

ABSTRACT

THESIS: The Kocher Site (12D491): A Spatial and Ceramic Analysis

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My research focuses on the identification of activity areas, or purposeful spaces, designated within a large Late Prehistoric village, 12D491 (the Kocher Site) located in Dearborn County, Indiana, based on a sample exclusively collected through systematic surface survey. Specifically, I conducted an in-depth ceramic attribute analysis and examined the spatial distribution of different attributes and artifact classes to better understand the fine-scale patterns of space usage and fluctuations in density within the site. The ceramic assemblage at 12D491 was almost exclusively small, shell tempered, plain vessels with a small amount of incising present. These vessels are most frequently used by smaller groups of people in a cooking or domestic context at the household level. The results of the spatial analyses reveal an overall distributional pattern with a circular area of high-density Late Prehistoric diagnostic artifacts and an empty or low-density plaza. I argue that 12D491 exhibits many types of patterning and differentiation of space including functional patterning and stylistic patterning both in radial and circumferential form. Functionally, there are four sections, 1) a very low-density circular area or plaza in the center of the overall distribution that is void of artifacts and approximately 30 m at its longest point, 2) A very dense habitation and activity zone between 30 m and 36 m at its widest point, 3) a refuse deposition zone at the western edge of the village that exhibits a large amount of overlap within the main artifact class distributions, and 4) a burial zone located in

northern edge of the village in the same radial ring as the refuse area. In addition to this radial patterning, there is a western grouping, closest to the plaza, composed of artifacts (non-mammal fauna, cord marked ceramics, and decorated ceramics) that do not occur in high density in any other portions of the village and are less common in frequency within the assemblage as a whole. These results were completed without any excavation data, and highlight the utility of analyses possible from a systematically collected non-invasive surface survey sample.