indeterminate sex and a 4 year old infant) out of the estimated total of twelve, a secondary mortuary treatment was identified that involved burning after complete decomposition of the skeleton.<sup>34</sup> Burning affected primarily the skull and partly the upper skeleton. Colouring of the bone, which

31. BRANIGAN 1987, 45.

32. A thorough survey of LBA tombs from the Greek mainland with evidence of burning can be found in CAVANAGH, MEE 1998, while the phenomenon is discussed in detail as a feature of Mycenaean identity and the cult of the dead in GALLOU 2005, 120–122.

33. Deliberate displacement and smoking of the bones were recognized as rituals associated with post-funerary activities in two tombs in the Tsiganadika cemetery on Thasos (KOUKOULI-CHRYSANTHAKI 1992, 647), and are the only examples known to date in Northern Greece. For LBA tombs: CAVANAGH, MEE 1998, 76, 116. – GALLOU 2005, 117–120. Also the practice of lightly burnt bones was recorded in the recently recovered Mycenaean tholos tomb at Kazanaki in Volos, Thessaly (PAPATHANASIOU 2009). For pre-palatial Crete: SOLES 1988, 58. – SOLES 1992, 247. – MURPHY 1998, 27–40. – BRANIGAN 1987, 43–51.

34. TRIANTAPHYLOU 2002.



Fig. 18. Burial Enclosure 5: the skeleton of the young adult man with the skull and upper skeleton burned and the lower part completely unaffected by fire.



Fig. 19. Burial Enclosure 5: the left and the right forearm in dry and burned condition, respectively.

ranges from brown to black, and the lack of alterations to the bone surface and texture suggest that burning was of short duration and at low temperature and took place after complete decomposition of the body. The best preserved example is provided by the extended primary burial of a young adult man in Enclosure 5 (Fig. 18): the skull is lightly burnt, as are parts of the upper limbs (compare the left and right forearm in dry and burned condition, respectively – Fig. 19) and vertebrae, while the lower body is completely unaffected. In two of the four cases with evidence of burning after decomposition of the human remains, this appears to have taken place *in situ*, after the re-opening of the enclosure. Charcoal from the area of post-funerary activities and from the single cremation, examined by Dr Maria Ntinou of the University of Valencia, indicates use of vine and wood of Cornelian cherry as fuel for the light burning of skeletal remains, while pine was used for the more substantial task of cremating the corpse.

In sum, at Faia Petra:

1) *inhumation* was the prevalent mode of disposal for both sex groups and all age categories,

2) a single *cremation*, requiring high expenditure of energy and specialized knowledge, may have been associated with special treatment of a significant member of the community perhaps of specific sex and age,

3) *funerary meals* involving consumption of meat constituted part of the primary burial ritual and arguably imply active participation therein of a larger social group than the close kin of the deceased,

4) *post-funerary activities*, often involving burning, were associated with intense manipulation of the deceased.

In contrast to the modest character of most of the associated grave goods, the manipulation of the deceased in primary or secondary burial rites demonstrates a high degree of complexity at Faia Petra. A common feature of all mortuary performances at Faia Petra is the participation of a large group of people, possibly an extended kin group, in elaborate practices that took place at different moments in the funerary programme and that, together – to a lesser degree – with the display of specialized items, sought to create and express prestige and power.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, by visiting and re-visiting the cemetery, the participants in these social gatherings re-asserted continuity and unity with the community of the deceased/ancestors and their strong links to the past as a reference area.<sup>36</sup> The use of precious local artefacts and limited access to Mycenaean-type pottery, together with post-funerary activities that strongly recall Mycenaean secondary burial practices, all contributed to the rising social status of certain groups of people at the end of the Late Bronze Age in Macedonia.<sup>37</sup>

This picture is consistent with the evidence of settlement patterns from Central Macedonia and, in particular, with that from the settlements of Kastanas, Assiros and Toumba Thessalonikis. During the Late Bronze Age, at sites with a central role such as Assiros and Toumba Thessalonikis, emerging social hierarchy is reflected in the ground plan of the settlements with the appearance of buildings of central character, of rooms with large storage facilities and of constructions which demand the mobilization of large amounts of labour.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, during this period, special ceramic ware, luxury vessels not accessible to all members of the community, emerged and seems to have been used on ceremonial occasions.<sup>39</sup> Faia Petra, despite the small scale and fragmentary nature of the evidence, contributes significantly to this picture of certain groups of people striving for social differentiation and competing with each other through the adoption of more complex rituals in the mortuary arena.

35. VOUSAKI 1998, 44–48.

36. CAVANAGH, MEE 1998, 116. – PARKER-PEARSON 1999, 52. – CAVANAGH 2008, 339 f.

37. ANDREOU 2010, 651.

38. ANDREOU, KOTSAKIS 1986. – WARDLE 1997, 524 f. – ANDREOU, KOTSAKIS 1999. – ANDREOU 2001. – ANDREOU 2003.

39. KIRIATZI, ANDREOU, DIMITRIADIS et al. 1997. – JUNG 2002. – JUNG 2003. – ANDREOU 2003. – ANDREOU, PSARAKI 2007.

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