

**Household Composition and Ritual Patterning:  
Continued Investigation of Residential Groups near Caracol's Epicenter:  
2008 Field Report of the Caracol Archaeological Project**



Arlen F. Chase and Diane Z. Chase  
University of Central Florida

The 2008 field season of the Caracol Archaeological Project ran from the end of January through the middle of March. Twenty-four individuals were formally involved in the production of the archaeological data reported on within this report (Table 1). The research undertaken at Caracol during the 2008 field season was designed to build on the results of the 2007 field season in which significant ritual variation was uncovered in both epicentral Caracol and in an outlying residential group. While appearing to be a fairly normal residential compound before investigation, excavations in the GRB Group proved otherwise. The southern building, Structure I5, was a finely constructed stone building, which had once been vaulted. Rather than a rubble-filled platform supporting a perishable construction, a formally constructed stone room (Structure I1) was situated on the western side of the northern pyramid (Structure I2). Usually only associated with eastern buildings, a face cache was found within the steps of the northern pyramid. Excavations in the eastern building, Structure I5, uncovered a series of stratified face caches, many of them associated with eccentric obsidians and other small items; both the number of face caches and their associated artifacts presented an anomalous situation in comparison to the vast majority of other residential compounds that had been excavated. All of these ritual and construction features were interpreted as being related to the status and/or occupation of the residents of the GRB Group. Given the fact that other patterned cache variation also had been documented in residential groups to the northwest of the epicenter, the 2008 field season sought to determine whether other unusual residential complexes existed elsewhere in close proximity to the epicenter. Towards this end, two residential groups in close proximity to the South Acropolis were tested during 2008 in order to ascertain if other ritual and/or household variation could be defined for Caracol. These two groups were nicknamed the "Culebras Group" and the "Palmitas Group." Both groups did produce archaeological materials that amplified known residential group patterns for the site (e.g., D. Chase and A. Chase 2004a).

**Background: Excavation of Maya Residential Groups**

The characterization and composition of Maya households has comprised a basic research question for Maya archaeologists for more than half a century. While the archaeological identification of Maya residential units as small platforms distributed over the landscape was established on the basis of the principle of abundance at the turn of the twentieth century (Thompson 1897), only limited excavations of house mounds were undertaken by the Maya archaeologists (e.g., Wauchope 1934) until the onset of more formal settlement pattern studies by Gordon Willey in the Belize Valley (Willey et al. 1965). Most early archaeological programs of excavation in the Maya area focused on the large structures and buildings that comprised the centers of most Maya sites. This initial focus on central monumental Maya architecture led to equivocation over the nature of Maya settlement. Were the temples and palaces at the center of vacant ceremonial centers (Willey 1956)? Or, were these constructions the nucleus of true urban settlements (Becker 1979)? The block mapping of 16 square kilometers of settlement surrounding the center of Tikal, Guatemala (Carr and Hazard 1961) eventually tipped the balance toward a general agreement that the Maya had urban centers, but debate about the nature of Maya cities is still ongoing (A. Chase and D. Chase 2007; D. Chase et al. 1990; Fox et al. 1996; Sanders and Webster 1989). Archaeological investigation of Maya residential groups has grown exponentially since the publication of the Tikal map, but exactly how such groups are constituted and situated in terms of an urban center is poorly defined. The research undertaken during 2008 sought to gather data that, when conjoined with previous investigations, helps refine our understanding of Maya residential settlement at the urban site of Caracol.

The site which has seen the most amplification of settlement pattern definition is perhaps Tikal, Guatemala. There, Marshall Becker (2003) analyzed the 2,500 mapped residential structures and defined some 690 residential groups. He then analyzed these 690 groups for repetitive architectural patterning and was able to define a series of 10 distinct plaza plans (Becker 1971, 1982). Becker (2003, 2004) has argued that each of these plaza plans can be identified through both architectural arrangement and material archaeological signatures. While Becker (2004) frames the discussion of residential groups at Tikal in terms of an "architectural grammar" for 10 plaza plans (PPs), only four of his plaza plans relate to residential groups and these can be recast in terms of two dichotomies. These contrastive features are, first, formal (PP2, PP3, PP4) and informal (PP5) layout based on group integration and directionality. These arrangements are then further differentiated based on the presence of ritual (PP2, PP4) and non-ritual (PP3, PP5) architectural features (Becker 2003:258-264). The ritual features consist of either a central altar (PP4) or an eastern shrine / mausoleum (PP2). At Tikal, 14-15% of the recorded groups exhibited eastern shrines (Becker 2003:259); less than 1% exhibited a central altar.

Thus, the most common residential layout for Tikal is a formal non-ritual residential group. At Caracol, in contrast, the formal ritual residential group comprises the most common layout. The limited ritual focus found at Tikal contrasts with settlement data from Caracol, which demonstrates that the east-focused residential groups constitute over 60% of all recorded plazas (A. Chase and D. Chase 1996). As at Tikal, central shrines occur infrequently at Caracol. Given the widespread distribution of east-focused shrines groups at Caracol (A. Chase and D. Chase 1987, 1994; D. Chase and A. Chase 1998), it may be expected that archaeological data would permit elaboration on the diversity in the "architectural grammar" that can be seen in such groups.

Archaeological investigations into these eastern shrines at Caracol have helped define patterning in the general function and use of these structures. Similar to Tikal, the eastern structures in Caracol's residential groups generally functioned within a mortuary realm; but, there are significant differences from the Tikal sample. Becker (2004:129) speaks of a "grammatical rule" at Tikal "involving an 'intrusive interment and covering' dyad" where the initial interment was placed into bedrock and then covered by the shrine - with each subsequent refurbishment "preceded by the intrusion of another high status burial" through the existing architecture. Whereas excavation into the Tikal PP2s primarily yielded burials, the Caracol east-focused groups contain a mix of both burials and caches. The Caracol interments were usually not placed into bedrock, but instead were situated in tombs in the cores of the eastern shrines. Many Caracol tombs were additionally associated with entryways that permitted easy access to the chambers for an extended period of time. Even without a formal entryway, Caracol's tombs were re-entered, sometime accidentally,



but also presumably for both social and political purposes (D. Chase and A. Chase 2003).

For Caracol it also has been possible to define both a generalized pattern of deposition and a temporality for these deposits (D. Chase and A. Chase 2004b). A tomb was placed first in the core of the building and then may have been used for the temporary placement of interments that were eventually buried elsewhere. Eventually, one or more bodies were placed within a tomb and re-entry was denied to the chamber through engulfment in a subsequent rebuilding. Once the tomb was inaccessible, the next interment would be placed at the base of the frontal step. Later, another burial may have pierced the frontal step and/or have been placed in the associated plaza on axis to the eastern construction. The sequencing of these events in Caracol eastern structures indicates that they followed a rhythm that was not tied to individual life cycles, but rather to Maya temporal cycles (D. Chase and A. Chase 2004b:220-221), indicating that these eastern constructions functioned to integrate Caracol's residential groups into broader ritual arenas (D. Chase and A. Chase 2009). They were not simply individual ancestral shrines. While ancestors may have been buried in these buildings, only a small percentage of a group's inhabitants actually were interred within the residential group (D. Chase 1997).

Of even more interest in terms of the architectural grammar of these groups is the conjunction of the eastern interments with caching practices at Caracol. Special cache containers, termed "finger bowls" and "face caches" (D. Chase and A. Chase 1998) were often placed to the front of the eastern shrines. Occasionally, the caches were incorporated into the building itself by being placed beneath front steps. And, in unusual circumstances caches were placed in the core of constructions, but this was not the normal practice. However, in at least two cases, face caches were located within the core of an eastern construction and in one case multiple caches were placed without the expected tomb. Thus, differences occur in the patterning associated with some of Caracol's eastern buildings. But, why? And, are these differences patterned? And, can such differences be predicted from surface remains?

### **The Problem: Variations in the Pattern**

Over the past twenty-three years, a number of residential plazas have been investigated in the immediate vicinity of the Caracol epicenter. For the most part these residential units have exhibited patterns traditionally associated with east-focused residential units, although informal structure groupings (2000 field season) and non-ritual residential groups (2006 field season) have also been purposely excavated. Two epicentral acropolis groups have also been tested, the Northeast Acropolis and the Central Acropolis. Both of these architectural complexes may be considered to be high status residential groups; and, investigations in both groups replicated site-wide ritual patterns, emphasizing the shared nature of the rituals by Caracol households of varying statuses. In the Northeast Acropolis, the single eastern pyramid, Structure B34, contained face-caches, burials, and tombs (D. Chase and A. Chase 2003). The Central Acropolis mimicked the summit of Caana in having both northern and eastern pyramids. While the northern building in the Central Acropolis revealed a royal tomb beneath its stairway, excavations into the eastern buildings in this residential group revealed tombs, caches, and burials that reflect patterns found in residential groups throughout Caracol (D. Chase and A. Chase 1996).

While there is widespread uniformity in ritual patterning throughout Caracol in east-focused structural groups, variability does occur in some of the residential groups in the immediate vicinity of the epicenter. Several of these groups display variations from the repetitive archaeological signatures found in the eastern buildings within the outlying settlement. For instance, although associated with burials, Structure D9 lacked both a tomb and caches. Structure I5 was similarly lacking the axial tomb that is typical of Caracol eastern shrines, but this construction had a series of caches and eccentric obsidians deposited within its core. The eastern construction Structure F4 contained neither tomb nor cache; instead, its western counterpart, Structure F2, contained a tomb that was the locus of a complex re-entry and re-deposition event (D. Chase and A. Chase 2003). While Structure J8 exhibited both a tomb and caches, this residential group was also associated with a low central altar that yielded over two dozen lip-to-lip "finger" caches. Thus, distinct archaeological variations do exist within Caracol's east-focused residential groups and it should be possible to gain further information on (and, perhaps, "understand") these variations by contextually examining proximate groups.

## Research Undertaken During 2008

Toward the goal of understanding the compositional differences in ritual patterning, two residential groups were selected for excavation during the 2008 field season, the C20 or "Culebras" group and the D29 or "Palmitas" group (Figure 1). The groups are neighbors, being divided from each other by the Pajaro-Ramonal Causeway. Both groups are also close to the South Acropolis, which has witnessed considerable investigation, and their proximity to this complex may be taken to imply that some interaction took place between these units. Thus, the archaeological data recovered from these two groups can be situated in terms of information from the South Acropolis ([www.caracol.org/reports/2003.php](http://www.caracol.org/reports/2003.php)). As a result of the 2008 investigations, five structures were investigated within the Culebras Group and three structures were excavated within the Palmitas Group. The ritual deposits that were recovered fit other residential patterns recovered from Caracol – except for the Early Classic Period cache recovered in association with Structure C21. Importantly, certain architectural constructions within these two groups also indicate that there was significant variability when compared to general residential groups elsewhere at the site: Structure C17 yielded a well-constructed frontal shrine room; Structure D32 produced a vaulted-room building complete with an exterior façade decorated with stucco pseudo-glyphs; and, Structure D27 appears to have been a formally constructed sweatbath. Thus, while the research goals of the field season were met in terms of finding variability within residential groups in the immediate vicinity of the Caracol epicenter, the features that were encountered have raised new questions about the composition of residential groups that need to be tested in the future.

### **Culebras Residential Group: Structures C17-C23 and D22-D26.**

The first residential group selected for investigation is set amidst terraces approximately 150 meters east of the South Acropolis and was nicknamed "Culebras" (see Figures 1, 2, and 3). The western side of this group is set on a higher terrace level than the eastern side. Single buildings define the southern and northern edges of the lower eastern plaza. What was originally thought to be a possible plain monument located at the southwest corner of Structure C17 was shown to be a cornice stone from a vaulted building (although no vaulted buildings are in evidence in this group as a result of the 2008 investigations). The eastern edge of the Culebras Group is bounded by four separate constructions, two of them (Structures C20 and C21) resembling small square raised shrines; both of these buildings were excavated during 2008. A small "altar" construction (Structure C22) is set in the center of the lower plaza on axis with the northern building but intermediate between the two eastern shrines. This small platform was also excavated. Thus, the 2008 field excavations within Culebras focused on all three constructions that were considered to have had ritual usage based on surface considerations. The western (Structure D25) and northern (Structure C17) buildings in Culebras were also investigated during 2008.

#### **Structure C20 (Figure 4)**

Structure C20 is the northernmost eastern shrine building in the Culebras Group. It rose just some 1.10 meters above the plaza. Very badly defined base-walls and a possible door jamb were visible on the summit of the structure (Figure 6). The latest frontal stair or stair-balk could also be discerned without excavation.

**Operation C179B** (Figures 4, 5, 6, 7, and 12) was assigned for an axial trench placed over Structure C20. This excavation was 1.50 meters wide and was eventually 8.40 meters long. As a result of this investigation, it is possible to define at least two different phases of construction for Structure C20. The latest upper phase consisted of a single room construction that was bedded on large dry-core boulders. This upper construction was placed over an earlier construction that included finely cut stone facings and plastered floors (Figure 7). This earlier construction apparently sealed S.D. C179B-5, S.D. C179B-6, and S.D. C179B-7; vessels recovered in S.D. C179B-6 date to the transition between the Early and Late Classic Periods. As S.D. C179B-6 is stratigraphically the latest deposit associated with the earlier version of Structure C20, S.D. C179B-5 and S.D. C179B-7 should precede it in time. The earlier version of Structure C20 was pierced by S.D. C179B-3, which can be dated to the early Late Classic Period. S.D. C179B-2 is located almost directly above S.D. C179B-3 and is probably of a similar date. Thus, the earlier version of Structure C20

antedates the early part of the Late Classic Period, as this is the time when the later version of the building was constructed. Construction fill for the latest version of Structure C20 includes pieces of painted stucco decoration stripped from a stone building, indicating that such a construction may once have existed in the Culebras Group or that these decorations were carried in from presumably demolished epicentral construction. The latest deposits recovered in Operation C179B were S.D. C179B-1 and S.D. C179B-4; these were placed in front of the final stairway and date to the late Late Classic Period. Of the seven special deposits recovered in this trench, two were caches and five were burials. The rear tomb shown in Figure 5 was neither excavated nor formally entered; it will be dug in 2009. At the end of the field season, the entire excavation was backfilled, including the area above the uninvestigated tomb.

**S.D. C179B-1** (Figures 5, 9, and 10) was located at a level below the lowest basal level of the front step, but squarely on axis to the structure. The deposit was badly crushed, but consisted of a lidded face cache (Figure 10a) and a lip-to-lip cache (Figure 10b) that had presumably been placed within the face cache. A total of 8 human phalanges can be associated with S.D. C179B-1; two of them were found within the lip-to-lip cache and the other six were intermixed with and under the sherds that made up the face cache. Additionally, two slate bars (Figures 8e and 8f) and a slate pendent (Figure 8b) were found in the general area and same level of the face cache and possibly may be associated with this deposit. The barble decoration associated with the S.D. C179B-1 face cache is generally associated with caches from within and near the epicenter; barbled face caches have only been recovered in this Culebras deposit, in the GRB Group dug in 2007, in the Central Acropolis, and in the Northeast Acropolis. Thus, this decorative mode may be taken to be indicative of the status of the individuals who occupied this group in the Late Classic Period.

**S.D. C179B-2** (Figures 5 and 11) was located approximately 50 to 60 cm directly above the capstones for S.D. C179B-3. It consists of the skull of a single individual and could possibly be referred to as a "skull cache." The atlas and hyoid were present along with 1 cervical vertebrae; no axis recovered. There are no clear cut marks on vertebrae. The sex of the skull cannot be determined; the mandible resembles a female, but the skull characteristics are more like a male. Some carries are in evidence in the associated teeth. The individual would have been approximately 25 years of age at death. Below the skull in the fill above the capstones for S.D. C179B-1 were faunal remains (small and large, including deer), a ceramic pipe (Figure 8d), and an obsidian tool (Figure 8j). All of this material may be associated with S.D. C172B-2 and some kind of ritual activity for the deposition of S.D. C179B-3.

**S.D. C179B-3** (Figures 5, 13, 14, 15, and 16) was an interment placed within a small crypt covered with capstones. The crypt penetrated an earlier floor. The skeletal remains of a single individual, probably and older male, were recovered in the crypt. As the bones were not articulated, this was certainly a secondary burial that was re-interred in this location. The shape of the mandible is consistent with that of a male; however, teeth were not present because of ante-mortem tooth loss and resorption in the mandible. There was also an extra growth on the left fibula, indicative of a potential pathology. Artifactual materials in S.D. C179B-3 included two complete vessels and a jadeite earring assemblage. The vessels have been used to date this interment in the early Late Classic Period. The single jadeite earring assemblage (Figure 16c and 16d) is more expectable from a cache than a burial (for instance, see earlier deposits in Structure A2 and A8; A. Chase and D. Chase 2006) and may indicate the broader ritual roles of these deposits (Becker 1992; D. Chase and A. Chase 2004b).

**S.D. C179B-4** (Figures 5, 17, 18, and 19) consisted of an interment placed in a crypt constructed just above bedrock in front of and below the front steps for Structure C20. S.D. C179B-1 was located directly above this burial. The crypt contained two individuals and two pottery vessels. Both of the individuals were determined to be males based on an *in situ* examination of preserved sciatic notches. Along the north-south axis of the crypt, a fully articulated, older adult male had been placed in a prone position with his head to the north. No teeth were recovered with this individual; his mandible had complete ante-mortem tooth loss and resorption. Arthritic lipping appeared on this individual's vertebrae. In the extreme southeastern corner of the crypt a secondary interment had been placed. This individual was disarticulated and had probably been placed into S.D. C179B-4 as a bundled burial. This male individual was approximately 21 years of age based on the 6 teeth that could be associated with

him. Filing was noted on his left lower lateral canine and incisor; hypoplasia and tartar were also in evidence on two lower premolars. The vertebrae with the secondary individual were billowed. Artifactual materials included in the interment were two pottery vessels. A small footed plate had been located northeast of the primary individual's head and a polychrome figural cylinder had been located east of the primary individual's lower leg and above the secondary individual's long bones. The part of the cylinder that protruded from the dirt matrix covering much of the burial was well-preserved (Figures 20 and 21); however, the back of the cylinder that was embedded in the lower dirt matrix had largely disintegrated.

**S.D. C179B-5** (Figures 5, 10, and 22) was designated for a lip-to-lip cache that had once been set on the western edge of the capstones that covered S.D. C179B-5. This cache was sealed by a floor in the core of the earlier version of Structure C20.

**S.D. C179B-6** (Figures 5, 23, 24, 25, and 26) was assigned to a collapsed tomb that probably constituted the latest deposit intruded within the earlier version of Structure C20. The large boulder fill for the final version of Structure C20 had caused the roof of the chamber to collapse on its northern end, resulting in the infilling of the chamber. The floor of the chamber does not appear to have been disturbed; the tomb's contents are still *in situ*. The southern end of the chamber had not collapsed and still exhibited an intact capstone (Figure 24). On the floor of the chamber the remains of a single adult individual were recovered; the sciatic notch was identified as being male in the field. The full interment could not be exposed because of the large collapsed boulders that filled the northern end of the tomb. This unexcavated section of the chamber probably contained the skull and torso of the individual as well as additional artifacts. Two ring-based ceramic dishes (Figure 26a and 26b) were recovered in the southern part of the chamber and a complete mano (Figure 26c) was positioned to the west of the body.

**S.D. C179B-7** (Figure 5) was the appellation given a tomb that was found in the eastern extent of Operation C179B. The chamber was not excavated during 2008 because of time constraints. The exposed capstones were drawn (Figure 12) and a central one was lifted to obtain dimensions for the chamber. The chamber is minimally 1.1 meters wide by over 2.2 meters long; 0.70 meters of airspace runs the distance of the chamber and there may be an entryway at the chamber's southern end. After measurements were taken, the capstone was replaced, the capstones were covered with a tarp, and Operation C179B was backfilled. This chamber is scheduled for excavation during the 2009 field season.

**Operation C179C** (Figures 27 and 28) was assigned for an areal excavation of the alley between Structures C20 and C21. The excavation measured 3.1 meters north-south by 3.5 meters east-west. It was hoped to be able to define the corners and building sides of the two shrine constructions, but this did not prove to be the case. Nor was intact trash recovered. The excavation was backfilled at the end of the field season.

#### **Structure C21** (Figure 29)

As part of the attempt to understand the ritual patterns in the Culebras Group, the second eastern shrine building, Structure 21, was also investigated. Like its companion Structure C20, the southern Structure C21 rose 1.10 meters above the Culebras plaza. However, Structure C21 was far less defined in terms of surface architecture. As a result of investigations into Structure C21, two versions of the building were found and two deposits were recovered.

**Operation C179D** (Figures 30 and 31) was designated for the 1.50 meters wide (north-south) by 6.20 meters (east-west) long axial trench that penetrated Structure C21. The construction fill for the latest building was continuous from the ground surface down to an earlier plaza floor. Within the upper core of the latest building, a spondylus valve (Figure 38a) was recovered; it is believed to have been redeposited within Structure C21 as a result of earlier demolition activity. That such demolition took place at the Operation C179 locus was clear from the recovery of a formally constructed step on the southern side of the excavation, resting directly on the lowest plaza floor recovered in the core of the building. Thus, it appears that an earlier construction at this locus had been removed when the latest construction was erected. The removal of this earlier building had also disturbed the upper portions of an earlier burial, S.D. C179D-2, dating to the later part of the Early Classic Period. Excavation in the western portion of Operation C179D also recovered three stones (one forming a corner) of an even earlier construction that had had been engulfed in the plaza. Refuse, including carved bone (Figure 34d, 34e, and 34f) and potentially reconstructible ceramics, abutted these stones; the ceramics were all

Early Classic in date. A green obsidian blade fragment and point (Figure 38l) were found in the same fill level, but south of the wall. Also encountered in the core of the plaza at the same level as the Early Classic trash and adjacent to it was a very impressive cache, S.D. C179D-1, which contained the first flint eccentrics recovered at Caracol after 24 seasons of excavation. The two deposits recovered in association with Structure C21 clearly establish this locus as important during the Early Classic Period and indicate that the earlier version of the demolished building likely preceded the use of the Structure C20 locus in terms of ritual.

**S.D. C179D-1** (Figures 32, 33, and 34) was a very impressive cache deposit placed within the earlier plaza fill in front of Structure C21. Even though placed directly into the dirt plaza fill, the artifacts were embedded in what is colloquially referred to as "cache dirt;" this cache dirt was full of small chips of valuable materials. In the case of S.D. C179D-1, the cache dirt consisted of 747 jadeite chips and 4751 spondylus chips. Also recovered within the cache dirt were 23 chert chips, 32 quartz chunks, 4 obsidian blade fragments, 2 unworked shells, and 138 slate mirror pieces; the scattered distribution of the slate mirror pieces suggests that they did not constitute a single artifact. The central elements of the cache consisted of a jadeite bead (Figure 34aa), a hard stone ball (Figure 34z), and a lump of brain coral (Figure 34g) overlaid by 3 chert eccentrics (Figure 34a-c). Distributed about the chert eccentrics were 8 obsidian eccentrics, 2 obsidian lancets, 6 complete spondylus shells, and 3 stingray spines. As 52 "fish vertebrae" were also recovered, it may be that the 3 stingray spines really represented 3 complete rays, as is noted for other caches at Caracol (Teeter and Chase 2004). S.D. C179D-1 dates to the Early Classic Period and contains the first chert eccentrics recovered at Caracol in 24 years of research.

**S.D. C179D-2** (Figures 35, 36, and 37) was designated for a burial that was found intruded into the lowest floor recovered in the Operation C179D locus. This floor level had possibly once sealed S.D. C179D-1, thus making the interment slightly later in date than the plaza cache, but still Early Classic. The upper portion of the burial had clearly been disturbed by renovation activities, probably accounting for some of the missing skeletal bone and certainly for the missing olla rim from one of the two vessels placed in the burial. A single supine individual with head to the north had been placed within the cist grave. The individual was probably a young adult aged 18 to 21; no third molars are present and all epiphyses are joined. Sex was indeterminate, even though the mastoid processes suggested the possibility of a male. Slight cribra orbitalia was present on the skull. The recovered mandible was only partial. The upper left central incisor was inlaid with jadeite and is either very worn or nearly filed flat; no inlays were recovered from the mandibular teeth or from the upper premolars or molars (other upper incisors were not present). The lower right second incisor is also either worn or filed. Two Early Classic ceramic vessels (Figure 37) were set above the individual's feet. No other artifacts were associated with this interment.

### **Structure C22** (Figure 39)

Structure C22 was the designation given to a low line-of-stone platform that had been mapped in the center of the Culebras plaza. The platform was originally selected for investigation as a possible ritual structure; as mapped, the group appeared to conform to Tikal Plaza Plan 4, designating residential groups with low central shrines; investigations in such constructions at Tikal had recovered skull caches (Becker 1982). As a result of the 2008 investigations in the Culebras Group, it does not appear that Structure C22 was on axis to any of the buildings in the plaza. The construction proved to be almost equidistant from the Structure C20 and Structure C21 central axes – and, although initially thought to possibly be on axis with Structure C17, the investigation of Structure C17 resulted in the recovery of architectural features that make this unlikely. Exactly what purpose Structure C22 served is unclear, although a single interment was recovered in its southern core.

**Operation C179E** (Figures 40 and 41) was designated for the areal excavation that largely encompassed Structure C22. The investigation measured 3.75 meters (north-south) by 3.25 meters (east-west). The humus was removed within this excavation and then a deeper 1.50 meter wide trench, running east-west, was placed over the center of the structure and excavated down to an earlier plaza floor (Figure 39). The central part of the platform that comprised Structure C22 was made up of fire-stone that had been encased within a single line of formally cut limestone that made

up the edges of the platform on all sides. The formal platform facing was not well preserved. The rear stones of a buried facing that rested on the earlier plaza floor was recovered on the southern side of the excavation. A single burial was recovered in the upper core for Structure C22 in the deeper axial penetration.

**S.D. C179E-1** (Figures 42 and 43) was designated for a secondary human interment that had been placed directly within the core of the western end of Structure C22. The recovered bones were not articulated, but the long bones and skull were located within a relatively small area, indicating that they may have once been bundled together. While it was initially believed that all of the skeletal material related to a single individual, analysis showed otherwise. Only four teeth were recovered; the teeth represent 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> molars for an 8 years-old individual. The mastoid on the skull was also very small. However, all the post-cranial remains appear to come from an adult male. The epiphyses on the long bones are fully fused and the pelvis was identified as male in the field based on an intact sciatic notch. Thus, analysis demonstrated that the remains of two individuals had been placed within the interment, the postcranial skeleton of one adult male and the skull and teeth of a subadult. Since these bones had been re-interred within the fill for Structure C22 from another location and assuming that the intent had been to re-deposit the bones of a single individual, this would indicate that the wrong skull was selected for re-interment with the adult bones.

#### **Structure D25** (Figure 44)

Structure D25 was set at the western extent of the Culebras Group, atop a 2 meter high terrace that bisected the residential area and was probably accessed by a stairway that once existed over this terrace. A series of smaller constructions were to the north of Structure D25. Structure D25 was selected for excavation because of its dominant western position in the group and because of a continued interest in western buildings at Caracol to determine if they held Terminal Classic burials in accord with patterns from the southeastern Peten of Guatemala (Laporte 1994, 2004). While isolated human bones were recovered in the excavation, no formal burials were found on the axis of Structure D25.

**Operation C179F** (Figures 45 and 46) was assigned to an axial excavation through Structure D25 that measured 9.00 meters (east-west) by 1.50 meters (north-south). At its western extent, the trench was set directly over a terrace facing composed of large boulders. Before excavation, it was possible to discern the outlines of the structure that had once been set on the platform (Figure 46). The basal extent of the building platform was evident on its northern side, but the southern side probably had been uprooted by a large collapsed tree. More central facings indicated that the building rose from above the plaza in three distinct levels. Excavation confirmed that Structure D25 had been built in a single effort and that it was set directly upon bedrock; no earlier constructions were recovered. Human remains were encountered in the plaza fill east of Structure D25, but were not given a burial designation because they were not recovered in association and isolated human bone is quite frequent in Caracol fills and on the floors of Terminal Classic palaces at the site. In the eastern end of the trench, a single tibia (set east-west) was found beneath a laja, a patella was recovered near bedrock (not in association with the tibia), and pieces of a human skull were also recovered over a meter away from the tibia in plaza fill. Although both the front and rear of Structure D25 were excavated to bedrock, no formal deposits and only a few artifacts were recovered. Recovered artifacts of interest included a green obsidian blade fragment (Figure 48j), a partial limestone bar (Figure 48i), and pieces of an effigy burner (Figure 47), possibly of Terminal Classic date. The burner pieces were recovered in the fill immediately above bedrock in the eastern structure core. Two drilled oliva shells (Figure 48a) and a broken shell artifact (Figure 48c) were recovered to the rear (west) of the building. A series of chert artifacts were found in the various building fills (Figure 48h, k, m, o, and p) and a large chert biface (Figure 48g) was recovered in the humus on the structure summit.

#### **Structure C17** (Figure 49)

Structure C17 is the most massive construction located in the Culebras Group. The building rises 2.20 meters above the lower plaza and dominates the northern end of the plazuela group (Figure 3). Even before excavation, a lower frontal terrace was in evidence for the building platform. Structure C17 was selected for excavation because of its size and in order to gain comparative data to excavated northern buildings in



other residential groups (e.g., Structure B40 excavated in 2005 and I2 excavated in 2007).

**Operation C179G** (Figures 50, 51, 52, and 53) was designated for the excavation that penetrated Structure C17. The trench was centered on the lower frontal terrace and succeeded in bisecting a doorway feature for what appears to have been a basal shrine room (Figure 52). The excavation measured 10.45 m (north-south) by 2.00 m (east-west) and was dug to bedrock in the center of the construction and beneath the shrine room. In an attempt to define the eastern side of the frontal feature, an additional areal excavation was made. It was located 0.80 m north of southern excavation and ran 1.08 m north-south by 0.80 m east-west; it exposed the interior of the shrine room, but did not encounter the eastern doorjamb. At minimum, two different construction phases were found in Operation C179G. The earliest consisted of a stone paving running north and raised approximately 60 cm above the shrine room floor. An earlier floor was found in the core of the building at approximately the same level as the paving surface. An earlier southern facing was also encountered, which had been covered over by the walls to construct the shrine room (at least on the western side of the excavation). The latest version of Structure C17 was associated with the basal shrine room and must have had a stairway that rose an additional meter above the earlier paving to a raised plaster floor. This floor was associated with features at the summit of the building, which may have included a bench (Figure 51). No formal deposits were associated with Structure C17, although a ceramic lens in dark soil was found immediately above bedrock in the center of the excavation; these pottery materials dated to the early Late Classic Period. A figurine fragment (Figure 48f) in the fill immediately above the interior stone paving may date the latest construction episode to the late Late Classic Period; also found in this fill were a thick-walled jar (Figure 54a) and a broken point (Figure 48r). Another figurine fragment (Figure 48b) was found to the front of the shrine doorway and a worked shell (Figure 48d) and partial bowl (Figure 54b) were to the side of the upper bench.

### **Summary of Culebras Group**

The Culebras Group appears to have been established in the Early Classic Period. A buried platform that was used at this time was found in front of Structure C21 and the initial construction of Structure C21 dates to the Early Classic Period based on the single burial on that building's axis. The cache found in plaza fill in front of Structure C21 is one of the most elaborate located at Caracol for this temporal era. It is likely that other low platforms dating to the Early Classic Period remain buried within the lower plaza fill of the Culebras Group. Based on the series of burials deposited on the axis of Structure C20, this edifice became the most important ritual structure in Culebras during the Late Classic Period. All of the excavated buildings on the lower plaza of Culebras were minimally modified, if not totally rebuilt, during the late Late Classic Period. The single building investigated in the upper plaza appears to have been constructed directly on bedrock during this same time, if not later, based on the ceramic burner recovered in its fill. In summary, Culebras appears to have founded in the Early Classic Period and to have peaked in terms of architecture and use during the late Late Classic Period. The archaeological data demonstrate that this residential group was occupied for at least 400 years.

The entire group was backfilled during the last week of the field season.

### **Palmitas Residential Group: Structures D27-D35.**

The second residential group selected for investigation during 2008 is located approximately 100 meters southeast of the South Acropolis and 100 meters southwest of the first group (see Figure 1). The largest construction in the group is the western building (Figure 56). A small squarish pyramid forms the east side of the plaza (Figure 55). Two long and low constructions are located on both the northern and southern sides of the plaza. Three "outbuildings" also appear to be associated with the group, one slightly south and two off the southwest corner of the plaza. Investigations in this residence group focused on Structures D27, D29, and D32, as well as a stone feature in the center of the plaza. Excavations revealed that Structure D27 had been a vaulted stone building with exterior stucco decoration that included a pseudo-hieroglyphic text (that likely

ran along the exterior cornice of the edifice). Structure D29 was demonstrated to be a shrine building and produced deposits consistent with those found in other east-structure-focused residential groups. Structure D27 proved to be a small sweat-bath, located slightly behind and northwest of the larger Structure D28 that anchored the northern side of the Palmitas plaza.

### **Structure D29** (Figure 55)

Set in isolation on the eastern edge of the plaza, Structure D29 could be identified as a ritual construction even before excavation demonstrated this fact. The substructure platform for the building rose slightly more than a meter above its associated plaza, had a squared plan, and had good evidence for a frontal stairway. Two single course summit facings for a construction were in a bad state of repair (Figure 66). They were located on either side of an open and looted chamber that crowned the summit of Structure D29. The chamber had been re-excavated by the Tourism Development Project prior to 2003, but no associated artifacts had been recovered. The TDP had, however, left a blue tarp covering the chamber. This tarp had subsequently fallen into the tomb and clearly demarcated the extent of their investigations. A constructed screen was also recovered on the southern side of the substructure. Based on the investigations undertaken in 2008, Structure D29 appears to have been built in a single construction effort on top of plaza flooring bedded on dry-core fill. The recovered artifactual materials indicate that the building was constructed and used in the Late and Terminal Classic Periods.

**Operation C180B** (Figures 56, 57, 58, and 59) was designated for an axial trench that was placed over Structure D29. The trench measured 7.50 meters east-west by 1.50 meters north-south. It encompassed the looted chamber, which was designated as S.D. C180B-3. A thin overlay of humus was cleared in the excavation to the east of the open tomb. The humus on top of the stair and summit of the structure was also cleared. No new deep penetration of the building itself was undertaken during 2008, primarily because of the time involved in excavating a tomb, S.D. C180B-2, which was discovered immediately in front of and below the stairs for Structure D29. The plaza area in front of (west of) the lower step for Structure D29 was more intensively investigated. The removal of the humus from in front of the building resulted in the recovery of six partial vessels (Figure 61a-f) that can be dated to the Terminal Classic Period. It is suspected that the rest of the reconstructable vessels that are illustrated, as well as additional ceramic pieces, would have been recovered if the front of the building to either side of the stairway had been cleared. Clearing beneath the level of the plaza floor associated with the lower step of Structure D29 resulted in the discovery of capstones in front of this step and of a cache, C180B-1 (Figure 59). Fill material from below the plaza floor included a human incisor and premolar in the vicinity of the capstones, burnt faunal material, an obsidian inlay (Figure 76c), a large chert biface (Figure 76i), and a stalagmite (not illustrated) presumably from a local cave.

**S.D. C180B-1** (Figures 58, 59, 60, and 61) was assigned for a "finger cache" located in the southwestern corner of Operation C180B. Two small lip-to-lip bowls (Figure 61g) had been placed directly into the plaza fill and had once presumably been covered by a plaster floor. The contents of this sealed cache consisted of two human finger digits (Figure 60). The association of a finger cache with an eastern shrine building is consistent with other Caracol contexts (D. Chase and A. Chase 1998).

**S.D. C180B-2** (Figures 58, 59, 62, 63, 64, and 65) was assigned for a tomb that was located in front of and partially under the front step for Structure D29. The lower half of the open-air chamber was filled with a densely packed matrix that resembled a soft concrete. This hard matrix completely enveloped 33 vessels that were not warped or crushed, suggesting that the matrix had been purposefully deposited around the ceramics, artifacts, and bone in the chamber. That the bone and ceramics had been placed in a single depositional effort is strongly suggested by the context of a Belize Red footed dish (Figure 64t); half of it is located on the very bottom of the deposit (Figure 63 Plan 4) and half of it is located on the very top of the deposit (Figure 63 Plan 1). Additionally, one of the large dishes (Figure 64z) rested near the top of the deposit (Figure 63 Plan 1) and on the floor of the burial chamber (Figure 63 Plan 3). The vessels (Figure 64) included in the tomb are all of Late Classic date, although some can be seriated into the early part of the Late Classic (Figure 64d, q, s, u, ee) and others may actually be Terminal Classic (Figure 64a, g, m, o, w).

That the vessels forms indicate some temporal span in terms of their use suggests that they – and the mixed human bone – in the chamber may have been stored elsewhere before final deposition at the Structure D29 locus. This is also suggested by the concentration of cylinders along the western wall of the chamber (Figure 63 Plan 1). Sherds in the surrounding matrix from a partial cache vessel (Figure 64aa) and from a face cache (not illustrated) also suggest some movement. Thirteen cylinders and thirteen plates/dishes were recovered in this deposit, suggesting a paired relationship between these items, in which one individual would have been accompanied by one cylinder and one plate/dish. The seven additional bowls recovered in the chamber could represent another component form for this pairing. Haviland and his colleagues (1985) have noted that single individuals buried at Tikal were frequently accompanied by one cylinder, one plate, and one bowl in the Late Classic Period.

Artifactual materials accompanying S.D. C180B-2 include two limestone spindle whorls (Figure 65a, b) and two shell labrets (Figure 65c, d). At least three sets of shell earrings (Figure 65k-p) were recovered in the tomb, as well as one set of small jadeite earrings (Figure 65q, t). The jadeite earrings suggest that at least one of the individuals within the tomb was of fairly high status. Jadeite (Figure 65r) and shell (Figure 65f-h, s, x) beads were also encountered. Careful screening of the tomb dirt also recovered malachite and three jadeite inlays (Figure 65u-w).

The human skeletal remains within the S.D. C180B-2 tomb were distributed haphazardly throughout the chamber. All were embedded in the almost concrete-like matrix and excavation made it clear that the bone had been secondarily interred in this location, as there was little articulation of remains. At least 17 individuals were represented in the recovered skeletal material. One of these individuals was a sub-adult (3 teeth; several long bones), approximately 18 months to 2 years at time of death. Cranial material was distributed in 18 discrete locations within the chamber. However, based on right femurs recovered, there were minimally 16 adults represented in the chamber. For many adults, no sex determination was possible. Most identifiable remains would appear to be male, although at least one individual was clearly a female. The teeth that were recovered show evidence of inlays (both jadeite and pyrite), empty inlay holes, a variety of filing (notch, flat-filing, and tau-filing), tartar, caries, and hypoplasia. Several elderly individuals had no remaining teeth and evinced resorption of bone in the mandible. In cases where teeth could be correlated with a specific individual, patterns of filing and inlaying were in evidence: one individual had both upper and lower inlays (complete distribution not defined); another individual had no upper inlays, but had lower inlays extending from the 1<sup>st</sup> premolar to the 1<sup>st</sup> premolar; yet another individual had filed upper central incisors with jadeite inlays only on the right side (two incisors and first premolar). In summary, between 17 and 18 individuals were represented within this burial; with one exception, all were adults at the time of their death and many had filed or inlaid teeth. All of the individuals were likely accompanied by one or more ceramic vessels. The layout and context of the deposit strongly suggest that all of the skeletal, artifactual, and ceramic materials were deposited in S.D. C180B-2 as part of a single effort, having been moved here from some other staging area.

**S.D. C180B-3** (Figures 58, 66, and 67) was certainly the most important interment in Structure D29. The base of the S.D. C180B-3 chamber measured 2.30 meters in length by 0.90 meters in width and would have had a height of approximately 0.85 meters; this compares with measurements of 1.80 meters by 0.80 meters by 0.75 meters for the S.D. C180B-2 interment. Unfortunately, unlike S.D. C180B-2, no artifactual remains can be associated with the S.D. C180B-3 chamber. The tomb had been looted between the time that it was mapped in 1986 and the time that the Tourism Development Project started in 2000. The Tourism Development Project had cleaned out the looted chamber, but apparently did not succeed in recovering any associated artifactual remains. At the beginning of the 2008 field season, a single tooth was recovered at the rear edge of the interment and a piece of human cranium was found on top of the humus over the front stairs; both are presumably from S.D. C180B-3. The looters had dug through most of the chamber's plaster floor and into the underlying dry core fill. Re-cleaning the tomb's floor in 2008 resulted in the recovery of a human phalange at the floor's juncture with the eastern tomb wall – all that remained of what was surely a rich interment.

#### **Central Plaza Feature** (Figure 55)

An areal excavation was undertaken in the center of the Palmitas plaza. Barely poking through the ground surface, shaped limestone blocks

suggested the existence of a line-of-stone feature. While investigations did indeed recover a pile of shaped rocks, exactly what this construction represented and whether or not it was a formal building could not be determined. What was found were two perpendicular lines of stone, which formed an inner corner. The southern line was at least two courses in height; the eastern line was at least seven courses in height based on the collapse pattern that could be discerned in the stones. Another potential line of coursed stone was recovered in the northwestern section of the excavation. However, no formal construction could be discerned.

**Operation C180C** (Figures 68 and 69) was assigned for the areal excavation over the central stone feature in the Palmitas plaza. The excavation measured 4.30 m east-west by 3.00 m north-south. Removal of the stones within the squared off corner demonstrated that these rocks rested directly on a bedrock surface. No artifactual material of consequence was recovered from this investigation, although a human tooth was recovered during the excavation of the feature.

### **Structure D32** (Figure 70)

Dominating the Palmitas Group, Structure D32 was a long raised mound on the western side of the plaza. Even in its ruined state the building rose more than 3.60 meters above the plaza that it fronted and was over 17 meters in length. No architectural features could be discerned prior to excavation, but penetration of the mound proved Structure D32 to have been a range building, complete with stone walls, vaulted roof, and exterior stucco decoration.

**Operation C180D** (Figures 71, 72, and 73) was assigned to an excavation that was placed perpendicular to the central axis of Structure D32. The trench measured 10.50 meters east-west by 2.00 meters north-south. Operation C180D was dug to bedrock both in the interior core of the construction and in the vicinity of its stairway. Excavation revealed a sequence of three different constructions. The earliest version of Structure D32 was found within a narrow slit trench through the upper front terrace. A formally cut stone wall, facing to the south, ran parallel to the trench and was set just above bedrock, indicating that the earliest construction at this locus was off-axis to the north under Structure D32. This early building had been encased within Structure D32-2<sup>nd</sup>, which rose in a series of four levels to form a building; it is suspected that the structure had stone walls and vaulting, like the later version of Structure D32-1<sup>st</sup> and that doorjambs were located just outside the excavation unit. Based on excavation, the rear facing for Structure D32-2<sup>nd</sup> was presumably located directly beneath the front wall of Structure D32-1<sup>st</sup> or had been removed in antiquity, as a deeper cut into the fill beneath the front room of Structure D32-1<sup>st</sup> revealed three plastered floors associated with the latest room and dry core fill that extended well below the summit level of Structure D32-2<sup>nd</sup> (see Figure 71). A complete human long bone was recovered from within this fill. The surface of the rear bench for Structure D32-1<sup>st</sup> was raised more than two meters above old Structure D32-2<sup>nd</sup> summit floor. As constructed, Structure D32-1<sup>st</sup> consisted of a single room with an interior width of 2.6 meters and walls that were 0.80 meters thick. A rear bench with its own projecting cornice was raised 0.75 meters above the floor and extended 1.80 meters into the room from the back wall. It appears to have been constructed simultaneously with the back wall. The room floor rose 0.40 meters above a 4.0 m broad frontal terrace that surmounted the bulk of Structure D32-2<sup>nd</sup>. This frontal terrace then descended to the plaza in a series of four steps that ended on a low platform with a single step-up that remained from the earlier construction. A human interment, S.D. C180D-1, had been placed within the fill of this frontal terrace. The surface of the frontal terrace yielded sheet refuse directly on the floor, resulting in the recovery of a series of partial Terminal Classic vessels, including a flanged burner (Figure 74a) with prong (Figure 74b), a series of bowls (Figure 74e, f, h), and pieces of an appliqué bowl with stamped impressions reminiscent of pieces recovered in the Barrio Palace during the 2001 field season ([www.caracol.org/reports/2001.php](http://www.caracol.org/reports/2001.php)). Also recovered on this frontal terrace were a series of stuccoed hieroglyphs that must have been attached to the building cornice (Figure 75). As even the whole hieroglyphs cannot be interpreted, these presumably represent "pseudo-glyphs" applied to the building by an artist who did not understand the meaning of the symbols; similar pseudo-glyphs have been reported by Houston (2000) for the Terminal Classic Period. Other artifactual materials

recovered in the excavation of Structure D32 include worked bone (Figure 76a, k), a rounded limestone ball (Figure 76j), and an obsidian core (Figure 76g).

**S.D. C180D-1** (Figures 71 and 77) was assigned to a human interment sealed in the fill beneath the plaster floor that comprised the frontal terrace for Structure D32. The bone had been placed directly into the fill matrix and was very poorly preserved, but represented the remains of a single child, who was between 6 and 9 months in age (based on tooth development and eruption) at the time of death; the femur length for the child would place his/her age closer to 6 months. All of the recovered teeth were deciduous except for first molars – and, the roots were incomplete on all deciduous teeth. One adult tooth, an upper premolar, with a cavity was also present. Whether this means that the child was originally deposited elsewhere and then moved into the core of Structure D32-1<sup>st</sup> is a possibility based on the presence of this tooth. The child was placed in a supine position with head to the south and appeared to be articulated, but such an appearance could also have resulted from a tightly wrapped, re-deposited bundle burial. A small obsidian biface point was found in association with the child (Figure 76f) and two pieces of worked shell (Figures 76b, d) were found in close proximity to the interment.

### **Structure D27** (Figure 78)

Structure D27 was a low non-descript raised platform set back from the main Palmitas plaza. It was selected for investigation precisely because it was not one of the primary constructions directly fronting the plaza. Before excavation, it was believed that Structure D27 may have faced east; after excavation, it was clear that the building was articulated with the other constructions distributed about the Palmitas plaza. Investigation proved Structure D27 to be a special-function plastered and stone-walled edifice that was probably surmounted by a stone roof. Although located on different sides of their respective plazas, Structure D27 is quite similar in plan to another building, Structure B59, excavated in 2005 in the C Group ([www.caracol.org/reports/2005.php](http://www.caracol.org/reports/2005.php)). Both Structure B59 and Structure D27 are believed to have been sweatbaths. Both buildings are situated back from the larger constructions on their associated plazas. Both have square footprints, formal stone walls, and a single narrow doorway that leads to an alleyway between two raised benches. Both buildings also have axial burning at their rear walls and both were likely stone roofed, although the form may have been more beehive-like than vaulted, much like the roof of the sweatbath noted for Pook's Hill (Helmke 2006:56).

**Operation C180E** (Figures 79 and 80) was assigned for the investigation of Structure D27. The excavation was originally established as a trench with the long axis running east-west because the building was believed to face east before any digging had taken place; this initial trench measure 1.80 meters (north-south) by 6.15 meters long (east-west). Once it was determined that the building actually faced south, the western end of the excavation was expanded to the south an additional 1.80 meters and 4.15 meters to the east. These excavations result in the recovery of most of a square building with formal walls and a central alleyway; the eastern end of the structure had collapsed down the steep hill behind Structure D28. The western end of Structure D27 was excavated and revealed a wall approximately 0.75 meters in height situated on a 0.25 meter high plinth (see Figure 79). Based on the recovered architectural features, Structure D27 was constructed over the northern edge of the raised Palmitas plaza (see Figure 80), probably in the Late to Terminal Classic Period. The central doorway to the structure measured 0.60 meters and the alleyway rose from the level of the plaza in two steps to the area of the sweatbath firepit. The interior of the building measured 3.0 meters deep by 3.2 meters wide. The side benches rose approximately 0.40 meters above the level of the plaza floor. Partial ceramics recovered immediately west of the building included both a small and a large bowl (Figure 74g, h), as well as a Pantano Impressed sherd with a stamped monkey design. Artifacts recovered in association with Structure D27 included a ceramic spindle whorl (Figure 76e), an eroded greenstone celt (Figure 76h), and a chert biface point (Figure 76i). Two eroded ceramic figurine fragments and several modeled-carved sherds were also recovered, all probably dating to the Terminal Classic Period.

### **Summary of Palmitas Group**

The bulk of the occupation in the Palmitas Group dates to the Late and Terminal Classic Periods. Terminal Classic Period reconstructable vessels were recovered in all excavations, except for the one over the feature in the middle of the plaza. The recovered burials from Structures D29 and D32 have a similar Late to Terminal Classic Period dating. Thus, it would appear that the Palmitas Group continued to be used to a later temporal horizon than the Culebras Group. While the Palmitas Group conforms with the majority of other residential complexes at Caracol in having an east-structure focus, it is unusual in having a formal sweatbath and a vaulted range building. The pseudo-glyphs associated with the western range building also are informative, suggesting that while the individuals living in Palmitas may have been wealthy, they did not possess – or minimally have access to – a full and complete knowledge of hieroglyphic writing. They either could not create or were not permitted to place actual readable texts on their building cornice; this seems strange given their proximity to the epicenter and the existence of readable texts on Caracol's epicentral and core Terminal Classic monuments.

The entire group was backfilled during the last week of the field season.

### **La Rejolla and Ceiba Terminus Causeway (Figure 81)**

During 2008, Dr. Ramzy Barrois, a French archaeologist, obtained post-doctoral funding to work at the site of La Rejolla in Guatemala. From previous reconnaissance work carried out by Dr. Nikolai Grube for the Caracol Archaeological Project in the early 1990s, it was known that La Rejolla was a short distance across the border from Caracol's Ceiba Terminus. La Rejolla has monuments that exhibit the Caracol Emblem and make reference to events that occurred circa A.D. 680. A causeway that runs west from the Ceiba Terminus was mapped by the Caracol Archaeological Project in the 1990s and was believed to connect to La Rejolla. In February 2008, Dr. Barrois requested permission from the project to map the causeway from La Rejolla that would connect to the Caracol Ceiba Terminus. Permission was requested for Dr. Barrois to use the Caracol Archaeological Permit to carry out this work and such permission was granted by Dr. Jaime Awe. Dr. Barrois subsequently did map the causeway between La Rejolla and Ceiba (Figure 81). Interestingly, this causeway enters Ceiba from the north and is not equivalent to the earlier causeway running west into Guatemala. As mapped, the La Rejolla Causeway curves around the base of a large hill on its way to Ceiba. It is now believed that the original causeway running west from Ceiba connects to an architectural complex that is located on this Guatemalan hill and that additional causeways remain to be discovered.

### **Significance**

How social groups were constructed and varied is one of the more interesting problems that can be investigated with archaeological data. Caracol's South Acropolis has been extensively investigated and has revealed a sequence of events that began in the Late Preclassic era. Tombs dating to the Early Classic were recovered in Structures D7 and D14, while tombs dating to the early Late Classic were recovered in Structures D15 and D16; burials of Late Classic date were recovered in association with Structure D9. Thus, the South Acropolis was used ritually throughout the Classic Period, but it is not clear that this complex was ever a fully functioning residential unit. The two residential groups that were selected for investigation during the 2008 field season are the closest constructions to the South Acropolis that contain overtly ritual buildings associated with residential housing. The excavation of the Culebras Group and the Palmitas Group had two inter-related goals. First, it was hoped that the recovered archaeological data would permit an exploratory assessment of temporal and ritual overlap with the South Acropolis, permitting a better understanding of this epicentral complex. The temporal overlap between these architectural units is complex. The Culebras Group was clearly occupied during much of the time that the South Acropolis was in use and the timing of the burials largely overlaps. The Palmitas Group clearly sees temporal overlap with the late Late Classic deposits recovered in the South Acropolis. Second, it was hoped that the recovered information would also aid in a broader understanding of ritual patterns in residential groups and how any variation in these patterns was situated within Caracol's urban landscape. What is interesting is that the Early Classic cache recovered in the plaza in front of Structure C21 is much more elaborate than similar materials thus far recovered in the South Acropolis. It is on a par with the materials recovered from an Early Classic tomb in



Structure D16 (<http://www.caracol.org/reports/2003.php>), but is unusual in terms of its residential siting. This indicates a fairly close connection in ritual content between the Culebras Group and the South Acropolis during the Early Classic Period, suggesting that the people occupying this group may have been directly involved in the affairs of the South Acropolis at this time. The shrine room in Structure C17 in Culebras also is indicative of a fairly close epicentral connection. Interestingly, Early Classic remains are lacking in the Palmitas Group and it may be that this area was unoccupied at this time. However, the Palmitas Group appears to have supplanted the Culebras Group in terms of importance in the Late to Terminal Classic Period. The vaulted Structure D32 and the Structure D27 sweatbath also suggest that the occupants of this group during the Terminal Classic were fairly high status. Given the proximity of this group to the South Acropolis and a general paucity of Terminal Classic remains in the epicentral complex, it may be that the occupants of the Palmitas Group were administering the affairs of the South Acropolis at this time. Thus, a close ritual and residential connection may be established for these two proximate groups. In summary, the interplay between the data collected during the 2008 field season and the existing data from the South Acropolis are quite informative and confirm pre-existing interpretations about the heterogeneity and status variation that existed among Caracol's neighboring plazuela groups.

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## TABLE 1:

### Caracol Project Members: 2008 Field Season

#### Staff:

<b>Directors</b>		
	Arlen F. Chase	C1
	Diane Z. Chase	C2
<b>Lab Director</b>		
	Amy Morris	C111
<b>Field Supervisors</b>		
	James Crandall	C170
	Jorge Garcia	C144
	Lucas Johnson	C134
	Andrea Slusser	C173
<b>Field Assistants</b>		
	Chris Camargo	C180
	Ryan Collins	C181
	Ashley Forbis	C182
	Lisa Lomitola	C183

**Belizean Labor:****Kitchen**

Angelica Meneses  
Linda Aurora Meneses  
Mirna Beatriz Chi

**Field**

Carlos Cocom  
Julio Galeano  
Saul Galeano  
Jaime Iglesias  
Carlos Ivan Mendes  
Gustavo Mendez  
Asterio Morales  
Eduardo Tut  
Jose Luis Uck

**Figures**

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- [Figure 60:](#) Detailed plan of the interior of S.D. C180B-1, showing the two *in situ* human finger bones.
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- [Figure 65:](#) Artifacts associated with S.D. C180B-2: a., b. limestone spindle whorls; c., d. shell

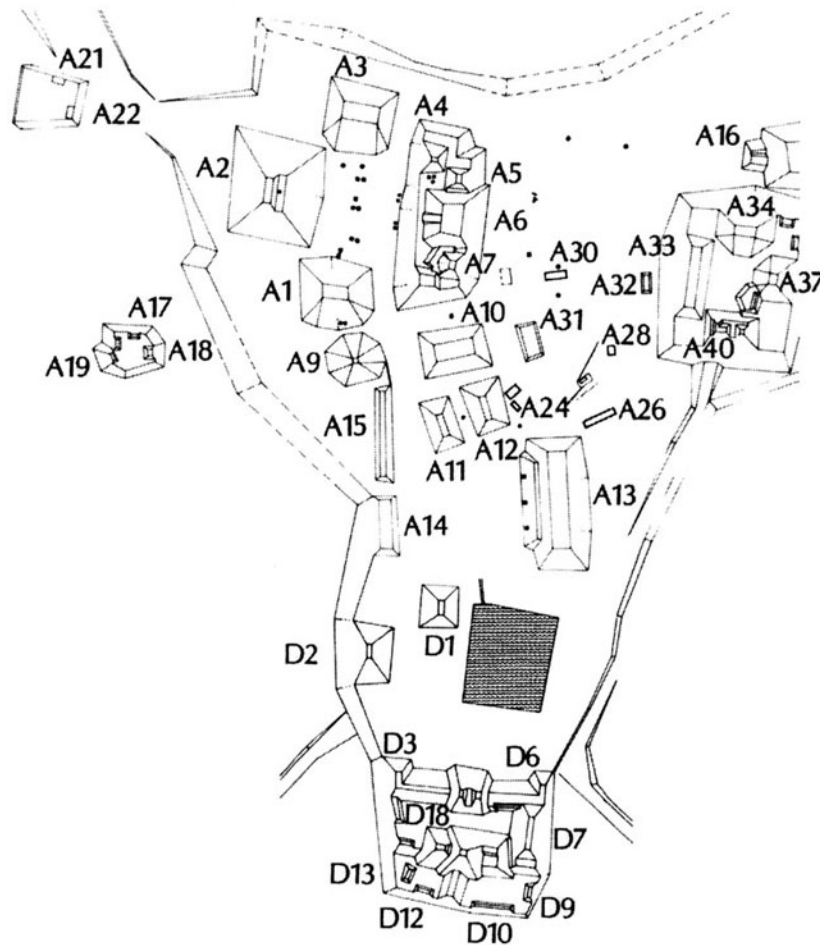


labrets; e. chert fragment; f.-p., s., x. shell artifacts; q., r., t.-w. jadeite earrings, bead, and inlays (malachite was also present).

- [Figure 66:](#) Plan of rear of Operation C180B showing location of looted tomb, S.D. C180B-3.
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- [Figure 74:](#) Partial ceramic vessels from Operations C180D and C180E: a. Monterey Modeled burner; b. unslipped incensario prong; c. related to Sombrero Appliqued; d. Pantano Impressed (monkey design; C180E); e. possibly Pepet Incised; f. Tinaja Red; g. Palmar Orange-polychrome (C180E); h. probably Tinaja Red (C180E).
- [Figure 75:](#) Stucco glyph blocks that were once associated with the latest frieze over the doorway for Structure D32; they appear to be pseudo-glyphs.
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- [Figure 81:](#) Map showing the causeway between La Rejolla, Guatemala and the Caracol's Ceiba Terminus (after Barrois and Palomo 2008).

**At Home in the South:**  
**Investigations in the Vicinity of Caracol's South Acropolis:**  
**2003 Field Report of the Caracol Archaeological Project**

Arlen F. Chase and Diane Z. Chase  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
University of Central Florida



Report submitted to the Belize Institute of Archaeology

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The 2003 field season of the Caracol Archaeological Project took place from early February through the end of March. A trip also was made to Belize in January 2003 to hire workmen and to participate in the formal opening of a fully stabilized Caana by the Government of Belize and the Tourism Development Project. The 2003 excavation crew for the Caracol Archaeological Project consisted of a total of 25 individuals (see Table 1). New investigations undertaken during the 2003 field season focused on locales at the rear of the South Acropolis that potentially could have housed attached specialists. Further work was also undertaken on South Acropolis structures previously investigated by the Caracol Archaeological Project in the early 1990s as well as on two looted epicentral structures located outside the South Acropolis. Our 2003 efforts additionally aided the Tourism Development Project, under the direction of Dr. Jaime Awe, in their clearing, recording, and artifact processing of the South Acropolis buildings prior to final stabilization. The particular areas focused on by 2003 excavations were:

- ⊙ Structures D5, D9, D11, D12, and D14, as well as a collapsed chultun - all new excavations either south of or immediately adjacent to the larger, more formal architecture in the South Acropolis.
- ⊙ Further excavation and recording of Structures D4, D5, D7, D16, D17, and D18 & areas previously excavated by the Caracol Archaeological Project - and recording of these areas in conjunction with the Tourism Development Project, as well as processing of artifactual materials from these areas recovered by both the CAP and TDP.
- ⊙ Recording of looters' trenches made prior to 1985 in Structures D1 and A9, combined with minimal new excavation in these vicinities.

As in the recent past, funding for the 2003 field season came from the Ahau Foundation, the Stans Foundation, the University of Central Florida Trevor Colborn Endowment, and private donations to the University of Central Florida.

### **The Problem: Further Definition of Epicentral Caracol's Urban Form and Function**

Previous excavations have shown that Caracol, like other urban centers, is composed of architectural units with differing functions. It has been suggested that the city of Caracol may have been organized in a concentric plan much like the urban model proposed by Burgess (1923) with an urban core surrounded by poorer transitional neighborhoods and suburban areas at the outskirts (A. Chase et al. 2001). Causeways connected downtown Caracol with the surrounding settlement, agricultural fields, and special function termini thought to have functioned as "market" areas in an administered economy (A. Chase 1998). The interpretations of Caracol urbanism are bolstered by settlement survey, excavation, and analyses (including both artifacts and stable isotope studies of human bone). These combined analyses and excavations have suggested that Caracol settlement was distinguished by household production (A. Chase and D. Chase 1994a; A. Chase et al. 2002). Specialists were not attached to elite households; rather, production locales for chert, shell, and other items were primarily localized within residential compounds disbursed throughout the site. Settlement was characterized by relatively evenly spaced individual plazuela groups as opposed to sets of clustered or nested plazuela groups; it has been suggested that this pattern was necessitated by efficient use of agricultural fields (A. Chase and D. Chase 1998, 2001a).

Epicentral Caracol forms the heart of the site's urban landscape. During the Late Classic Period, this area contained monumental architectural units with varying administrative and residential functions (A. Chase and D. Chase 2001b). Besides anchoring the central B Group, Caana served as a presumed royal residential compound associated with individuals found on Caracol's stone monuments. The A Group lacked residential functions, serving in a largely ceremonial and ritual capacity. Barrio functioned as an elite residential compound (albeit one with no identifiable ancestral mortuary shrine). The Central Acropolis formed a more typical elite residential compound with two eastern and one northern mortuary structures. And, the walled areas near the Machete causeway functioned as a specialized workshop area and residence for non-agricultural workers.

The 2003 investigations continued to focus on urban form and function by excavating in less well studied areas of the Caracol epicenter. In

particular, investigations concentrated on the smaller structures bounding the southern part of the South Acropolis and on two looted pyramids. The primary focus of investigation was the South Acropolis ([Figure 1](#)). Work here in 1990 and 1992 had focused on looted Structure D4 and Structures D17 and D18 (previously investigated by Anderson [1958, 1959]), finding a new tomb in Structure D16. This earlier work had demonstrated that the northern and central parts of the South Acropolis did in spite of the recovered tombs did not appear to have a residential function. Thus, it was imperative to discern how the smaller structures may have functioned within this architectural complex. As the Tourism Development Project was slated to start the final stabilization process of the South Acropolis in the Spring of 2003, it was decided to focus the efforts of the Caracol Archaeological Project in this same area to maximize the recovery of archaeological data and aid the clearing efforts that were undertaken by the Tourism Development Project. This would also result in a more comprehensive season report that would incorporate past excavation efforts. A secondary focus of the 2003 investigations were Structures A9 and D1, both of which have been severely looted; the goal was to record the looters' trenches and to carry out limited excavation relative to these two buildings so as to gain an understanding of how these architectural concentrations functioned in terms of the overall epicenter.

### **New South Acropolis Excavations: 2003**

The South Acropolis consists of three integrated plaza areas, all sharing the same raised platform. The northernmost plaza is ringed by the largest architecture. The two southern plazas are lower in level than the northern ones and are delimited by smaller constructions. While most of the larger buildings defining the northern plaza of the South Acropolis had been excavated prior to 2003 (see below), no investigations had been undertaken in either the smaller structures comprising the northern plazas or in the smaller western structures of the northern plaza ([Figure 2](#)). Given the enigmatic function of the larger architecture in the South Acropolis, it was believed that excavation in these smaller buildings (Structures D8-D15) could hold the key to understanding how the South Acropolis fit into Caracol's urban plan. The conjoined plazas in the South Acropolis and the mix of both larger and smaller constructions are relatively unique at Caracol. Were these structures lived in? Did Structures D9 and D11 fit with more general residential expectations relating to mortuary activities? Or, were all of these buildings used in some other way, perhaps by attached specialists? Excavations undertaken during 2003 sought to determine the form, function, and temporal dimensions of these smaller buildings in an attempt to determine how they were used in relation to the rest of the South Acropolis. In particular, we wanted to know whether they might have served as residential or other special function structures. As a result of the 2003 investigations, residential functions can be assigned minimally to those structures lining the southeast plaza of the South Acropolis. These excavations also succeeded in locating not only *in situ* burials, but also *de facto* debris (D. Chase and A. Chase 2000) associated with two different time periods. Investigations did not suggest that these plazas served as craft production areas. It is hoped that future stable isotope studies of the recovered human remains will be able to determine if the individuals consumed the identified palace diet or the lesser protein and maize diet characteristic of the walled areas adjacent to the Machete causeway (A. Chase et al. 2001).

#### **Structure D9**

Located in the southeast corner of the South Acropolis is a lower plaza level. Structure D9 is the eastern building for the plaza bounded by Structures D7 and D16 to the north, 3 small platforms to the south, and Structure D11 to the west. The structure was selected for excavation to test for the existence of Caracol's typical Late Classic residential group eastern mortuary patterns (A. Chase and D. Chase 1994b). Initial investigation required removal of backdirt from South Acropolis clearing excavations.

**Suboperation C164B** ([Figure 3](#), [Figure 4](#), and [Figure 5](#)) consisted of an axial trench, measuring 6.3 m north-south by 1.5 m east-west, placed through the presumed mid-line of Structure D9. Evidence for at least two sequent constructions was uncovered in this locus and four discrete burials were encountered. The core of the latest building contained a reconstructable dish ([Figure 12b](#)) and several sherds from a broken face cache. The core of the earlier building consisted of hard-packed fill. Both versions of Structure D9 had been built on a plastered surface that may have

represented the original plaza platform and that covered large boulders comprising a dry-core fill; all of the burials penetrated into the dry-core fill level and, thus, their contents were generally not well-preserved. Stratigraphy and artifacts indicate that the Structure D9 construction and use dates to the Late and Terminal Classic eras.

**S.D. C164B-1** ([Figure 6](#), [Figure 7](#)) consisted of a crude crypt placed in front of the final construction of Structure D9. It was sealed by a plaster floor that abutted the lowest step of this edifice. Large capstones covered the partially open-air crypt. The burial deposit had been placed in a small open-air chamber barely below ground level and cut into dry core fill; thus, the contents of the crypt were not well preserved because of collapse and access to animals. Skeletal analysis indicates that there were 2 adults within the chamber, 1 older than the other. Based on the position of the long bones, it would appear that one had been articulated and placed supine with head to the south. Ante-mortem tooth loss is evident in one mandible. Heavy wear was visible on the recovered teeth and calculus deposits were also present. Phalanges and vertebrae show evidence of arthritis. Three vessels ([Figure 8](#)) were grouped together in the southern part of the chamber and a concentration of small shell objects ([Figure 9](#)) were found beneath the bone towards the north part of the crypt. There were obsidian blade fragments within the fill. The pottery vessels indicate that this interment dates to the Late to Terminal Classic era.

**S.D. C164B-2** ([Figure 10](#), [Figure 11](#)) was located immediately west of S.D. C164B-1. The southern part of this chamber had been cut away by the placement of S.D. C164B-1, indicating that some time presumably elapsed between the positioning of these two burials. The interment contained the remains of 1 partial adult with head to the north. Associated with this individual were an obsidian lancet and a single pottery vessel ([Figure 12a](#)). The vessel type indicates that the crypt may be assigned a Late Classic date.

**S.D. C164B-3** ([Figure 13](#)) was placed within an unlined cist and covered with a minimal number of capstones. The remains consisted of a single individual aged as being from birth to 1 year old at the time of death. No artifactual items accompanied the burial. The burial was placed prior to the construction of the earlier version of Structure D9, probably in the later part of the Late Classic Period.

**S.D. C164B-4** ([Figure 14](#)) was intruded through the floor in front of the lowest step for the earlier version of Structure D9. It was sealed by fill for the steps of the later version of that edifice. It appears that a crude cist was carved out of the dry-core fill and that a single adult with head to the north was placed into the cist and covered by large capstone. The teeth of this individual had pyrite inlays and calculus deposits. No artifacts can be specifically attributed as accompanying this interment, although a complete point ([Figure 28d](#)) was recovered in the fill covering the burial.

## **Structure D5**

As mapped by Satterthwaite (see [Figure 1](#)), only a single structure demarcated the southern side of the southeast South Acropolis plaza. Remapping this area during 2003, however, revealed the existence of three small platforms where one had originally been indicated ([Figure 2](#)). The westernmost of these three platforms was randomly selected for testing and was designated as Structure D5 (a label that had originally been incorrectly assigned to the eastern half of Structure D4); the middle platform retained the Structure D10 designation; and, the eastern platform was designated as Structure D36.

**Suboperation C164C** ([Figure 15](#), [Figure 16](#), [Figure 17](#)) consisted of an axial trench, measuring 5.3 m north-south by 1.5 m east-west, placed over the westernmost northern platform defining the southeast plaza in the South Acropolis. Clearing the humus within the trench revealed a simple line-of-stone building with two crude broad steps on its northern side. Continued excavation into the core of the upper construction revealed that it immediately overlay another construction that appeared to face east. Two steps for this earlier construction were exposed, the uppermost one in section and the lower one about 50 cm east of section. A floor abutted this lower step; crushed on this floor and against the side of the step were most of four pottery vessels ([Figure 18](#)). These vessels represent both serving and storage functions and date to the later part of the Late Classic Period. The remains of a corner of an even earlier construction, represented by the plaster turn-ups of a buried floor and a few facing stones, was recovered in the northern part of this excavation. The northern part of the trench was dug to bedrock and revealed yet one more buried floor. The fill

material for the lowest flooring was Preclassic in date.

### **Collapsed Chultun**

A sunken area, or sump, was evident in the plaza between Structure D5 and Structure D16. The surface depression was believed to have been caused by either the collapse of an open-air chamber or of an open-air chultun. Accordingly, the feature was selected for further investigation.

**Suboperation C164D** ([Figure 19](#), [Figure 20](#), [Figure 21](#), [Figure 22](#)) consisted of an excavation measuring 4.0 m north-south by 1.65 m east-west placed over the sump that was evident in the plaza. Initial clearing of the humus revealed the remnants of a plaster floor on the north side of the excavation, tilted at an 80 degree angle, indicating that a collapse had indeed occurred. Excavation succeeded in following the collapse downward and revealed a line of stones that ran parallel to the western excavation limit. These stones turned into a wall facing which extended across the limit of the former chultun and abutted its bedrock sides. This facing was set directly on the floor of the chamber. The flooring of the chamber consisted of hard limestone shelves that stepped down from west to east. The entire floor of the chamber was excavated, both behind and in front of the wall. Situated behind the wall and on the floor of the chamber in front of the wall were a series of reconstructible vessels, which permit the use of this chultun to be dated to the Protoclassic / Late Preclassic era ([Figure 23: b.c.d.e.f.g.h.j](#) from behind the wall; [all others](#) from floor [in front](#) of wall). A figurine head ([Figure 28a](#)) that can be dated to this same era was found in the collapse that filled the chamber.

### **Structure D11**

The most massive structure north of the central architecture is Structure D11. This building forms the western limit for the southeast plaza and the eastern limit for the southwest plaza in the South Acropolis. It extends out of the raised platform supporting Structure D18 and extends to the southern edge of the South Acropolis, effectively blocking passage between the southeast and southwest plazas. Excavation revealed that Structure D11 was part of the southeast plaza, something that could not be ascertained by surface features alone.

**Suboperation C165B** ([Figure 24](#), [Figure 25](#), [Figure 26](#)) consisted of an axial trench, measuring 2.0 m north-south by 14.6 m east-west, through Structure D11. Surface clearing of the entire trench revealed no remnants of any stone superstructure, but did find the lower two courses of a stairway on its eastern side. A late plaster floor abutted the lower step. The lack of well-defined architecture may be due to the late date of the last version of Structure D11, if a reconstructible cooking vessel ([Figure 27b](#)) found in the western extent of the excavation can be related to the use of this edifice. Penetration of the structure core recovered Late Classic ceramics, a pottery figurine head, and most of a pottery whistle ([Figure 28a and 28b](#)). Deep excavation within the core of the latest version of Structure D11 uncovered an earlier version of the structure. The earlier construction's shorter axis ran east-west and measured 4.7 m; it rose 0.75 m above an even earlier platform floor, which ran beneath all of Structure D11. A separate plaza floor abutted the eastern limit of this earlier building, indicating that it too was aligned with the southeast plaza. Penetration of the earlier building's core revealed an almost concrete-like matrix and some isolated human skull fragments.

### **Structure D12**

The southwest plaza of the South Acropolis is defined by the rear of Structure D11 on the east, by the rear of Structure D17 on the north, by Structure D13 on the west, and by Structure D12 on the south. Structure D12 was selected for excavation based on the fact that it did not have a large tree blocking its central axis.

**Suboperation C166B** ([Figure 29](#), [Figure 30](#), [Figure 31](#)) was an axial trench, measuring 1.5 m east-west by 5.5 m north-south, placed through Structure D12. Like the uppermost buildings throughout all the northern plaza areas in the South Acropolis, the architecture was very indistinct and defined only by lines of stone. Clearing revealed the corner of a potential bench in the southern part of the trench and possible steps in the northern part of the excavation. Three floors were encountered. The uppermost abutted what was left of the latest version of Structure D12. The other two floors lay beneath the fill for Structure D12 and represented platform surfaces capping extensive dry core boulder fill. No deposits were recovered in this excavation.



## Structure D14

Two low buildings, Structures D14 and D15, exist at the western end of the main South Acropolis plaza. Structure D14 was selected for excavation because of its position on the southern side of this plaza and the fact that all of the other southern buildings in this plaza (Structures D16, D17, and D18) had produced tombs. Structure D14 did not conform to this pattern.

**Suboperation C163B** ([Figure 32](#), [Figure 33](#), [Figure 34](#)) consisted of an axial trench 1.5 m east-west by 6.0 m north-south placed over Structure D14. Initial clearing revealed several lines of stone representing a multi-level perishable building. Penetration of the core of this latest construction revealed an early construction represented by a single line of stone set upon the original plaza floor. Unlike the dry-core fill found beneath the southern plaza floors, the fill for the upper plaza floor consisted of large fill stones set within a hard-packed dirt matrix. No deposits were recovered in this investigation.

## Summary of New 2003 South Acropolis Excavations

The new 2003 excavations are now all backfilled - focused on smaller structures in the South Acropolis and significantly added to the time depth for the occupation of this area through the recovery of the extensive deposit of Late Preclassic / Protoclassic materials from the collapsed chultun. The vessel from the rear of Structure D11 also indicates that this area was used through the end of the Terminal Classic era. No workshop debris could be detected in any of the recovered artifactual remains from the excavations in the small structures of the South Acropolis. As the excavations were large enough to have recovered such debris, it does not appear that these buildings were used for the production of specialized artifacts. However, a good case can be made that at least the southeast plaza functioned as a residential group. Not only were four Late-to-Terminal Classic burials recovered in Structure D9, but serving and storage vessels were recovered on an earlier floor within Structure D5. These data strongly suggest that the northeast plaza of the South Acropolis was a residential area. However, a new question is raised by these data. What is the relationship between the inhabitants of the southeast plaza and the rest of the South Acropolis? Were these individuals caretakers or the primary users of this area? This question can still not be answered definitively without additional analysis.

## Continuing South Acropolis Excavations: 2003

Prior to the 2003 field season, the major architecture in the South Acropolis had been partially, but not completely, tested and excavated. Initial excavations within this group were originally conducted by Belize's first archaeological commissioner, A.H. Anderson (1958, 1959), in the 1950s. Clean-up and areal clearing intended to make the area more readily accessible to tourists was the primary focus of the subsequent USAID-GOB funded Caracol Archaeological Project investigations carried out in 1990 and 1992. These investigations recorded and amplified the previous work that had been done on Structures D17 and D18 and cleaned up and recorded the looting that had occurred on Structure D4 (before exposing the entire building); the research also uncovered a new tomb in Structure D16 and tested Structures D6 and D7. All of Anderson's open excavations were backfilled, as were the looter's trenches in Structure D4. Furthermore, the summits of Structures D4 and D17, the western base of Structure D18, and the tombs in Structures D17 and D18 were all stabilized as an outcome of this effort. The archaeological data collected as a result of this work suggested that the three central buildings in the South Acropolis functioned as important, presumably non-residential, mortuary structures and that Structure D4 had not had a residential function.

The recent Tourism Development Project at Caracol also selected the South Acropolis as one of its focal points for further stabilization. The Caracol Archaeological Project carried out a close articulation with the TDP during 2003 and helped in the clearing efforts for these buildings through assigning lots and processing artifacts that came from the TDP excavations (the suboperations assigned to TDP excavations in the South Acropolis are shown in [Figure 35](#)). Based on the TDP clearing effort ([Figure 36](#)), the CAP also added to plans and sections that had been started in 1990 and 1992 for Structures D4, D6, D7, D16, D17, and D18. An additional penetrating excavation was also undertaken in Structure D4.

## Structure D4

When visited in 1983, the western half of Structure D4 had been pitted by looters. A deep trench ran through the western side of Structure D4, penetrating both a bench located here and the floors beneath the bench. Because of this looting and the revealed architecture, Structure D4 was selected for further excavation in 1990 and was then subsequently stabilized by the Caracol Archaeological Project during the 1991 field season. Once it was uncovered, it became evident that Structure D4 formed a formal entranceway into the South Acropolis. Individuals would have had to pass through this building in order to enter the plazas and structures beyond. With its two massive side benches, Structure D4 can be thought of as something like a waiting area and/or guardhouse. The ancillary buildings, permanent to the west and impermanent to the east, faced north to parts of the site exterior to the South Acropolis. Thus, the entire northern building of Structure D4 and its wings served to provide privacy to any activities that were carried out within the plazas making up the South Acropolis.

**Suboperations C72BDC72J** consisted of excavations undertaken in 1990 that were involved in the areal clearing of Structure D4 and its western annex ([Figure 37](#)). Suboperation C72B involved the clean-up of the looters' trench through the western summit of Structure D4; this section ([Figure 38](#)) was augmented by Suboperation C72H which excavated the southern area exterior to the building. Suboperation C72I consisted of the axial trench through Structure D4 ([Figure 39](#)). This excavation revealed the existence of earlier buildings buried in the core of Structure D4, in fact revealing the buried side of an earlier construction that appeared to face to the south.

**Special Deposit C72B-1** was assigned for the heavily burnt, fragmentary, and plentiful human remains that were found within a pit in the northern extent of the trench that encompassed the original looters' excavation. The black soil that defined this pit was sealed by eroded light brown floor bedding for the floor surface that was immediately north of Structure D4. Within this pit were the cremated remains of minimally one individual. The only other materials found in association with this human bone were fragmentary obsidian blades.

**Suboperation C72K** was an excavation carried out in February 1994 on axis to Structure D4 to look for a lower northern step ([Figure 40](#)). The excavation recovered a single row of stone and measured 1.5 m north-south by 3.0 m east-west.

**Suboperations C72LDC72Q** were assigned during the 2003 field season for clearing excavations undertaken by the TDP in and around Structure D4 (see [Figure 35](#) and [Figure 42](#)). For the summit excavations, the newly revealed architecture was drawn at 1:20 and added to earlier drawings ([Figure 37](#)). Additionally, Suboperation C72N was assigned to a 2 m north-south excavation used to penetrate the terrace immediately south of Structure D4 and add the dry core fill that was revealed to the earlier section ([Figure 39](#)). A small test was also made in a discontinuity in the plaster surface west of Structure D4 within Suboperation C72M ([Figure 41](#)), but it proved to only be an area of eroded flooring.

### **Structure D6**

A flat area was evident on the northern flank of the arm linking Structures D4 and D7. This platform, noticeable in mapping, had been designated Structure D6.

**Suboperation C89B** ([Figure 43](#), [Figure 44](#)) was assigned for an exploratory excavation made into Structure D6 during the 1992 field season. All that was discovered were crude walls comprising the rear wall for the western arm of Structure D4 and the eastern limit of the Structure D4 southern stair outset. In reality, Structure D6 was probably not a formal building, but was rather just an architectural terrace.

### **Structure D7**

Dominating the eastern side of the main interior plaza of the South Acropolis is Structure D7. A small excavation was made at the base of Structure D7 in 1992 by the CAP, but recovered no visible architecture. In 2002, the TDP cleared the entire building prior to its stabilization. They too found a lack of visible architecture on the sides and base of the structure. At the summit of Structure D7, however, three building substructures were uncovered. The central one was set back to the east and the two side substructures faced the central platform (see [Figure 2](#)).

**Suboperations C91B and CD20A** ([Figure 45](#)) were assigned to excavations undertaken in Structure D7. Suboperation C91B was 3.8 m east-west by 2.0 m north-south excavation placed on axis to Structure D7 at its base in 1992. This excavation was halted after initial clearing because it

recovered neither architecture nor any evidence of caching activity, as would normally be expected if the structure had functioned as an eastern ancestral shrine (D. Chase and A. Chase 1998). Suboperation CD20A was assigned to the clearing of Structure D7 in 2002 by the Tourism Development Project prior to stabilization in 2003. These excavations recovered 3 substructures at the summit of the building, but little else in the way of architecture. Two tombs were, however, encountered during the 2002 clearing operations; data presented below indicates that these chambers appear to have been used relatively early in the history of the South Acropolis and that at least one had been re-entered (see D. Chase and A. Chase 2003). All of the mortuary activity in the central structures post-dates the use of the eastern Structure D7.

**Special Deposit C20A-1** ([Figure 46](#)) was assigned for a tomb that was encountered in the core of the central summit substructure south of the central axis. No pottery vessels were recovered from this chamber. Presumably because of its proximity to the surface and its location in dry core fill, the bone was not in a good state of preservation.

**Special Deposit C20A-2** ([Figure 47](#)) was assigned for a tomb that was found partway down the western slope of Structure D7. This tomb had been refilled with core material and, because it shows no indication of having intact capstones, is believed to have been accidentally re-entered at a later time and then treated in accord with other patterns that are noted for Caracol (D. Chase and A. Chase 2003). Some of the nine vessels ([Figure 48](#)) that can be assigned to this chamber were clearly intact on the floor of the chamber, according well with an accidental re-entry. However, the inclusion of potential cache vessels (specifically [Figure 48a](#)) in this chamber as well as "Charlie Chaplins" ([Figure 49e and 49f](#)) and other small shell objects generally found in caches is problematic and may indicate that specific rituals were carried out when this re-entry occurred. The presence of 4 limestone bars ([Figure 49a-d](#)) in this chamber is also intriguing given their presumed association with weaving and twining. The nine vessels that were recovered in association with S.D. CD20A-2 are all of Early Classic date and this assemblage is clearly earlier than any of the other mortuary deposits encountered in the South Acropolis.

### **Structure D16**

The architectural focus of the South Acropolis is the large raised platform that makes up the southern side of its main plaza. Three buildings surmount this raised platform: Structure D17 on the west end; Structure D18 in the middle; and, Structure D16 on the eastern end ([Figure 50](#)). In contrast to Structures D17 and D18, Structure D16 is barely visible in terms of architecture, appearing almost as if a flat surface with a slight bump across its northern end. This appearance may be due to later stone-robbing at this locus, especially as it is clear that a complicated architectural sequence exists here and that Structure D16 is earlier than either Structure D17 or Structure D18.

**Suboperations 88B and 88C** ([Figure 51](#), [Figure 52](#)) were assigned for the areal clearing and axial penetration of Structure D16 during 1992. Suboperation C88B was assigned for the western part of the summit structure and its articulation with Structure D18. Suboperation C88C was assigned for the axial trench and the eastern part of Structure D16's summit. At least 3 building phases could be ascertained as a result of these excavations. The latest building phase was represented by a partial facing at the summit of the plaza above all other floors and walls; its existence lends strong support for an interpretation of stone-robbing at this locus. The middle phase of construction has low broad steps leading up to the summit of the platform. It was cut through on its western end by a covered crypt and it, in turn, is believed to seal an Early Classic tomb in its core. At least in the front of Structure D16, this middle phase overlays even earlier platforms, which appear to be off-axis to the east from the construction that is now visible.

**Special Deposit C88B-1** ([Figure 53](#)) cut into architecture that makes up the middle phase of construction for Structure D16. When uncovered, the crypt had its capstone intact, but was literally just under the ground surface. For whatever reason, no bone or artifacts were recovered in this crypt.

**Special Deposit C88C-1** ([Figure 54](#), [Figure 55](#), [Figure 56](#)) was assigned to a well constructed tomb that was presumably sealed by the middle construction effort in Structure D16. When found, the chamber was barely a meter below the ground surface. At one time, the interior walls of the chamber had been plastered. The floor of the tomb had a layer of cinnabar under the vessels and bones. The tomb contained the remains of 2

individuals, both of whom were adults and 1 of whom was female. Nine teeth inlaid with pyrite were recovered, all from one individual and all maxillary teeth indicating that one of the individuals had decorated teeth from premolar to premolar. Thirteen whole and 3 partial ceramic vessels were recovered from the chamber, all of Early Classic date ([Figure 57a](#), [Figure 57b](#)). Other artifacts from the chamber include a set of composite obsidian earflares ([Figure 58c](#)), 2 antler figurines ([Figure 58a and 58b](#)), 4 complete *spondylus* shells, 5 stingray spine fragments, 2 pyrite mirror pieces, 237 shell beads, 12 shell inlays, 1 shell pendant, 1 shell figure, 2 shell tubes, 3 pearls, 1 jadeite pendant, 3 jadeite beads, 2 crystal mosaic inlays, 48 hematite mosaic pieces, 75 malachite mosaic pieces, and 1 obsidian drill.

**Suboperations 88D and 88E** were assigned in 2003 for the basal excavations on axis to Structure D16 (C88E) and for the basal excavation of the eastern side and northeast corner of Structure D16 (C88D). In general, only a basal course of cut stone was recovered on the northern side of the platform.

### Structure D17

The western side of the central platform was crowned by Structure D17. A.H. Anderson excavated a tomb in this building in 1953. He then returned in subsequent years to continue excavations at Caracol. A short visit is recorded in 1954 with Gordon Willey and a full field season is noted for 1958. During one of these seasons, it is believed that Anderson placed an axial trench through Structure D17. In 1990 this open excavation was recorded and backfilled when Structure D17 was areally exposed. Structure D17 was consolidated during the 1991 field season. The building proved to have three doors facing south and three inner doors to the rear room, the eastern two of which were blocked by later construction. As excavated, the eastern part of the inner rear room contained a series of raised platforms, as if a stair to a second story. The western part of Structure D17 was gone, having presumably slid off the summit.

**Suboperation C37B** ([Figure 59](#), [Figure 60](#)) was designated for the areal excavation of Structure D17 and for the clean-up of Anderson's trench during the 1990 field season. Once the building was cleared, a cross-section was also drawn showing the relationship between Structure D18, Structure D17, and S.D. C37B-1 ([Figure 61](#)). During this work, a footed cylinder ([Figure 27a](#)) was found in the alley between Structure D17 and Structure D18.

**Special Deposit C37B-1** ([Figure 62](#)) was excavated by A.H. Anderson in 1953. He entered the tomb through its collapsed entrance and found a single adult in the chamber who was accompanied by 9 well preserved pottery vessels of early Late Classic date and 4 jadeite beads. After excavation, Anderson placed a wooden door in the entranceway and used the tomb as a storage area.

**Suboperation C37E and C37J** were designated for excavations undertaken during the 2003 field season at the base of Structure D17. Suboperation C37E continued the Structure D17 section line to include the northern basal architecture. A single line of stone articulating with the associated plaza floor was encountered in this excavation. Suboperation C37J was designated for materials that were recovered as a result of the excavation of the basal substructure corner for Structure D17.

### Structure D18

Perhaps the most important building in the South Acropolis, Structure D18 commands not only the central platform, but also the entire South Acropolis. Little of the latest building remains, presumably removed by A.H. Anderson in 1958 when he excavated the infilled tomb in Structure D18. The CAP excavations revealed that, Structure D18, which faced north, covered an earlier building that had once faced west. When the final phase of Structure D18 was built, the earlier building had been converted into a large tomb with an entryway being constructed through the building's north wall. This entryway had been hidden within the frontal stairway for the latest version of Structure D18. At some point in time, it may be surmised that the tomb roof collapsed or that access was accidentally gained into the tomb. This appears to have occasioned the removal of the chamber's roof and its infilling. Luckily, this fill was placed over the intact remains of the chamber; its re-entry patterns are in accord with others noted for Caracol (D. Chase and A. Chase 2003).

**Suboperations C37C and C37D** ([Figure 63](#), [Figure 64](#), [Figure 65](#)) were assigned for archaeological work undertaken on Structure D18 in 1990 (C37C) and 1992 (C37D). This work included opening up an axial trench through the building as well as areally clearing the structure's outer walls, the western side in 1990 and the eastern side in 1992. The latest version of Structure D18 had two stairway modifications, both of which covered the tomb included in the core of the construction. Axial excavations in the southern portion of Structure D18 revealed the southern wall of the buried building. Excavations west of the room used as a tomb demonstrated that the buried building had once been a two-room edifice. The single inner door of this building had been blocked when the rear room was turned into a tomb. The rear room also had a bench, which continued beneath the make-shift southern wall for the tomb chamber. Excavations on the northern exterior of this buried building succeeded in getting down to plaza level, something that Anderson (1959) could not do. Deep excavations into the core of the earlier building recovered a large ceramic sample ([Figure 66a](#), [Figure 66b](#)) that indicates that this earlier building must have been constructed in the Early Classic era. Remnants of even earlier constructions were recovered buried in the core of the earlier building at plaza level.

**Special Deposit C37C-1** ([Figure 67](#), [Figure 68](#)) was excavated by Anderson in 1958. Nails, used to guide his drawings, were recovered in 1990 during the clearing of this chamber. Anderson (1959) had originally found the entranceway to the buried tomb because the stairway for the latest version of Structure D18 had collapsed. However, the tomb had been completely infilled with construction core and he entered it by digging down through the core of the latest version of Structure D18. That everything was intact on the floor of the chamber is consistent with an ancient accidental tomb re-entry (D. Chase and A. Chase 2003). Two articulated adult individuals were recovered from within the tomb. On the bench was a supine body with head to the south and with inlaid jadeite teeth; on the floor west of the bench was another individuals with head to the north. Fourteen pottery vessels accompanied this interment along with 1 figurine and 1 whistle as well as "scores of tiny flat beads made of shell and jade and scores of very small oliva shells" (Anderson 1959:214-215). The vessels all date to the early part of the Late Classic Period (Tepeu 1 equivalent vessels).

**Suboperations C37F-C37I** were new excavations undertaken during the 2003 field season prior to final stabilization. Suboperation C37F was assigned to the continuation of the axial trench through Structure D18. Suboperations C37G and C37H were assigned for the areal clearing of the northern face of the platform supporting Structure D18. Suboperation C37I was assigned to all materials coming out of the central plaza of South Acropolis during 2003.

### **New 2003 Non-South Acropolis Excavations: Structures A9 and D1**

Structures A9 and D1 had already been looted by the onset of the first full season of the Caracol Archaeological Project in 1985. The summit of Structure A9 had an open east-west trench through it. A summit-to-base trench had been driven into Structure D1 from its western side. cursory examination of the looters' trenches in each of these structures in 1985 showed no evidence that any deposits had been encountered; however, the trenches were not formally cleared and recorded. The 2003 field season remedied this situation.

### **Structure D1**

Structure D1 is situated strategically adjacent to the main reservoir north of the South Acropolis. Although appearing to be in isolation, it likely formed an architectural complex with Structure D2, a tall pyramid located on the edge of the raised epicentral area immediately west of Structure D1. As a result of the 2003 investigations, it is possible to state that Structure D1 faced west, as all of its intact facings were oriented in this direction. However, the sides of Structure D1 were not investigated, meaning that its form is still not known. Nor is its obvious relationship with the main reservoir understood.

**Suboperations C167B and C167C** ([Figure 69](#), [Figure 70](#), [Figure 71](#)) were assigned to excavations undertaken to understand the architecture and construction of Structure D1, a building that had been savaged by an earlier looters' trench. The sides of the open excavation were cleaned and drawn, finding only a very few facings halfway up the trench. Multiple phases of Structure D4 had once existed, with the dry-core fill

making up the core of most of these buildings. No deposits were encountered. The artifactual materials recovered in the core of the building can only be used to place the latest construction effort for Structure D1 in the broadest sense of the Late Classic Period (i.e., after A.D. 550).

Suboperation C167C was a new excavation, measuring 3.05 m east-west by 1.25 m north-south, made at the summit of D1 that effectively was a continuation of the open trench. Together Suboperations C167B and C167C stretched for a total distance of 15.7 m. Two steps that were oriented to the west as well as a preserved floor were encountered in Suboperation C167C ([Figure 70](#)). All of the open excavations in Structure D1 were backfilled as a conjoined effort of the CAP and TDP following recording.

### **Structure A9**

The summit of Structure A9 had looted prior to 1985, but neither major architecture nor deposits had been encountered. Based on the spatial relationships between structures immediately south of Caracol's A Plaza ([Figure 72](#)), it appeared on the map that Structures A9 and A15 formed a two-building group. They both shared the same raised platform and appeared to demarcate a small private plaza on the very edge of the western epicenter. However, the exact relationship of Structure A9 to other buildings in this part of Caracol was not clear. A narrow alley separated Structures A1 and A9. However, the western "end" of this alley was defined by a structural projection appended to the back of Structure A1; this platform had yielded a tomb, 2 caches, and a greater than life-size seated stucco figure (A. Chase and D. Chase 1997). Thus, Structure A9 could have been associated with this ritual complex as well. Small excavations were, therefore, undertaken at the base of Structure A9 to resolve its relationship to either Structure A15 or Structure A1. Surprisingly, these excavations revealed that Structure A9 faced east and was probably paired with the south-facing Structure A8 to form a small, very open plaza area at the southeast entrance to the A Plaza.

**Suboperation C162B** ([Figure 72](#), [Figure 73](#)) was a 2 m by 2 m excavation set in the presumed corner formed by Structure A9 and the raised platform that was also associated with Structure A15. No formal architecture was encountered. Rather, a sloping layer of construction fill was encountered, the top of which was littered with broken pottery. One of the vessels encountered in this lens proved to be a rather large reconstructible olla ([Figure 74](#)). As a result of this investigation (and others undertaken during 2003), it may be posited that the area south of Structure A9 and west and north of Structure A15 was in the process of being infilled at the end of the Terminal Classic Period, probably to form a base for future construction.

**Suboperations C162C and C162D** ([Figure 72](#), [Figure 73](#), [Figure 75](#)) were two small trenches placed along the northern base of Structure A9 to determine if this structure faced south. Suboperation C162C measured 3 m north-south by 2 m east-west and succeeded in finding a terrace facing and plaza floor that were associated with Structure A9. This excavation also encountered a crude line of stone that projected at right angles from the terrace facing and probably represented a basal pad for a perishable structure ([Figure 75](#)). In order to ensure that this line-of-stone did not represent the ripped-out side of a stairway, a second excavation was placed 1.5 m west of Suboperation C162C. Suboperation C162D measured 2.2 m north-south by 1.6 m east-west. This excavation was dug down to the same plaza floor level that had been found in Suboperation C162C. Like C162C, Suboperation C162D did not reveal any steps; nor were any other architectural features found in this test. Based on these two investigations, it was determined that Structure A9 did not face south.

**Suboperation C162E** ([Figure 72](#), [Figure 76](#), [Figure 78](#)) was placed over the eastern basal axis of Structure A9 in line with the looters' trench on the summit. Suboperation C162E measured 2.8 m north-south by 2.2 m east-west. It was located 2.8 m north of Suboperation C162B. This investigation produced the missing stairway for Structure A9. At least 5 distinct steps could be delineated within the areal investigation. These steps rested direct on a plastered plaza floor. A test through this plaza floor produced no deposits, but did contain Late Preclassic sherd material. This excavation demonstrated that access to the Structure A9 summit was gained from its eastern side.

**Suboperation C162F** ([Figure 77](#)) was assigned for material was recovered as a result of detailing the east-west looters' trench at the summit of Structure A9. No dateable material was recovered. While a plaster floor could be seen in the summit section, no facings could be discerned that



were associated with it. A smaller north-south cross-trench at the summit was not recorded.

### Summary

Previous excavations have shown that Caracol, like other urban centers, is composed of architectural units with differing functions. Epicentral Caracol is at the heart of the site's urban landscape and is tied to the surrounding core area settlement and agricultural fields via its intra-site causeways. Many architectural units within the site epicenter differ from those found in the surrounding hinterland, varying in architectural form and serving a greater variety of functions relating to residence, ritual, administration, and production. The 2003 research investigated urban form and function by excavating in several less well-studied areas of the Caracol epicenter, particularly the smaller structures directly associated with the South Acropolis and previously looted structures not directly associated with Caracol's major plazas. The investigations undertaken during the 2003 field season not only complemented research undertaken during previous seasons at the site by the Caracol Archaeological Project, but also will work with and supplemented the stabilization efforts undertaken as part of the IDB Tourism Development Project directed by Dr. Jaime Awe.

The bulk of the 2003 work focused on the South Acropolis and it is appropriate to try to place the results of this work within a broader perspective. Initially, the excavations within the small structures south and west of the South Acropolis's larger architecture had hoped to find workshop or activity areas that could be related to attached specialists. There were not found. However, the work undertaken within these buildings helps place the South Acropolis into temporal context.

The ceramics encountered in the collapsed chultun in the South Acropolis' southeast plaza demonstrate that the South Acropolis was flourishing at the end of the Late Preclassic Period and that ritual activities were taking place in this vicinity even then (based on the recovered incensarios). Further investigations in the South Acropolis would undoubtedly find other deposits associated with this time period. By the beginning of the Early Classic Period, the South Acropolis appears to have functioned as an elite residential unit. Structure D7 was clearly used as a mortuary structure with burial patterns that were consistent with those found in later residential groups. Had deeper penetration been made of this badly preserved building, a tomb dating to the Late Preclassic / Protoclassic era may have been encountered. However, the residential functions of the South Acropolis shifted sometime toward the end of the Early Classic Period. This is indicated not only by the mortuary patterns found in the southern Structures D16, D17, and D18 that span the late Early Classic to early Late Classic, but also by the construction of a formal eastern temple (now buried within Structure D18) in the later part of the Early Classic as well. The architectural additions to the South Acropolis at the end of the Early Classic, the southern mortuary focus that continued through the middle of the Late Classic, the re-entry of the Structure D7 lower tomb, and the construction of a non-residential southern gateway building (Structure D4) for the South Acropolis all indicate that the function of this area had shifted to other activities by the beginning of the Late Classic era. The poor preservation and stone removal in the central architecture of the South Acropolis indicate that its main plaza never regained a residential function. However, the 2003 excavations in the smaller structures surrounding the southeast plaza of the South Acropolis indicate that this group did have a residential function sequent to the deposition of the Late Classic tomb in Structure D17. *In situ* ceramics recovered on an early floor within Structure D5 indicate serving and storage functions here in the later part of the Late Classic Period. Burials recovered from Structure D9 also date from this same time, but continue into the Terminal Classic Period as well. Thus, an intriguing temporal sequence can be established for the South Acropolis in which the complex apparently started out as an elite residential unit in the Late Preclassic to Early Classic Period, shifted to a non-residential, presumably public function at the end of the Early Classic Period, and then partially regained a residential function in the later part of the Late Classic Period.

From a practical standpoint, the concentration of the 2003 research excavations in a single portion of the site that was undergoing stabilization not only greatly facilitated in-field communication and movement of personnel, but also permitted the integration of archaeological data collected over half a century. The long-term research approach taken by the Caracol Archaeological Project also means that each field season

provides additional understanding and field data that can be conjoined with previously accumulated information to shed new light specifically on the site of Caracol and, eventually, on broader questions concerning the ancient Maya.

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## TABLE 1:

### Caracol Project Members: 2003 Field Season

#### Staff:

Arlen F. Chase C1  
Diane Z. Chase C2

Amy Morris C111

Jorge Garcia C144  
Amanda Groff C150  
Ben Marshall C152  
Willie Rivers C138

Shawn Botts C157  
Shoshana Caplan C158  
Melina Hoffman C159  
Kerri Masem C160  
Jennifer Navarra C161  
Shayna Michaels C153  
Eric Shippee C162  
Megan Simpson C163  
Erik Stanley C164

#### Belizean Labor:

Rita Wilshire

Aurora Gongora  
Alicia Hernandez  
Carlos Ivan Mendez

Marvin Alexander Chable  
Carlos Castellanos  
Carlos Castellanos, Jr.  
Jaime Iglesias Mis  
Noe Rivas

## Figures

[Figure 1](#). Reconstructed plan of the South Acropolis and its buildings prior to the 2003 field work (from A. Chase and D. Chase 2001b).

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[Figure 3](#). Axial section through Caracol Structure D9.

[Figure 4](#). Upper and lower plans of the excavation through Caracol Structure D9.

[Figure 5](#). Photograph of trench through Caracol Structure D9.

[Figure 6](#). Plans related to Special Deposit C164B-1: capstones overlaying burial and burial itself.

[Figure 7](#). Photograph of burial in Special Deposit C164B-1.

[Figure 8](#). Vessels from Special Deposit C164B-1: a) probably Azucar Impressed; b) probably Azucar Impressed; c) Belize Red.

[Figure 9](#). Shell artifacts associated with Special Deposit C164B-1.

[Figure 10](#). Plan of Special Deposit C164B-2.

[Figure 11](#). Photograph of upper portion of crypt for Special Deposit C164B-2.

[Figure 12](#). Vessels from Caracol Structure C9: a) eroded Machete Polychrome from Special Deposit C164B-2; b) probably eroded Machete Polychrome from within core of Structure D9.

[Figure 13](#). Plan of Special Deposit C164B-3.

[Figure 14](#). Plans related to Special Deposit C164B-4: capstones overlaying burial and burial itself.

[Figure 15](#). Axial Section through Caracol Structure D5.

[Figure 16](#). Upper and lower plans of axial excavation through Caracol Structure D5.

[Figure 17](#). Photograph of Caracol Structure D5 during excavation, showing the buried earlier building.

[Figure 18](#). Vessels associated with the buried earlier building in Caracol Structure D5: a) probably Machete Polychrome; b) eroded Palmar Orange-Polychrome; c) Subin Red; d) Cambio Unslipped.

[Figure 19](#). North-south Section of collapsed chultun in excv. C164D and recovered wall profile.

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[Figure 21](#). Plan of chultun bottom in excv. C164D.

[Figure 22](#). Photograph of *in situ* pottery being excavated at the bottom of the collapsed chultun (excv. C164D) and east of the chultun wall facing.

[Figure 23a](#), [Figure 23b](#), [Figure 23c](#)

Figure 23. Pottery recovered in association with the bottom of the collapsed chultun (excv. C164D):

a) Sierra Red; b) possibly Union Appliqued; c) Sapote Striated; d) Lagartos Punctated; e) Paila Unslipped; f) Alta Mira Fluted; g) Paila Unslipped; h) unnamed type; i) Sierra Red; j) Sierra Red; k) Sierra Red; l) Paybono Black; m) Sierra Red; n) Lagartos Punctated; o) Sierra Red; p) Sacluc Black-on-Orange; q) unnamed type; r) possibly Sarteneja Usulután; s) related to Paila Unslipped; t) Sierra Red; u) Laguana Verde Incised; v) Paila Unslipped; w) Paila Unslipped; x) Paila Unslipped; y) burned Altar Mira Fluted; z) Sapote Striated; aa) unnamed punctuated type.

[Figure 24](#). Axial Section through Caracol Structure D11.

[Figure 25](#). Plan of Caracol Structure D11 with humus removed.

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[Figure 27](#). Terminal Classic pottery vessels recovered in association with Structures D11

[b) Cambio Unslipped] and D17 [a) eroded Danta Polychrome].

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[Figure 29](#). Axial Section through Caracol Structure D12.

[Figure 30](#). Plan of excavation through Caracol Structure D12 after removal of humus.

[Figure 31](#). Photograph of excavation in Caracol Structure D12 and the western end of the excavation through Caracol Structure D11.

[Figure 32](#). Axial Section through Caracol Structure D14.

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[Figure 34](#). Photograph of excavation of Caracol Structure D14.

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[Figure 37](#). Detailed plan of Caracol Structure D4 and its "wings."

[Figure 38](#). Section of the looters' excavation through the southern bench in Caracol Structure D4.

[Figure 39](#). Axial Section of Caracol Structure D4 [through its central doorways].

[Figure 40](#). Axial Section of the 1994 test through the basal stair of Caracol Structure D4.

[Figure 41](#). Section of a 2003 test through the eastern "wing" of Caracol Structure D4.

[Figure 42](#). Photograph of Caracol Structure D4's eastern exterior wall, excavated during 2003 by the Tourism Development Project.

[Figure 43](#). Section through the 1992 Caracol Structure D6 excavation.

[Figure 44](#). Plan of the 1992 Caracol Structure D6 excavation.

[Figure 45](#). Section and Profile from 1992 work on Caracol Structure D7 with the addition of the two tombs and the basal facing found during 2002 by the Tourism Development Project.

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[Figure 47](#). Cross-Section and Plan of the lower Caracol Structure D7 tomb.

[Figure 48](#). Pottery vessels recovered in association with the lower Caracol Structure D7 tomb: a) Quintal Unslipped; b) eroded Dos Arroyos Orange Polychrome; c) Quintal Unslipped; d) Quintal Unslipped; e) Quintal Unslipped; f) Quintal Unslipped; g) eroded Balanza Black; h) Pita Incised; i) Quintal Unslipped.

[Figure 49](#). Artifacts recovered in association with the lower Caracol Structure D7 tomb: a,b,c,d) limestone bars; e,f,g,j,l,m)shell; h,i,k) jadeite.

[Figure 50](#). Combined plans of the walls and facings of Caracol Structures D16, D17, and D18, also showing relationship between the three tombs associated with these buildings.

[Figure 51](#). Axial section through Caracol Structure D16.

[Figure 52](#). Plan of Caracol Structure D16 showing recovered facings and deposits.

[Figure 53](#). Plan of Special Deposit C88B-1.

[Figure 54](#). Section, Cross-Section, and Wall Elevation of chamber holding Special Deposit C88C-1.

[Figure 55](#). Plan of Special Deposit C88C-1.

[Figure 56](#). Photograph of Special Deposit C88C-1, looking south.

[Figure 57a](#), [Figure 57b](#)

Figure 57. Pottery vessels associated with Special Deposit C88C-1: a) Dos Arroyos Orange Polychrome; b) Balanza Black; c) Balanza Black; d) Balanza Black; e) Balanza Black; f) Aguila Orange; g) Pucte Brown; h) eroded Dos Arroyos Orange Polychrome; i) Pucte Brown with stuccoed panels; j) Pucte Brown; k) Pucte Brown; l) Urita Gouged-Incised; m) Balanza Black; n) Positas Modeled and Urita Gouged-Incised; o) unnamed unslipped; p) possibly Tintal Incised.

[Figure 58](#). Artifacts associated with Special Deposit C88C-1: a) antler figurine; b) antler figurine; c) pair of composite obsidian earflares on pottery backings.

[Figure 59](#). Axial section through Caracol Structure D17.

[Figure 60](#). Plan of Caracol Structure D17.

[Figure 61](#). Cross-Section of alley between Caracol Structures D17 and D18, showing the position of the Structure D17 tomb relative to the floor of the rear room in Structure D17.

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[Figure 63](#). Axial Section of Caracol Structure D18.

[Figure 64](#). Section of opposite wall of the Axial Section for Caracol Structure D18 north of buried building showing the existence of facings covering the earlier structure; these facings were associated with an earlier version of Caracol Structure D18-1<sup>st</sup>.

[Figure 65](#). Plan of Caracol Structure D18, showing all recovered walls and facings.

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Figure 66. Partial pottery vessels, all of Early Classic date, from within the fill of the buried earlier building within the core of Caracol Structure D18: a) Quintal Unslipped; b) Dos Arroyos Orange Polychrome; c) Quintal Unslipped; d) Dos Arroyos Orange Polychrome; e) related to Hoya Punctated; f) probably Balanza Black; g) Dos Arroyos Orange Polychrome; h) related to Hoya Punctated; i) Dos Arroyos Orange Polychrome; j) Aguila Orange; k) Dos Arroyos Orange Polychrome; l) probably Dos Hermanos Red; m) Aguila Orange; n) Dos Aguadas Gray Polychrome; o) Quintal Unslipped; p) Aguila Orange; q) Dos Arroyos Orange Polychrome; r) Quintal Unslipped; s) Aguila Orange; t) Quintal Unslipped; u) Caldero Buff Polychrome; v) probably Balanza Black; w) Dos Arroyos Orange Polychrome; x) eroded Dos Hermanos Red; y) Aguila Orange; z) unnamed red fluted; aa) Aguila Orange; bb) Dos Arroyos Orange Polychrome; cc) Quintal Unslipped; dd) San Blas Red-on-Orange; ee) Dos Arroyos Orange Polychrome; ff) Yaloche Cream Polychrome; gg) probably Balanza Black; hh) eroded Balanza Black; ii) probably Urita Gouged-Incised; jj) unnamed unslipped modeled.

[Figure 67](#). Plan of the tomb within Caracol Structure D18.

[Figure 68](#). Elevations of the northern and southern walls of the tomb within Caracol Structure D18.

[Figure 69](#). Axial Section through Caracol Structure D1.

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[Figure 73](#). Sections of three separate excavations in the vicinity of the northern and eastern sides of Caracol Structure A9.

[Figure 74](#). Partial pottery vessel [a) probably Cambio Unslipped] recovered from excv. C162B.

[Figure 75](#). Plan of excv. C162C at the level of the plaza floor.

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[Figure 77](#). Axial Section of the looters' excavation at the summit of Caracol Structure A9.

[Figure 78](#). Photograph of the excavations undertaken on the eastern base of Caracol Structure A9.



**CONTINUED INVESTIGATION INTO  
EPICENTRAL PALACES:  
REPORT OF THE 2001 FIELD SEASON AT  
CARACOL, BELIZE**

**Arlen F. Chase and Diane Z. Chase**

**University of Central Florida**

**Report Submitted to the Belize Department of Archaeology**

The seventeenth field season of the Caracol Archaeological Project took place from late January through the end of March 2001. The excavation crew consisted of a total of 25 individuals during the course of the work (see Table 1). A *New York Times* "Science Times" film crew was also on site for one week and produced a short documentary for the National Geographic cable channel (entitled "Hidden City of the Maya"), which first aired internationally in late July 2001. *TIME for Kids* also ran cover stories on the 2001 field season at Caracol in their "World Report Edition" of May 4, 2001 (Vol. 6, No. 6) and a week earlier for younger children.

The 2001 investigations primarily focused on the unexcavated portions of two epicentral palace compounds, Barrio and Caana ([Figure 1](#)). Both had been largely excavated and exposed during earlier field seasons, but they were selected for further research in 2001 as part of planned cooperation between the research interests of the Caracol Archaeological Project and the touristic and development goals of the GOB-sponsored Development Project under the direction of Jaime Awe. Besides plans for improving the access road to the site and building a new on-site research center, the Belizean Development Project has as its mandate the stabilization of both the Barrio palace group and the Caana architectural complex. Thus, one of our research goals was to complete the excavation of these two place compounds. The full investigation of these complexes was expected to yield information relevant to the final architectural plans and functional use of these groups.

Investigations undertaken during 2001 focused on:

- Three locales in Barrio (Figure 2): the unexcavated northern room in Structure B21 (Figure 14); an investigation of the formal western stair and areal excavations of the northern half of Structure B25 (Figure 5); and, axial investigation of Structure B26 (Figure 12).
- Four areas in Caana (Figure 18): the areal investigation of the summit of Structure B18 as well as associated summit and plaza probes (Figures 21 and 22); the areal investigation of the remaining unexcavated rooms in the northwest quadrangle (Figure 27); the clearing of the alley between the base of Structure B19 and the northeast quadrangle (Figures 30 and 31); and the clearing of the side rooms that were inset into the front basal platform of Structure B19 (Figure 18).
- Follow-up excavations and recording of an open tomb in Structure F21 that had previously been started during 1995, but never completed (Figures 46 and 47).

No formal settlement mapping was undertaken during the 2001 field season.

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### **Palaces, Final Abandonment, and the Further Definition of Caracol's Elite: The Problem**

The palaces of Caracol have proved quite important to understanding both the social composition of the site and the nature of Caracol's Classic era collapse. Of all architectural constructions at Caracol, areal exposure of these buildings is most likely to reveal *de facto* refuse that relates to the site's final elite and has a bearing on the abandonment of this important city (D. Chase and A. Chase 2000; A. Chase and D. Chase 2001). These palace complexes include extensive vaulted range edifices that incorporate raised temples into their building arrangements. Not only has areal clearing produced *de facto* refuse, but excavation into the cores of these structures also have produced a series of deposits which permit an assessment of Caracol's Late Classic society with regards to ritual (A. Chase and D. Chase 1994, 1996a; D. Chase and A. Chase 1998), diet (A. Chase and D. Chase 2001; A. Chase et al. 2001), and status (A. Chase and D. Chase 1996b; A. Chase et al. 2002). However, while individual palaces and portions of palace compounds have been investigated, no palace compound had all of its rooms excavated prior to the 2001 field season.

Continued investigation of Caracol's palaces was of particular interest for at least three reasons. First, *de facto* refuse has been recovered on the floors of some rooms from almost all of the palaces that have been excavated to date at Caracol. Associated carbon dates indicate that some drastic event may have simultaneously ended epicentral occupation of these complexes ca A.D. 895 (A. Chase and D. Chase 2001). New excavations would therefore yield new *de facto* refuse and more clearly help to delineate the latest activities at Caracol. Second, excavations of room floors has also permitted interpretations concerning differential use of palace compounds; this is particularly seen in relation to rooms associated with only serving wares as opposed to rooms containing only storage vessels (such as on Caana). Evidence of shell and bone working is also differentially distributed in some palace complexes (such as Barrio). It was felt that new excavations of palace compounds might permit further delineation of other activity areas. Third, excavations of palace compounds have yielded deposits in associated temples that permit insight into elite ritual (D. Chase and A. Chase 1998), elite ancestral burial habits (D. Chase and A. Chase 1996a), and elite dietary consistency over time (A. Chase and D. Chase 2001). Further excavations in these palace compounds would surely permit additional insight into Caracol ritual and diet relative to social status. Finally, at least in the case of Caana, it was felt that excavations could possibly reveal how late in the Terminal Classic Period this complex was rebuilt, something that is particularly significant for considerations of the Classic Maya collapse.

### **Epicentral Palace Investigations: Barrio**

The Barrio palace compound (Figure 2) consists of a series of once vaulted structures on a raised platform in the eastern part of Caracol's epicenter. The palace compound consists of three range buildings and a potential northern temple. Although the 2001 field season revealed the remains of a series of deeply buried palaces under the latest version of this northern building, it did not clarify the function of the latest version of this edifice. The eastern and southern buildings in Barrio are almost identical in size and layout. Formal entry to Barrio was through the larger western building, which commands the sizeable plaza directly east of Caana. An altar showing a person within a moon sign was found in this eastern plaza at the beginning of the 2001 field season (Figure 17). Excavation into the structural cores of Barrio's buildings suggests that this complex was constructed in the Late Classic Period and included some Terminal Classic structural modification. Recovered *de facto* refuse was limited to two rooms in the complex during the 2001 field season. However, significant amounts of redeposited trash were also recovered.

A variety of excavations, consisting primarily of areal clearing but with deeper penetration in two locales, was undertaken in Barrio during the 2001 field season. As a result of the 2001 field season, the northern rooms in the western building were areally cleared (Figure 5). The southern half of this building was areally cleared in 1991 and 1993. The western building was partially sectioned on its medial axis in past seasons; this axial probe was continued in 2001 (Figure 6). *De facto* refuse was recovered in association with the investigations into the western building (Structure B25), primarily associated with the building rooms on the side of the interior plaza. In the eastern building in Barrio, the transverse room on the north end of the structure was cleared areally except for the portion that was near the collapsed eastern slope of the supporting platform. The other rooms within Structure B21 had already been exposed and all three frontal axes were penetrated in 1991. Finally, the northern building in Barrio, Structure B26, had been excavated about its base and partially tunneled on its southern medial axis in 1993. Investigations during 2001 undertook an axial penetration of the summit of Structure B26. No formal structural remains were encountered that would have represented a final summit building, but deeply buried earlier construction was present. As a result of these investigations, all of the buildings in the Barrio palace compound have been cleared and axially probed.



## Structure B25

Structure B25 dominates the eastern edge of the large plaza immediately east of Caana and the western side of the Barrio plaza ([Figures 3 and 4](#)). The building measures some 7 m in width (east-west) by 35 m in length (north-south). It consists of 2 sets of parallel rooms offset by tandem end rooms. Central doorways permit axis between the eastern plaza and the interior Barrio plaza. The arrangement of the central axis of Structure B25 is consistent with controlled palace access routes found elsewhere at Caracol (A. Chase and D. Chase 2001). The excavation of Structure B25 during the 2001 field season was undertaken in accord with the stabilization goals, which call for the consolidation of the entire Barrio palace complex. Thus, through arrangement with the Department of Archaeology, the rooms were left open for stabilization purposes. The northern exterior wall of Structure B25, which had bowed outward badly, was in fact left for final excavation by the stabilization team so that it could more accurately be consolidated.

**Suboperation C160B** ([Figures 5 and 6](#)) was defined for the axial excavation through the western stairway of Structure B25. As the central door for Structure B25 was 3 m in width, the excavation was also made 3 m in width; once the western plaza floor was reached and cleared, the excavation was halved and deeper penetration was only 1.5 m in width. The trench extended out 8.8 m from the outer (western) edge of the B25 central doorjamb. The axial upper stairs for Structure B25 had been stabilized by the Department of Archaeology in 1996; this stabilization effort was not disturbed by the 2001 research. Rather the eastern end of the 2001 trench was demarcated by the last consolidated step.

As a result of these investigations the western axial stair for Structure B25 was found to consist of 8 steps and to project out 5.6 m beyond the building into the western plaza. Whereas the upper steps associated with the building itself were composed of horizontally laid stone, the lower steps were comprised of vertical upright slabs, a construction technique generally considered to be of Terminal Classic or Postclassic date (D. Chase and A. Chase 1988).

At the plaza level of the steps, a deeper 1.5 m wide trench was dug to bedrock and penetrated 6 floor levels. Bedrock was located 1.52 m below the latest plaza floor. Penetration into the latest steps revealed the remains of at least one earlier ripped-out stairway. It appears that the latest western stairway into Barrio may be the result of a remodeled earlier version. The bottom step for a potential third stairway was located half a meter directly beneath the existing second basal step. While earlier stairways could be discerned, little evidence of previous construction efforts was found in the core of the building. An earlier trench in the eastern part of the building revealed that this section of Structure B25 was constructed directly over a flooring that is at the same level as the interior courtyard floor. Axial penetration in the western interior building revealed a second floor approximately 20 cm below the current one. It ended in a turn-up 1.4 m beyond the interior front wall, suggesting that the western room floor had at one time been at a slightly lower level than the eastern room floor. This would have been perfectly appropriate for a building that anchored the eastern side of the large western plaza. Apart from these minor modifications, no evidence for an earlier version of Structure B25 was encountered in the core of the building itself. Thus, it would appear that Structure B25 was constructed in a single effort that raised its substructure 1.25 m above the interior Barrio courtyard.

Excavations at the plaza base of the stairs produced the remnants of a single large olla ([Figure 16a](#)), a small jadeite bead, and half of a doughnut-shaped stone or macehead. No special deposits were recovered on axis to Structure B25.

Upon conclusion of excavation (and through discussion with the DOA and stabilization projects), the deeper trench was completely backfilled to the level of the latest stairway construction and the stones that comprised the steps were replaced in their original locations so that they could be properly stabilized.

**Suboperation C160C** ([Figures 5 and 6](#)) was assigned for the clearing of overburden and collapse from within the northern extent of the long central west room. The material that filled the room was of a light buff color and was composed for the most part of fallen building stone and decomposed limestone mortar as well as stucco decoration and armatures that once would have decorated the exterior of Structure B25. As in the southern part of this room a doorway was encountered in the west wall, confirming that this rather long room could be entered through 3 doorways on its western side. The eastern side of this room was pierced by a single 3 m wide medial door that led to the eastern rooms and ultimately to the inner Barrio courtyard. No *in situ* artifactual materials were associated with the floor of this room.

**Suboperation C160D** ([Figures 5 and 6](#)) was assigned for the eastern rooms off the medial passageway through Structure B25. A separate door to the room itself was inset 1.5 m to the north of the east-west medial passage. Along with two shell beads, the remains of a plate ([Figure 16b](#)) and a large fragment of a modeled-carved vessel ([Figure 16c](#)) were found in this antechamber. The room itself was dominated by a large bench attached to the eastern, western, and northern walls. The bench rose 0.72 m above the associated floor and was both 2 m deep and broad (the width of the room). It was fronted by 1.25 m of floor space to its front (south). Two small ceramic vessels ([Figures 16d and 16e](#)) and a pyrite inlay were recovered from the room floor immediately south of this bench; another pottery vessel ([Figure 16f](#)) was found in the northwestern corner area of the bench. The presence of three miniature vessels within this room may indicate that this space was used for a special function. The forms of these vessels are consistent with ceramics sometimes suggested as holding pigment or paint.

**Suboperation C160G** ([Figures 7 and 8](#)) was assigned for excavation of the northern transverse room of Structure B25. Excavation revealed that the western portion and northwestern corner of this room were badly collapsed. The room was unusual in that three different levels of benches were recorded. Originally, the room appears to have had a door between it and the northern east-facing room as well as a doorway out to the alley between Structures B25 and B26. Both doors were later sealed and partially buried by raised benches. As presently constituted, this room has its doorway bisected by a raised bench on its eastern side. It was appended to another bench that had already raised the entire room beyond the inner



doorjamb. Another u-shaped bench was placed atop this bench and was attached to the rear (south) wall of the room; most of the western extent of this bench had collapsed. A final, and even higher, bench ran along the length of the room's eastern wall, engulfing the eastern end of the central u-shaped bench. The complexity of bench construction in this room is similar to that found in the southern room of Structure A39 in the Central Acropolis (A. Chase and D. Chase 2001; D. Chase and A. Chase 1996a). No *in situ* material was recovered from this investigation.

**Suboperation C160I** (Figures 9 and 10) was assigned for the areal clearing of the northernmost west-facing room in Structure B25. A 2 m wide door exposed most of the room to light. Like its southern counterpart, the rear of this room was filled by a raised bench with armatures that abutted the room's northern and southern walls and filled all but half a meter of the room. The bench was painted red. It was 1.4 deep and rose 0.65 m above the front floor with its side armatures rising another 0.33 m. No *in situ* artifactual materials were associated with the room floors, but there was stucco decoration, probably from the collapsed exterior architecture of Structure B25, in the fill of the room.

**Suboperation C160F** (Figure 5) was assigned for an initial corner probe in the northwestern corner of the northernmost east facing room in Structure B25. This suboperation was later superseded by and encompassed within Suboperation C160H.

**Suboperation C160H** (Figures 5 and 11) was assigned to the clearing of the northernmost east-facing room in Structure B25. It appeared prior to excavation that the door to this room had been blocked and sealed in antiquity. Excavation half-sectioned the room along the face of the room's northern doorjamb. Once the overburden was cleared, two benches were found. One filled most of the northern extent of the room, while a second lower bench ran from the southeast corner towards the northern bench. Both benches were extensively burnt. The height differential between the two benches was 0.30 m. The rear axial bench was 1.1 m deep, but only 0.35m high. The remnants of a 0.35 cm wide armrest marked the southern extent of the lower axial bench; the higher northern bench compensated for the missing northern armrest. A complete seashell and an antler tine were found on the upper surface of the lower bench. Excavation through the axial bench revealed that it had once been a separate entity from the northern bench and that an addition had filled in the original narrow alleyway that had separated the two benches.

A well-finished plaster floor covered the area between the doorjambs and benches, but the southeastern corner of the room showed no evidence of any flooring. Excavation was undertaken in the broken corner of the room to a depth of approximately 0.85 meters. The material here was indistinguishable from the dry core rubble found elsewhere in Structure B25 with one exception. A large amount of Terminal Classic garbage including pieces of a slate mirror back, a spindle whorl, a large jasper tubular bead, and several vessels (Figure 16j,l,p,u) were recovered from this area; other pieces of pottery recovered here proved to fit to vessels located exteriorly to the room in a raised construction area (Figure 16x,jj; see Suboperation C160L). In an attempt to explain this anomalous corner material, an axial probe was made beneath the sealed floor of the room to see if similar materials were recovered. For whatever reasons, the sealed sample yielded less sherd material and garbage, although some of it was potentially Terminal Classic in date. Thus, the unsealed area in the room's southeastern corner is still not fully understood although it was clearly a locus for the deposition of Terminal Classic trash.

Other vessels were recovered from the floors of this room. Two ollas were found on the northern bench (Figure 16i and k). Another olla (Figure 16g) and a tripod plate (Figure 16h) were found just west of the northern doorjamb. And a very burnt and broken modeled-carved vase was found directly on the room floor in front of the northern bench (Figure 16m; also located here was a jadeite flake). The scene on the vase is a common Belize scene found on 2 similar vases from Caana (A. Chase 1994:180) and on a host of vessels from throughout Belize (Graham et al. 1980).

**Suboperation C160L** (Figures 5 and 11) was assigned for the excavation and removal of 5 meters of a crude construction feature that blocked and raised the plaza area between Structures B25 and B26. The wall that formed the southern side of this feature was not finished like other architecture found at Caracol. It probably represented a construction pause in a more formal building that was never finished (because the site epicenter was abandoned). A similar, though cruder, feature was recovered on the Caana summit linking the B18 stairway to the front (south) palace area. Excavation behind the crude facing in the northwestern corner of the Barrio plaza revealed 2 buried steps leading to the northeastern room of Structure B25. The southern limit of these steps had been removed prior to being engulfed in the construction feature; the northern end of the steps was intact. The fill of this feature was peppered with Terminal Classic garbage that included large pockets of carbon and ash. Artifactual materials that were recovered included a ceramic bird whistle, drilled and worked shell and bone, slate mirror backs, a groundstone celt, mano and metate fragments, spindle whorls, chert points, and obsidian and chert fragments. Most notable were a series of reconstructable vessels that contained the majority of the Terminal Classic forms known from other Caracol palace excavations (Figure 16n,o,q-t,v-jj). Also recovered in this Terminal Classic trash dump were human remains (cranial and long bone), possibly the remains of trophies and/or a meal (see also D. Chase and A. Chase 1982 for similar burnt human remains in a Terminal Classic trash dump at Nohmul, Belize).

**Suboperation C160E** (Figure 5) was assigned for materials recovered in the alley between Structures B25 and B26. This alleyway had already been largely cleared during the 1991 and 1993 excavations of Barrio. New excavation continued to the north, revealing the full extent of the structure walls for B25, but not *de facto* trash or deposits.

## Structure B26

Structure B26 is the tallest building within the Barrio palace complex. It dominates the northern side of the interior courtyard. It had previously been investigated only at its base. Its southern corners were both rounded and its western extent formed the side of a narrow alley between Structures B25 and B26. It had been axially probed in 1993, leading to the discovery of a very crude frontal stair and a simple burial deep within its core (see Figure 12). Sizeable limestone boulders visible over the entire surface of the building had led to early speculation that Structure B26 was either stone-robbled or that the latest version of Structure B26 was never finished. Based on the excavations undertaken in 2001, evidence was amassed

that the building was never finished and that it was being enlarged at the time of its abandonment. This interpretation is supported not only by the lack of summit architecture, but also by the plaza level construction feature that connected Structures B25 and B26 (see Suboperation C160L), by the raised level of the alley between Structures B25 and B26, and by the blocked doorways associated with this alley (see Suboperation C160H).

**Suboperation C160J** (Figures 12 and 13) was assigned to an axial penetration on the summit of Structure B26 that measured 3.7 m in length by 2.0 m in width. The rubble concentration extended from the surface of the summit to a depth of almost 2.5 m where a buff colored fill was found. This lighter fill probably resulted from building demolition as a red-painted plaster floor was encountered at a depth of 2.85 m below the summit of the mound. Scattered human remains were also encountered at a depth of about 2.0 m; these were not articulated, however, but were found sparsely distributed throughout the rubble fill. The deeply buried red-plaster floor was at one point covered over by a bench. One course of this bench was still preserved. It faced south and was abutted by another floor. The eastern doorjamb (1.0 m wide) for the building containing this bench was also encountered in the excavation. South of the doorjamb, a plastered step led 0.35 m down to another floor level, which had been ripped out 1.25 m further south. Penetration below these various floors revealed an intensive locus of building activity in which earlier doorjambs and slight axis shifts were evident. Dry core fill existed beneath the deeply buried architectural constructions. No special deposits were encountered.

Based on these excavations, it would appear that the north side of the Barrio courtyard had at one point had a well-constructed "palace" building similar to those that existed on the other three sides of the plaza. This edifice had been raised more than the other buildings in Barrio; its floors were over a meter higher than the raised southern or western structures. At some point in the Terminal Classic it would appear that a major renovation was started on Structure B26 that would have raised the building substructure by approximately 3 meters. However, this construction effort never reached fruition.

The excavation into Structure B26 was completely backfilled at the end of the 2001 field season.

### Structure B21

The eastern extent of the Barrio complex is defined by a well-constructed building labeled Structure B21. As originally mapped by Satterthwaite (Satterthwaite and Beetz 1981), there appeared to be two eastern structures in the Barrio group. Excavation in 1991, however, revealed that this surface anomaly was due to the collapse of the rear wall of the building and the broad axial doors of the building. In point of fact, Structure B21 is an eight room tandem plan building with transverse end rooms (A. Chase and D. Chase 2001). The two side rooms facing the courtyard both have benches with armatures. The three eastern building axes were trenched in 1991 and revealed no special deposits.

**Suboperation C160K** (Figures 14 and 15) was assigned for the northern room of Structure B21, which had never been excavated. Excavation proceeded east from the already exposed rounded corner of Structure B26 following the northern exterior wall of the room. Once the doorjamb was reached, the building was half-sectioned. Much of the eastern extent of this room had collapsed over the edge of the raised platform supporting Barrio and the eastern limit of the room was not exposed. It appeared that there may be another ancillary construction to the north of Structure B21 based on the presence of a southern oriented facing about 0.8 m north of the doorway to the room. This possible construction was not investigated. Excavation revealed the room's floors to be well plastered and found several sherd scatters on the floor of this room in the area of the doorway. However, no vessels could be reconstructed.

### Epicentral Palace Investigations: Caana

Caana is at the heart of Caracol. This huge architectural complex rises some 43.5 meters above the floor of the B Plaza (Figures 19 and 20). The palace compound encompassed minimally 71 rooms with at least 45 associated benches (Figure 18). Excavations document a very complicated construction history. Although little is known about Caana's Early Classic form, penetrating excavation has shown that Structure B19 was at least 38 meters in height by the end of the Late Preclassic era. At the onset of the Late Classic Period, the summit plaza was 4 meters lower than the present plaza surface. Burials found in Structures B19 and B20 associated with this earlier summit level are dated from A.D. 537 through A.D. 634 (A. Chase and D. Chase 1996a). Based on hieroglyphic texts on a buried building, the Caana summit was raised after A.D. 680. Although Structure B18 was not axially penetrated before the 2001 field season, its present form could be dated to the Terminal Classic Period based on artifactual materials recovered from within a room that was engulfed by its expanded substructure. Terminal Classic ritual activity was recovered from the floors of Structure B19 and an altar set in front of this building probably marks 10<sup>th</sup> Cycle ceremonies (A. Chase and D. Chase 1999). Excavations of Caana encountered differentiated refuse with individual rooms containing distinct kinds of *de facto* refuse (suggesting variations in the usage of rooms); some rooms contained predominantly storage vessels while others contained serving vessels. Besides on-floor ceramics, excavations in the Northeast Quad of the summit also yielded the remains of an articulated child within the southern room suite; the position and unburied condition of this body indicates that this portion of Caana was abandoned both rapidly and completely.

Investigations on Caana during 2001 sought to detail remaining unexcavated rooms in order to record architectural plans and locate any use-related remains. While the inner rooms of the Northwest Quad had been excavated previously, the outer rooms of this building had not (Figure 27). The alleyway between Structure B19 and the Northeast Quad also remained unexcavated (Figure 30). These were exposed during the 2001 field season. Areal excavation of the summit of Structure B18 defined its latest building plan (Figure 22); axial penetration at the summit and base sought to understand the construction history on this structure (Figure 21), but recovered no formal earlier constructions (unlike similar work in Structures B19 and B20). Laporte (1994) has shown a Terminal Classic emphasis for placing ritual deposits in north and west buildings in the adjacent southeast Peten. Structure B19, a north building, did in fact produce recognizable Terminal Classic material during the 2001 and previous field seasons. However, this season's excavations of Structure B18, a west building, did not produce any special deposits. Special deposits dating to the

Late Classic era were encountered, however, in each suite of tandem rooms on the basal southern corners of Structure B19 (Figures [33](#), [36](#), [39](#), and [42](#)). Both tombs were sealed under each B19 basal room suite, but each had been re-entered and ritually uprooted in antiquity, presumably at the beginning of the Terminal Classic era.

### **Structure B18** (Figures [19](#), [21](#), and [22](#))

Structure B18 is one of the latest constructions to have been undertaken on the summit of Caana. In its final phase it engulfed both the rear half of Caana's long linear front (south) tandem-plan building within the core of its southern substructure and the majority of another building within the northern side of this same substructure. Ceramics recovered within the filled-in room under the southern extent of Structure B18 dated to the Terminal Classic Period. Also visible within the fill of Structure B18 at its southern extent was the south facing doorjamb of an earlier building that would have exited onto the roof of Caana's southern summit range building, indicating that an earlier version of Structure B18 had existed at one time. The floors of this earlier building were estimated to be approximately 4 m below the latest summit floor.

**Suboperation C20F** ([Figure 21](#)) was assigned for an excavation at the base of Structure B18 into the plaza core. This excavation was laid out tangent to the lowest step for Structure B18 and was 2.0 m wide by 3.0 meter long. As had been noted for excavations in front of Structures B19 and B20 (A. Chase and D. Chase 1987), the plaza had been raised in a single construction effort through the deposition of over 4 m of dry core fill without any pause lines. Digging in this dry core fill was rather precarious. However, limited penetration was made through the plaza floor in front of Structure B18 to a depth of almost 4.4 meters. Although deeper than either the B19 or B20 plaza penetrations, neither earlier construction activity was located nor was an earlier plaza floor encountered. Artifactual material recovered in the dry core fill was almost non-existent. The excavation was backfilled to the level of the plaza surface once it was recorded.

**Suboperations C20D and C20E** ([Figure 22](#)) were assigned for the areal clearing of what little was left of Structure B18's northern summit building (even less of the summit building was left to the south). The collapsed material that was excavated from above the summit floors was used to extend the summit surface to the west. Initial clearing of the central room north of the single stone left in the southern doorjamb was undertaken as Suboperation C20D. Following the intact red-painted floor, the northern jamb was easily recovered 2.65 m away from the southern jamb as was the eastern step-up onto the room floor. The room step-up was partially covered by an even more easterly lower step, indicating that this latter step or stoop had been subsequently added. The interior wall of the northern part of this room was easy to follow for 3.4 meters; it ended in a cross wall that ran west for almost 2 m (where there was a sharp vertical drop, probably at the junction with what would have been the interior medial building wall). The northeast interior corner of the front room had visibly slid off the summit. The central summit room floor was fairly intact, but was upended in several vertical sections as one moved west until it disappeared completely. What was intriguing was the stucco decoration that was recovered from within the collapse in this interior room. A large portion of a stucco frieze was encountered that must have graced the front exterior of B18 at one point in time ([Figure 23](#)). Also encountered were a few fragments of stucco hieroglyphs that also would have been located on the exterior façade.

The northern wall encountered in Suboperation C20D proved to be approximately 0.65 m in width, 0.15 m less than the eastern wall. This was probably due to its status as an interior building wall. Suboperation C20E was assigned for excavation of the limited summit area that could be assigned to the room north of this wall. The eastern wall of this room had completely collapsed (as was visible in the arc seen in the slumped east-west wall stones). However, an interior segment of the outer northern wall of Structure B18 was recovered 2 m from the northern facing of the medial wall. And, importantly, a doorjamb was also located here, which indicates that this room faced north. The continuous medial wall indicates that there was no interior passage to the front axial room of B18. The collapse over the floors of this room yielded the remains of 2 stucco heads that would have been attached to the upper building facade ([Figure 24](#)) as well as most of the rim of a large ceramic storage container ([Figure 25a](#)).

Once the axial room had been cleared down to floor level and recorded, a deeper axial probe was undertaken within Suboperation C20D. This smaller trench was 1.5 m in width, penetrated the sealed summit floor, and was tangent to the southern section as delineated by the southern doorjamb. Penetration below the red-painted room floor revealed no other formal floors associated with the summit of Structure B18. However, 0.74 m below the summit floor, a construction floor or pause was encountered. A second construction floor was found 1.20 m below the first. This second construction surface was penetrated to a depth of 0.90 m; at this point excavations were halted due to difficulty in excavating the dry core fill. Thus, excavation was undertaken to a total depth of 2.84 m below the summit floor of Structure B18 without finding evidence of any earlier constructions. No special deposits were encountered. However, pieces of mirror backs were recovered sealed within both construction blocks. This deeper excavation was completely backfilled once it was recorded.

### **Northwestern Quadrangle** (Figures [26](#) and [27](#))

The rooms that immediately surrounded the Northwestern Quadrangle in Caana were excavated during the 1991 field season. Unlike the Northeastern Quadrangle, which has room suites on all four sides of its interior courtyard, the Northwestern Quadrangle has building suites only on its northern and western sides. The floors of both buildings were painted bright red. It has been argued elsewhere that this quadrangle was the logical formal residential area for the royal personage (A. Chase and D. Chase 2001).

**Suboperations C78H, C 78I, C78J, C78K, and C78L** (Figures [27](#), [28](#), and [29](#)) were assigned for the various rooms that did not front on the interior courtyard excavated in 1991. Most of these rooms were badly preserved with much collapse off of the northern and western sides of the summit.

The rear room of the western building was excavated as Suboperation C78I and yielded the remains of a central bench. While the portion of this rear room that attached to the base of Structure B18 was still extant, only the eastern and southern faces of the bench were still in existence. The northern face of the bench and most of the room's northern extent were gone. However, based on the plaster floors and rear wall stones that were recovered in the southern part of the room, the bench in this building was unusual in that it was inset at least 0.20 m into the rear (west) wall of the room. It does not appear to have had armatures. While the floor of this rear room and the sides of the bench appear to have been painted red, the upper plaster surface of the bench appears to have been white (perhaps to color contrast with a now missing rear red panel behind the bench [as recovered elsewhere on Caana]). A single *in situ* vessel was recovered from the doorway area in front of the bench. This vessel is a large pedestal base censer ([Figure 25c](#)), similar to one found in the suite of rooms immediately south of Structure B20 and resembling another one from the Structure F21 tomb ([Figure 48g](#)).

Suboperation C78H was assigned for the eastern room immediately north of Suboperation C78I. At one time this room could be entered through the front room of the western structure in the Northwest Quadrangle. However, the room had been sealed in antiquity; it was also raised above the floor level of the front room by a bench that filled the entire room. Excavation showed this bench to be in an exceedingly bad state of repair, lacking all of its western extent. To gain a better building plan, the room was therefore excavated down to the original floor level. This resulted in both the discovery of most of the basal stones for the western wall (although slid out of place) and the recovery of most of a large incurved bowl ([Figure 25d](#)).

Suboperation C78J was assigned for what little remained of the room immediately north of Suboperation C78H. This room had once been the rear room of a two-room suite that faced west. A floor was found attached to its eastern wall at a height that indicated that it had once served as a bench surface. No western walls for this rear room could be found as they had long ago slid off the summit of Caana. No *in situ* artifactual remains were recovered.

The northern room of the north building in the Northwestern Quadrangle was cleared as Suboperation C78L. The room floor was of red plaster and the room had a central rear bench that also had been painted red and had side armatures at one time. The rear wall was not in evidence in the bench area, but was present in the room that was nearest to Structure B19 and indicated that the bench had been attached to this wall (unlike its western counterpart). On the western wall of the rear room, the southern doorjamb of an entranceway to a third room was found. Suboperation C78K was assigned for this third room, but only the southeast corner of this room had not collapsed down the side of Caana. No *in situ* artifactual material was recovered in association with the northern suite of rooms in the Northwestern Quadrangle.

#### **Northeastern Quadrangle ([Figures 30](#) and [31](#))**

The Northeastern Quadrangle in Caana was excavated during the 1991 and 1993 field seasons. These excavations resulted in the clearing of the interior plaza and the definition of the plan of this suite of residential rooms. Several of the rooms in this complex were littered with the remains of ceramic vessels. In one case, these vessels within a single room formed clear clusters and could be put back together, resulting in the recovery of a large concentration of serving vessels (13 black tripod plates; 3 grey vases). In other cases, the sherds were from large storage vessels, which could not be easily reconstructed. These materials, however, provide clues as to how the northeastern quadrangle was utilized. Also important from the standpoint of understanding the rapidity of Caracol's epicentral abandonment was the recovery of an unburied child from the floor of the inner room in southern residential suite. Investigations during the 2001 field season focused on the alley adjacent to the eastern side of Structure B19.

**Suboperation C81P ([Figure 30](#))** was assigned for the clearing and excavation of the L-shaped alley that existed between the base of Structure B19 and the northern building in the Northeast Quadrangle and between this northern building and the western suite of rooms appended to the base of Structure B19. The passage between the western and northern buildings of the Northeast Quadrangle was vaulted (see [Figure 30](#)) and had a raised step separating the alley from the courtyard. The alley between the northern building and the base of Structure B19 was not vaulted. Recovered in these clearing investigations was an eroded vase or cup ([Figure 25b](#)) of similar form to those recovered from within the western suite of rooms in the Northeast Quadrangle.

#### **Structure B19 ([Figure 20](#))**

Among the most important buildings at Caracol and the tallest on Caana, Structure B19 has been the focus of significant effort by the Caracol Archaeological Project. Work during the 1986 field season revealed the buried chamber of a woman, still the largest tomb out of the 100 excavated at the site, within an earlier version of Structure B19 (A. Chase and D. Chase 1987, 1996a). Subsequent work between 1993 and 1995 revealed the final plan of Structure B19 to be a tandem room building with three frontal doors and with a single axial doorway to the rear chamber. The summit floors were penetrated and yielded evidence of earlier constructions as well as a series of special deposits. The building was also tunneled from front to rear, connecting up with a now backfilled looter's tunnel that had existed in the northern side of the substructure when the current project started in 1985. These investigations revealed that the original substructure had been built on the earlier Caana plaza surface towards the end of the Late Preclassic and that Structure B19 had risen to a height only 4 meters shy of its Late Classic height at this time.

One of the earliest features noted for Structure B19 was a two-room basal suite set into the building's southwestern substructure at plaza level. The roof of the rear room of this suite had collapsed into a hollow in which the walls of this small chamber ([Figure 39](#)) were visible. This rear room had been excavated in 1985 and the front room had been half-sectioned into the summit plaza, but the eastern part of the front room had never been fully excavated. The postulated two-room basal suite on the southeastern corner of Structure B19's substructure had been confirmed during the 1993 field season, but had never been exposed. One of the goals of the 2001 field season was to finish the investigation of these rooms.



**Suboperation C4I** (Figures [32](#), [33](#), [35](#), [36](#), and [37](#)) was assigned for the investigation of the two-room suite that was inset into the southeastern corner of the B19 substructure at plaza level. Although the outer doorway of this room suite had been exposed earlier, it had been backfilled. The exterior portion of this room was re-exposed to the western doorjamb and an excavation was laid out through the front door. The northern extent of this excavation was meant to encompass the rear room (its extent was projected from the already exposed southwestern room suite). As initial clearing revealed a slightly collapsed (and broken), but otherwise intact lintel for the inner room, the rear room was not excavated; rather, its investigation was left for the stabilization crew so that this doorway could be restored. However, the entire eastern part of the front room was cleared and the front room was sectioned in line with the western doorjamb up to the inner doorway. The western extent of the front room was not excavated.

Within the collapse of the front room modeled stucco was recovered in abundance as well as a tenoned head with crude human features ([Figure 34](#)). This tenoned head was similar to one discovered much earlier set into the forehead of a composite architectural mask at the base of Structure B20-1<sup>st</sup> (A. Chase and D. Chase 1987:24). Given the presence of architectural masks composed of building stones and stucco on the final versions of Structures B18 and B20 midway up each substructure, it is considered likely that a pair of such masks also once graced Structure B19, having been set on the roof of each basal room suite. The tenoned head would have fallen into the southeastern room as a result of the collapse of the room's roof.

Excavation was initially halted on the plaster floor of front room, which showed evidence of axial burning, especially immediately in front of the step-up into the rear room of this suite. Further inspection of this step-up revealed a "linteled" niche that had been sealed and then plastered over. Removal of the stones filling the niche revealed faced sides and a plastered floor 0.06 m lower than the floor that abutted the inner step. This lower floor was cut on its south side. Accordingly, a 1 m by 1 m excavation was placed on axis and tangent to the rear step. Removal of the latest plastered floor in the front room revealed a circular cut in the floor that formed the niche surface; this cut went through two additional floors. The circular cut was most similar to the re-entry hole encountered for the Structure A38 tomb (D. Chase and A. Chase 1996a) and indeed upended capstones were readily visible within the cut as well as open air space to the north. Minimal clearing confirmed the existence of tomb under this suite of rooms. The stratigraphy indicated that this tomb had been re-entered in antiquity and that evidence for this re-entry then had been sealed beneath a formal plaster floor.

Digging into the reentry pit revealed that it had been situated directly over the steps and entrance for a tomb that extended under the unexcavated rear room. Re-entry of the chamber was confirmed through the discovery of a scree of dirt and debris that spilled into the well-plastered and commodious tomb. Large faced rocks, presumably from dismantled constructions, had rolled into the tomb and rested against its northern wall. While some sherd material ([Figure 38h](#) and cover) and modeled stucco (from former architectural decoration) was found within the scree itself, there were concentrations of broken vessels on the floor of the chamber and the complete bases of 2 vessels ([Figures 38b,d](#)) sat midway along the tomb's western wall. Some of vessels (such as [Figures 38a,b](#)) had been broken into many pieces and strewn randomly over the floor of the chamber. Pockets of carbon indicated that some of the broken vessels had been extensively burned ([Figures 38d,e,f,g](#)). With one exception ([Figure 38a](#)), sherds within the scree fit to the broken vessels on the floor of the chamber. Other artifactual materials encountered within the chamber included a jadeite inlay, worked bone and shell (spondylus and conch), obsidian blade fragments, faunal remains, and pieces of ceramic censersware.

Excluding the entrance, the chamber measured 1.95 m in height by 2.40 m in length by 1.60 m in width. Following the formula established for calculating Caracol tomb volume (D. Chase and A. Chase 1996a), the chamber itself encompassed 7.31 m<sup>3</sup> of open space. Even though chambers of this size often house single individuals in the Caracol epicenter (A. Chase 1992), this tomb contained the scattered and disarticulated remains of 2 people, 1 adult and 1 subadult approximately 7-8 years of age. The subadult showed evidence of potential inlay holes in three of the deciduous canines (but no inlays were intact) as well as evidence of hypoplasia. The adult did not appear to have had inlays, but did exhibit calculus on the lower incisors. This individual additionally appeared to have had arthritis.

**Suboperation C4H** (Figures [37](#), [39](#), [40](#), [41](#) and [42](#)) was assigned for investigations undertaken in the southwestern basal suite of rooms for Structure B19. This locus had initially been investigated in 1985, but the eastern part of the front room had never been excavated; this collapse was removed during the 2001 field season, yielding mainly fragments of modeled stucco.

After the eastern basal tomb had been located, a small test excavation (1.7 m north-south by 1 m east-west) was placed on axis in the front room in the western suite south of the inner door. Excavations in 1985 had already revealed the existence of 3 floors in this room, the upper 2 of which had once turned up to a bench that had been ripped out in antiquity, but had once raised the level of the rear room. Excavation through the floors in the front room found that the upper two were intact and continuous, but that the third one that formed the remaining surface for the rear room had been pierced by a circular cut. Like its eastern counterpart, this cut formed a reentry point for a tomb beneath the sealed upper floors. Upended capstones poked through the cut and the chamber had been largely filled in antiquity with earth, stone, and redeposited modeled stucco. Only its northern end and extreme east and west sides were absent of fill. Similar to the eastern chamber, the sherd of a polychrome vessel graced the entranceway of the chamber ([Figure 40](#)); unlike the eastern chamber, this sherd could be fit to the rest of the vessel on the floor of the chamber ([Figures 41](#) [upper left] and [43b](#)). Pieces of only 2 vessels were recovered in the overburden ([Figure 43a,i](#)); these also fit other sherds from the chamber floor.

Although both basal B19 tombs were peppered with carbon, more burning was evident in the western chamber than in the eastern chamber. Several of the vessels (Figures [43a,c,d,e,g,j,k,l](#)) were extensively burnt. Much of the bone was either calcined or in extremely poor condition, with one exception. A concentration of bones in the southeast part of the chamber on the floor proved to be in extremely good condition and to have formed an articulated hand, leading to speculation that it had been sacrificially cut off (i.e., an expanded version of the site's many "finger" caches [D. Chase

and A. Chase 1998]) and tossed into the chamber just before the tomb was partially filled with dirt and sealed.

Unlike the eastern chamber, a lense of darker reddish-brown soil lay on the floor of the western tomb. Most of the vessel and sherd remains lay either in or on this layer. The material from the floor of the chamber included 4 bowls ([Figure 43a-d](#)), 2 dishes ([Figure 43e,h](#)), pieces of 2 decorated jars ([Figure 43i,k](#)), the complete rim of a plainware olla ([Figure 43j](#)), an interiorly burnt unslipped offering dish ([Figure 43l](#)), a complete unslipped pedestal base ([Figure 43g](#)), and several other unique sherds ([Figure 43f](#)). One of the polychrome bowls exhibits the Mexican year-sign ([Figure 43b](#)) and closely resembles a vessel found in Tikal Burial 116 (Culbert 1993:fig. 64c2; see also Smith 1955:fig. 73b6,8); another vessel with the Mexican year-sign was recovered from a burial in Caracol Structure B5 (A. Chase 1994:fig. 13.10). Artifactual material in the tomb included a spindle whorl, worked bone and shell (spondylus and conch), a stone bead, 2 hematite inlays, obsidian blade fragments, faunal material, and pieces of ceramic censerware. Modeled architectural stucco had also been dumped directly on the floor of the chamber and included an unusual snake head ([Figure 44](#)).

Exclusive of the entryway, the western basal tomb for B19 encompassed 7.36 m<sup>3</sup> and measured 2.40 m long by 1.60 m wide by 1.98 m high. Like its counterpart to the east, the western chamber also housed multiple individuals. Parts of five individuals were present in this chamber. The 2 adults each exhibit inlays in their teeth; one had extensive hematite inlays extending between the first premolars in the maxilla and between the canines on the mandible; the second had jadeite inlays in the upper incisors with the central incisor also being filed. Three subadults appear to have been present. One was less than a year old; one was about 15 years of age; and one was 6 years old and had an inlay hole in a deciduous upper incisor.

A final question must be raised as to whether the reentry and desecration of the two basal B19 tombs was part of the same event. For several reasons it is suspected that the chambers were desecrated at approximately the same time. First, the modeled stucco decoration dumped into each chamber is of similar quality and may have derived from the same razed building; further work with the stucco in each chamber may gain cross-fits. Second, what appear to be parts of the same vessel may actually be distributed in each tomb, even though no cross-fits could be made during the 2001 field season. One of these vessels is likely a ring base olla. There is a base in the eastern chamber ([Figure 38d](#)) and a rim of what appears to be the same vessel in the western chamber ([Figure 43j](#)). Another shared vessel is likely a red cylinder vase ([Figure 38c](#)); its base was in the eastern tomb and sherds of what appear to be the same vessel were recovered in the western tomb. Both chambers also contain sherds of a thin blackware jar with an incised exterior design, but again no cross-fits could be made. Finally, both chambers also contained a few fragments of a Late Classic D Terminal classic modeled cylinder censer, similar to those found in association with the B19 lower central stair feature and Altar 16 (A. Chase and D. Chase 1987:25; 1999). This circumstantial evidence points to a unified desecration of the two chambers somewhere towards the start of the Terminal Classic era. Once results are received from radiocarbon samples collected from within these chambers, it may prove possible to better interpret the chambers' reentry and desecration.

At the conclusion of the 2001 field season (and in accord with the Department of Archaeology and the GOB Development Project) the excavated areas over both the southeastern and southwestern room suites were covered with zinc by the project and the two tombs were left open for future stabilization by the GOB Development Project.

**Suboperation C4J** ([Figure 45](#)) was assigned for a 1 m wide axial penetration of the oval bench with rounded back that is set to the front of the western basal room suite of Structure B19. Given the uniqueness of this feature, it had been hoped that a dateable deposit would be recovered from within its core. However, only a few eroded sherds were found within the dry core fill of the bench. The plaza floor that supported the feature had not been broken and was not penetrated. The bench did obscure differing plinth heights and projections (the plinth became a mini side stair for the B19 basal steps, mimicking the side steps at the very base of Caana) at the base of the exterior room wall that its construction had engulfed.

This bench was originally areally exposed and recorded in 1985 ([Figure 45](#)). A projecting stucco cornice around the upper part of the bench seat had largely fallen off, but pieces of it were recovered and revealed an interwoven mat symbol that had once banded the bench. The rear backing had its own red projecting band surrounding a surface that was decorated with several layers of polychrome painting. Although little of this paint remained, careful recording revealed patterns of jaguar spots and vertical mat symbols ([Figure 45](#)). These iconographic symbols marked this unusual bench or throne as a locus of great power.

### Other Investigations

Although the focus of the 2001 field season was the site's epicentral palaces, it proved necessary to finish a salvage excavation of a looted tomb that had been started in 1995, but for various reasons had never been completed.

#### Structure F21 ([Figure 46](#))

Structure F21 was situated west of the site epicenter in a group that lies at the southern extent of a ridge that defines the western side of the valley over which the A Group towers to the east (the northern extent of the valley is demarcated by the causeway that joins the A Group and the Northwest Group). Structure F21 defines the northern edge of its residential plaza and is the tallest building within its group. During the 1995 field season, looting was discovered in the both Structures F21 and F22, the eastern building in the same group. The front of Structure F22 had been penetrated axially at its base, but no burials appeared to have been encountered. Structure F21 had been penetrated on both its western and northern side. The western trench had tunneled into the core of the building, but encountered nothing. However, on the northern side of Structure F21, the looters had penetrated the roof of a tomb at plaza level and had spewed out pieces of vessels and bones into the associated plaza. An excavation crew was sent to begin clean-up of this tomb under the direction of Clarrisa Hunter. The looters' backdirt was screened and loose vessel pieces were

collected. However, the salvage excavation was not finished in 1995 and a tarp was placed over the looters' entrance to the chamber. Ms. Hunter died in the off-season (D. Chase and A. Chase 1996b) and no one returned to complete the salvage excavation the following year.

During the 2001 field season, members of the stabilization crew relocated Structure F21 and recovered pieces of two other vessels from its immediate vicinity. Looters had once again visited the area and left these materials behind. Because of this, an excavation crew supervised by Amy Morris completed the excavation and recording of the tomb during off-hours over the course of multiple weekends. Within the chamber, small pieces from most of the vessels recovered from the looters' backdirt in 1995 were found as were pieces to the vessels found in the plaza in 2001 by the stabilization crew.

**Suboperations C121A and C121B** (Figures 46 and 47) were assigned for salvage excavations related to Structure F21 and its immediate vicinity. Suboperation C121A was assigned for surface finds in the plaza associated with Structure F21; only 1 "cache" vessel (Figure 48m) could not be securely associated with the F21 tomb. Suboperation C121B was assigned for excavation associated with the F21 tomb. During the 2001 field season, the interior of the chamber was cleared to floor level and recorded. The looters had excavated through the floor in most of the tomb, but had left many small artifacts behind. Thirteen ceramic vessels (Figure 48a-l,n) can be securely associated with this chamber and it is suspected that the remaining cache vessel (Figure 48m) also came from this chamber. Another cache vessel (Figure 48n) was associated with the formal western entryway to the chamber, recalling similar entranceway cache associations seen in the upper tomb of Structure A34 (D. Chase and A. Chase 1996a). Other artifactual materials from within this chamber included worked bone and shell (including a possible lip-plug), worked dog teeth, a fish vertebrae, and pieces of obsidian and chert.

The total volume encompassed by the Structure F21 tomb was 2.94 m<sup>3</sup> (not including the entry step). The chamber measured 2.15 m in length by 1.10 m in width by 1.40 m in height. The remains of 5 individuals were recovered in association with this chamber; 3 were adults and 2 were older adults. Minimally 3 individuals had their upper central incisors filed and one also had inlays (now missing). Tartar and hypoplasia are also evident in the teeth recovered. Overall, the positioning of this tomb in the north building is reminiscent of similar ones known from Structures A34 and B19.

**Summary**

The investigations undertaken during the 17<sup>th</sup> field season of the Caracol Archaeological Project sought to complete the investigation of two previously researched palace complexes in the site epicenter. Part of this focus was driven by the desire to compliment the GOB tourism project, which had proposed to stabilize both compounds. It was also hoped that, in the process of clearing the Barrio palace complex and the rest of the Caana summit prior to full stabilization, it would be possible not only to flesh out already existing plans and sections, but also to gain new information on how these palace complexes had been used. The 2001 investigations succeeded in accomplishing these goals and added to the settlement data with the Structure F21 investigations.

New information relative to the functional use of the Caana summit was gained. The final building plan for Structure B18, with its transverse end rooms, was not what was expected and revealed that Structure B18 more resembled a "palace" than a "temple." This functional difference may explain the lack of axial deposits encountered in association with the building. The Caana Northwest Quadrangle was fully exposed for plan and the incensario encountered on the floor of the rear western room, in combination with evidence for the bench being inset into the rear wall, suggests that this area had special ritual function. The contrast between the Northwest Quadrangle and the Northeast Quadrangle is especially apparent in the different kinds of ceramics recovered in the two areas (as re-emphasized in the 2001 alley excavations; see also A. Chase and D. Chase 2001).

Especially significant was the recovery of two reentered and desecrated tombs under the front basal side rooms of Structure B19. After their reentry, the tombs were sealed under later floors and benches. There was burning on the floors above them, indicating that these side rooms had continued to be used. The recovery of the impressive artifactual materials from within these chambers indicates that Caana had continued to be occupied and used by the site's elite into the late part of the Late Classic Period past A.D. 700. But, the reentry and desecration of the chambers raises unanswered questions about the transition between the Late and Terminal Classic Periods around A.D. 800.

The Barrio excavations met all of the outlined research goals. The axes of Structures B25 and B26 were investigated and backfilled, and the unexcavated rooms in Structures B25 and B21 were cleared and recorded in preparation for future stabilizing crews. These investigations additionally revealed that Barrio was in the middle of undergoing a major remodeling effort at the time of the "collapse." Unexpected and exceedingly important was the recovery of large amounts of Terminal Classic garbage in the form of reconstructable vessels from the area at the juncture of Structures B25 and B26 in the interior courtyard. These vessels unite disparate sections of the Terminal Classic palace ceramic subcomplex found elsewhere in the Caracol epicenter and should eventually permit cross-site comparisons to help elucidate this enigmatic era.

The results of the 2001 field season will ultimately add to the mystique of Caracol, complementing the ongoing stabilization not only in a practical way but also in terms of its broader long-term intention of encouraging tourists to visit and be awed by the archaeological remains of the site.

**TABLE 1:**

**Caracol Project Members: 2001 Field Season**

**Staff:**

Arlen Chase C1

Diane Chase C2

Amy Morris C111

Amy Murphy C118

Sandra Wheeler C123

Lana Williams C126

Lucas Johnson C134

Lyndsey Wood C140

Elise Adams C142

Shayna Brown C143

Mark "Earl" Jacobs C145

Justin Kiner C146

Chris Savage C147

Eva Schmidt C148

**Belize Support Staff:**

Rita Wiltshire

Aurora Gongora

Elida Neal

Carlos Mendez

Eric Manzanero

Carlos Castillo Garcia

Jaime Iglesias Mis (Moguel)

Saul Ysiel Galeano

Edilberto "Nelson" Mendez

Reginaldo de Jesus Mendez

(Edilberto) Margarito Tun

**FIGURES**

The following figures were prepared in this format by A. Chase. Figures 1, 2, and 18 are by A. Chase. The ceramic illustrations and the new Caracol altar were drafted by Lucas Martindale Johnson. The architectural illustrations were drafted either by Amy Morris or D. Chase. All photographs are either by D. Chase or by A. Chase. Line drawings are based on field drawings and are presented without major reconstruction that may be added in final publication.

[Figure 1](#). Map of Epicentral Caracol showing locations of Barrio, Caana, and Structure F21.



[Figure 2](#). Plan of Barrio palace compound.

[Figure 3](#). Photograph of excavation of Barrio main entryway steps approaching Structure B25, Suboperation C160B.

[Figure 4](#). Photograph of inner court of Barrio looking toward Structures B25 (west building) and B26 (north building), Suboperations C160D, C160H, and C160J.

[Figure 5](#). Plan of north portion of Structure B25 showing plans of newly excavated rooms, Suboperations C160C, C160D, C160F, C160G, C160H and C160I.

[Figure 6](#). Axial section through main doors of Structure B25, Suboperation C160B, C160C, and C160D.

[Figure 7](#). Axial section of overburden in north room of Structure B25, Suboperation C160G.

[Figure 8](#). Photograph of multiple bench levels in Suboperation C160G.

[Figure 9](#). Axial section of overburden in northwestern room of Structure B25, Suboperation C160I.

[Figure 10](#). Photograph of bench in Suboperation C160I.

[Figure 11](#). Axial section of overburden in northeastern room of Structure B25, Suboperation C160H.

[Figure 12](#). Section of Suboperations C160J and C76X, comprising an axial trench through Structure B26.

[Figure 13](#). Photograph of deeply buried architecture under the latest dry core fill of Structure B26-1<sup>st</sup>, Suboperation C160J.

[Figure 14](#). Axial trench through northern room of Structure B21, Suboperation C160K.

[Figure 15](#). Photograph of excavation of northern room of Structure B21, Suboperation C160K.

[Figure 16a-l](#). [Figure 16m-v](#). [Figure 16w-gg](#). [Figure 16hh-jj](#). Ceramic vessels associated with Structures B25 and B26: a.,gg. Sombrero Appliqued; b.,m. Sahcaba Modeled-carved; c.,s. burnt Tinaja Group; d.,e. possibly Valentin Unslipped; f.,j.,t.,u. Tinaja Red; g.,i.,k.,cc.,ee. Valentin Unslipped; h. probably Tinaja Group; l. ceramic figurine (untyped); n. Cameron Incised; o. probably Cameron Incised; p.,x.,z.-bb. Pantano Impressed; q. possibly Martin's Incised; r. Belize Red; v. unknown modeled type; w.,y. eroded Tinaja Red; dd. Possibly Platon Punctated; ff. possibly Encanto Striated; hh. possibly San Julio Modeled; ii. Possibly Azucar Impressed; jj. Pabellon Modeled-carved.

[Figure 17](#). New Caracol carved altar (Altar 23) found in courtyard west of the Barrio palace.

[Figure 18](#). Plan of Caana palace complex as of the end of the 2001 field season.

[Figure 19](#). Aerial photograph of Caana looking west towards Structure B18.

[Figure 20](#). Aerial photograph of summit of Caana looking north towards Structure B19.

[Figure 21](#). Axial excavations undertaken on Structure B18, Suboperations C20D and C20F.

[Figure 22](#). Plan of remnants of building on summit of Structure B18, Suboperations C20D and C20E.

[Figure 23](#). Collapsed stucco frieze recovered from summit excavations of Structure B18.

[Figure 24](#). Stucco heads recovered from summit excavations of Structure B18.

[Figure 25](#). Ceramic vessels recovered from Structure B18, Northwest Quadrangle, and Northeast alley. a. undesignated unslipped type; b. possibly eroded Tinaja Red; c. Valentin Unslipped; d. possibly Tinaja Red.

[Figure 26](#). Photograph of Northwest Quadrangle on summit of Caana.

[Figure 27](#). Plan of Northwest Quadrangle on summit of Caana, Suboperations C78H, C78I, C78J, C78K, and C78L.

[Figure 28](#). East-west section through Northwest Quadrangle on summit of Caana, Suboperation C78I.

[Figure 29](#). North-south section of rear room of the north building in the Northwest Quadrangle, Suboperation 78L.

[Figure 30](#). Plan of alleyway between Structure B19 and Northeast Quadrangle with section through vaulted east-west passage, Suboperation C81P.

[Figure 31](#). Photograph of alleyway between Structure B19 and Northeast Quadrangle, Suboperation C81P.

[Figure 32](#). Photograph of excavation of east basal front room of Structure B19, Suboperation C4I.

[Figure 33](#). Axial section of excavation of east basal front room of Structure B19, Suboperation C4I.

[Figure 34](#). Tenoned head from collapse with east basal front room of Structure B19, Suboperation C4I.

[Figure 35](#). Photograph of tomb beneath east basal front room of Structure B19, Suboperation C4I.

[Figure 36](#). Plan of tomb beneath east basal front room of Structure B19, Suboperation C4I.

[Figure 37](#). Short cross-sections of tombs from below basal front rooms of Structure B19: a. eastern tomb; b. western tomb.

[Figure 38](#). Ceramic vessels recovered in association with basal east Structure B19 tomb, Suboperation C4I: a. possibly Batcab Red-polychrome; b. possibly Paixban Buff-polychrome; c. Belize Red; d. Valentin Unslipped; e. possibly Nanzal Red; f. Valentin Unslipped; g. possibly Tialpa Brown; h. possibly Joyac Cream-polychrome.

[Figure 39](#). Axial section of excavation of west basal front room of Structure B19, Suboperation C4H.

[Figure 40](#). Photograph of tomb entry below sealed floor in west basal front room, Suboperation C4H.

[Figure 41](#). Photograph of tomb beneath west basal front room of Structure B19, Suboperation C4H.

[Figure 42](#). Plan of tomb beneath west basal front room of Structure B19, Suboperation C4H.

[Figure 43a-h](#). [Figure 43i-l](#). Ceramic vessels recovered in association with basal west Structure B19 tomb, Suboperation C4H: a.,d. burnt Zacatel Cream-polychrome; b. possibly Zacatel Cream-polychrome; c. possibly burnt Chantori Black-on-orange; e.,h. Machete Orange-polychrome; f. undesignated type; g. undesignated plainware type; i. possibly Carmelita Incised; j. Valentin Unslipped; k. possibly Rosa Punctated; l. Ceiba Unslipped.

[Figure 44](#). Stucco snake head recovered with basal west Structure B19 tomb, Suboperation C4H.

[Figure 45](#). Stucco bench in front of basal west room of Structure B19, Suboperation C4J: a. plan; b. elevation of bench back; c. stucco painting on rear projection; d section.

[Figure 46](#). Profile and tomb north-south cross-section of Structure F21, Suboperation 121B.

[Figure 47](#). East-west section and plan of tomb in Structure F21, Suboperation 121B.

[Figure 48a-g](#). [Figure 48h-n](#). Ceramic vessels associated with tomb in Structure F21, Suboperation C121B: a. Pajarito Orange-polychrome; b. Zacatel Cream-polychrome; c. possibly San Pedro Impressed; d. possibly Tenaja Fluted; e. probably Salada Fluted; f. Gallinero Fluted; g. Caana Striated; h. possibly Kau Incised; i. possibly Tinaja Red; j. possibly Pasos Impressed; k.-n. Ceiba Unslipped.

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**Searching for Caracol's Last Urbanites:  
Continued Investigation of Small Structures in and near Caracol's Epicenter:  
2005 Field Report of the Caracol Archaeological Project**

Arlen F. Chase and Diane Z. Chase  
Department of Anthropology  
University of Central Florida

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**Report submitted to the Belize Institute of Archaeology  
Searching for Caracol's Last Urbanites:**

**Continued Investigation of Small Structures in and near Caracol's Epicenter:  
2005 Field Report of the Caracol Archaeological Project**

Arlen F. Chase and Diane Z. Chase  
University of Central Florida

The 2005 field season of the Caracol Archaeological Project was carried out from the beginning of February until late March. Sixteen staff participated in the entire field season; six visitors were on-site for approximately a week (Table 1). Excavations undertaken during the 2005 field season were designed to complement investigations that have been ongoing in the site epicenter since the 2000 field season. However, in addition to

focusing on architectural variation and potential areas of craft or food production, the 2005 investigations specifically sought to locate late epicentral remains.

It has been hypothesized that there were two contemporary ceramic and material culture assemblages during the latest occupation of Caracol and that these assemblages were status-linked (A. Chase and D. Chase 2004, 2006). At the same time, artifact distributions, iconography, and hieroglyphic texts indicate a changed political and economic system that is re-focused on dynasty and stratification as opposed to the symbolic egalitarianism of the preceding Late Classic Period (D. Chase and A. Chase 2006). The 2005 season of the Caracol Archaeological Project sought to focus on the latest occupation of Caracol and on the relationship between the site's outlying residential groups and its epicentral populations. Investigations specifically sought to examine the functional relationships between latest occupation in downtown Caracol and the residential groups that immediately abut the urban core. To accomplish this, two specific loci were targeted for investigation during the twenty-first field season of the project (see [Figure 1](#)):

- ☐ the I20 area, which involved four excavations – one trench and one probe into Structure I20, the trenching and horizontal stripping of Structure B59, and the probing of a depression north of Structure B59.
- ☐ and the B42 plazuela group, which involved three excavations – one trench into Structure B40, one trench into Structure B44, and a more expansive trench into Structure B42.

As in the recent past, funding for the 2005 field season came from the Ahau Foundation (through the auspices of the University of New Mexico Foundation), the Stans Foundation, the University of Central Florida Trevor Colbourn Endowment, and private donations to the University of Central Florida.

### **The Problem: Terminal Classic Ceramic Sub-Assemblages and the Decline of Symbolic Egalitarianism**

The Terminal Classic at some Maya sites has been viewed as evincing a depopulation of many, if not most, outlying residential groups (e.g. Tikal and Seibal; Culbert 1973, 1974; Tourtellot 1988) with any remaining non-elite population squatting in the remains of once-elite epicentral architecture. Key archaeological factors in this interpretation are the presence of Terminal Classic ceramic markers in epicentral contexts and their absence in surrounding area excavations as well as the occurrence of substantial trash deposits within epicentral buildings (e.g. Altun Ha and Tikal; Pendergast 1979; Culbert 1973, Harrison 1999). From the start of the Caracol Archaeological Project, Terminal Classic ceramics have been gathered in a systematic way from the floors of epicentral palaces to test collapse scenarios (A. Chase and D. Chase 2006; D. Chase and A. Chase 2000). The ceramics associated with the epicentral palaces include customary Terminal Classic markers, such as modeled-carved pottery, along with a host of other specific forms, such as smaller tripod incurving bowls, footed fluted vases, tripod blackware plates, larger incurved bowls, pottery burners, and, occasionally, mundane storage jars (e.g., A. Chase and D. Chase 2006). Whereas some of these forms, such as modeled-carved ceramics and the smaller tripod incurved bowls, can be used to link Caracol to a broad array of other Terminal Classic Maya centers, these same ceramics, as at many other lowland Maya sites, are found only in exceedingly limited contexts in the surrounding core of Caracol (A. Chase and D. Chase 2004). Detailed contextual study of this Terminal Classic occupation at Caracol makes it evident that the Terminal Classic occupants of palaces were elite and that there was not total depopulation in the core areas of the site. Instead, the Terminal Classic inhabitants of the outlying groups continued to use traditional Caracol Late Classic ceramics while the coeval palace inhabitants used a different ceramic serving assemblage and incorporated elements of the traditional assemblage only in the utilitarian and mortuary realms (A. Chase and D. Chase 2004, 2006). Identifiable Terminal Classic ceramics such as fine-orange modeled-carved, occur in conjunction with other long-distance trade items like jadeite, seashells, and obsidian, indicating widespread regional contacts (see also Harrison 1999 for a similar situation at Tikal); associated faunal and human burial data found in the epicentral palaces suggest a continued good and varied diet for Caracol's latest elite. Review of

Terminal Classic ceramic situation at Caracol indicates that there was contemporary occupation throughout the site, but that the identification of this occupation is masked by the presence of two distinctive ceramic sub-assemblages at this point in time: one that generally is found only in epicentral palaces and represents a break with traditional materials; and a second that is found in the outlying residential groups and is completely derivative from Caracol's Late Classic ceramics. Thus, a focus strictly on the elite Terminal Classic ceramic markers at Caracol (those that are specifically noted at many other sites in similar palace or stone building contexts) leads to an underestimation of the overall site occupation and an incorrect assessment of the timing and processes involved in site abandonment.

The existence of two ceramic sub-assemblages, only one of which is associated with elite palace contexts, is consistent with other archaeological data and patterns derived from settlement investigations at Caracol; these data indicate significant changes in the social, political, and economic spheres during the Terminal Classic Period (e.g. D. Chase and A. Chase 2003, 2006). For the most part, Late Classic Period Caracol is characterized by a unified material culture and what has been termed a "Caracol identity" (A. Chase and D. Chase 1996; D. Chase and A. Chase 2004). This identity is characterized not only by shared Late Classic ceramic types throughout all parts of the site, but also by the existence of a shared ritual patterns that span all Late Classic residential groups at Caracol. This shared identity includes: the presence of an eastern mortuary structure with both single and multiple individual (and entry) tombs; the use and placement of "face" caches and finger bowl caches within these groups; and, the use of effigy incensarios. This shared identity and the relative prosperity of households throughout Caracol has been interpreted as evidence for a political system characterized by symbolic egalitarianism (D. Chase and A. Chase 2006) and is believed to have been a by-product of the conscious nation-building and successful warfare in the early part of the Late Classic Period (A. Chase and D. Chase 1989; D. Chase and A. Chase 2002). This symbolic egalitarianism is no longer evident in the Terminal Classic Period. Just before A.D. 800, the Caracol shared identity broke down and marked social stratification appears to have returned, as represented in the material remains and ritual patterns found at the site. Not only do the traditional Late Classic Period residential ritual patterns fall out of existence, but on-floor artifactual debris suggests disjunction in the access to specific material remains. A resurgence of hieroglyphs and iconography in a new corpus of late stone monuments also appears, suggesting that these changes may be correlated with a return to dynasty.

Archaeologically, it is difficult to correlate all of the above factors to provide a comprehensive picture of Terminal Classic Caracol. The distribution of the Terminal Classic ceramic sub-assemblages at Caracol (and elsewhere) is for the most part mutually exclusive (A. Chase and D. Chase 2006) and the use of type fossils to temporally place both Late Classic and Terminal Classic remains (e.g., Smith 1955:13 and Sabloff 1973:114, 121) means that coeval materials that are found in spatially distinct parts of the same site may become temporally separated in the analytical process. The 2005 excavations at Caracol sought to find archaeological contexts where there might have been co-mingling of the two Terminal Classic ceramic sub-assemblages and/or where it might prove possible to gain better stratigraphic insight into the latest Maya at Caracol. Based on work undertaken in previous seasons in and around the Caracol epicenter, it was judged that the best place to look for such contexts would be in epicenter-core transition zones.

### **Groups Adjacent to Caracol's C Group**

The major palace in the C Group, centered on Structure B64, was investigated during the 1994 field season through a combination of axial trenching (of Structures B63 and B64) and areal exposure (of Structure B64's front courtyard). The areal exposure not only recovered a stucco text associated with this palace (containing the names of individuals not occurring in the stone monuments), but also encountered a large amount of Terminal Classic trash, indicating that the inhabitants of Structure B64 participated in the Terminal Classic epicentral ceramic sub-assemblage (the same sub-assemblage was also in evidence in Barrio to the southwest). A burial recovered within Structure B63 stratigraphically demonstrated that traditional "Late Classic" ceramics were being utilized during a "Terminal Classic" timespan and indicated functional differentiation of late

ceramics; traditional ceramics were included within late interments even though a non-traditional sub-assemblage may have been utilized by the inhabitants. Excavations south of the C Group in 2004 in Structures B52 and B53 revealed Terminal Classic materials here, as well, in the form of a modeled-carved sherds on the surface of Structure B52. However, a ubiquitous utilitarian ceramic assemblage was recovered in association with Structure B53 that is not part of the Terminal Classic palace ceramic sub-assemblage. Taken together, these findings indicated the possibility that there could be an admixture of late ceramic sub-assemblages within this portion of Caracol. It was specifically this hope of further refining the Terminal Classic ceramic situation that led to the selection of the I20 area and the Structure B42 group for further investigation during the 2005 field season.

### **Structures at the Southern End of the C Group: The B42 Group**

The B42 plazuela group lies immediately southeast of the raised platform that supports the main buildings within Caracol's C Group (see [Figure 1](#)). This group is also directly east of Structures B52 and B53 and the Barrio palace complex. As mapped, this plaza group has three focal buildings, Structure B40, B42, and B44 D all of which were the focus of excavation during 2005. Prior to investigation, all indications were that the nine structures within this unit formed a regular Caracol residential group ([Figure 2](#)). Yet, the proximity of this plaza group to so many other areas that had yielded Terminal Classic remains made the complex a good candidate for having been occupied as well during this era. While the spatial configurations between the I20 and B42 groups are different, both structural concentrations appeared to place similar emphasis on northern and eastern structures, thus allowing for the possibility that excavation of analogous structures in these two groups also could provide useful comparative data.

#### **Structure B42**

Structure B42 clearly represented an eastern shrine building, being a squarish construction that anchored the eastern end of the residential plaza. It was selected for excavation on the basis of its being such a shrine building; it was hoped that its investigation would yield a sequence of deposits that extended into the Terminal Classic era (and this was indeed the case). The unexcavated building rose roughly 1.2 m above the interior plaza and the southeast corner of the building had the remains of a partial looters' trench running toward the structure's centerline. A single axial trench was placed into Structure B42 ([Figure 3](#)). This excavation was completely backfilled at the conclusion of the field season.

**Suboperation C171B** was assigned for the 8.1 m long by 1.5 m wide trench that originally bisected Structure B42 ([Figure 2](#), [Figure 4](#)). While this excavation penetrated the core of the building to a depth of 1.4 m below the surface of the building summit, bedrock was not encountered. Instead a series of burials were found which required two areal extensions south of the original section line to more fully expose these interments ([Figure 2](#)); the easternmost extension ran 2.2 m further south of the original excavation and extended from the eastern excavation limit 1.7 m to the west; the westernmost extension was an additional 1 m to the south by 3.4 m east from the western excavation limit.

Only a single construction phase was encountered within Suboperation C171B and nowhere were any substantial architectural remains encountered ([Figure 5](#)). A single course of stones represented the remains of a crude facing on the summit of the structure and the three stairs that were recovered were in similar disrepair. The remains of a plaster floor were found in the plaza to the front of the building; this floor did not extend behind the front stairway; one cache and one burial appear to have been sealed by this floor. Apart from the summit facing, the frontal stairs and this floor, the only other constructed remains were associated with interments. Archaeological data recovered in Suboperation C171B indicate that Structure B42 was constructed in a single building effort sometime during the transition from the Early Classic to the Late Classic Period. Interments and other materials associated with this building indicate that it was used from this time period into the Terminal Classic era. Excavation of Structure B42 recovered 6 interments and 4 caches as well as other artifactual materials. A piece of a slate monument fragment was



found on the surface of Structure B42 just south of the western excavation extension ([Figure 6](#)). Material found immediately west of the front steps and overlying S.D. C171B-2 included a number of reconstructable Terminal Classic ceramics ([Figure 7](#)), including one modeled-carved vessel ([Figure 7d](#)) that is almost complete. All of these ceramics, even though reconstructable, were scattered within the general area and were mixed with some human bone, leading to the possibility that at least the modeled-carved cylinder was associated with a burial located barely beneath the ground surface. If it was associated with a barely buried interment, however, this would represent the only instance of this phenomenon at Caracol. Given the presence of other, more partial, Terminal Classic ceramics from this same area (see [Figure 7](#)), it is more likely that these vessels were *defacto* refuse.

Both of the modeled carved vessels associated with Structure B42 contain some surprises within their iconography. The glyphic panel on the bowl incorporates elements of a sky band combined with a Tikal emblem "hair bundle." The cylinder depicts two distinct scenes. One scene shows two warriors with spears facing each other; behind one is a prisoner; behind the other is a kneeling individual with his arm across his shoulder in a gesture of submission. The second scene shows the same warrior and prisoner on the right, but with the two individuals on the left presenting offerings to the one on the right. The iconography on this cylinder has not been noted from elsewhere at Caracol.

Most of the recovered data from Structure B42 relates to ritual and burial. Three interments were found within the building and three were located west of the front step ([Figure 8](#)). One cache was found within the building core, one was found almost at ground surface at the upper limit of the stairway, two were found sealed by the plaza floor, and several cache vessels appear to have been redeposited within S.D. C171B-2 ([Figure 9](#), [Figure 10](#)).

**S.D. C171B-1** ([Figure 9](#), [Figure 13a5](#)) was assigned for a small face cache and flat disc lid that were found almost as soon as the eroded upper plaza floor was stripped away; it was set in fill above the better preserved (and plastered) lower plaza floor. This cache is located well north of the axis on which the majority of the other deposits were found. Based on spatial location, it may have been positioned in front of the building in relation to S.D. C171B-7, a crypt located in the summit of the construction.

**S.D. C171B-2** ([Figure 4](#), [Figure 8](#), [Figure 9](#), [Figure 10](#)) was assigned for materials that were associated with a 30 cm deep stone crypt placed immediately in front of and partially beneath the front step for Structure B42. Building the eastern wall of this crypt clearly disturbed an earlier cache, S.D. C171B-10, which had been placed within construction fill behind the front step of the building. Major portions of some of the vessels in this cache instead ended up within the crypt (see [Figure 11c and 11d](#)). Investigation of the crypt revealed an interment that was packed with bones and whose excavation indicated a series of sequentially-placed articulated individuals. However, it is not clear how much, if any, time intervened between placements. The stratigraphic sequence within this crypt revealed that the last vessels to be placed were a polychrome bowl ([Figure 11b](#)) against the west wall and a small cache vessel ([Figure 11e](#)) atop of the eastern crypt wall ([Figure 9](#)). It is possible that the modeled-carved cylinder discussed above represented a later depositional episode at this locus. Once the upper layer of bone and the bowl had been removed, a complete polychrome cylinder ([Figure 11a](#)) was recovered amid more bone. This cylinder, in turn, lay over even more bone and the two vessels that are believed to have originated within the stairway cache; sherds that fit one of the vessels in the stairway cache (see [Figure 22d](#)) were also recovered in the northern part of this crypt. An articulated individual was found beneath these ceramic pieces at the very bottom of the crypt. The ceramic cylinder and bowl ostensibly date to the late part of the Late Classic Period. Artifactual materials recovered with S.D. C171B-2 included a pair of moon snails, a drilled animal tooth, three shell discs, and a pristine obsidian blade ([Figure 12](#)). Probably 7 individuals were placed within S.D. C171B-2. The lowermost individual in the crypt was certainly an adult female and the last individual placed within the crypt was a young adult male with notched teeth. Another young adult male included within this interment had three jadeite inlays in his maxillary teeth (minimally the 2 incisors and 1 canine on his left side; the upper right front teeth were missing). One other adult female, one other adult male, and two subadults were also included in this burial.

**S.D. C171B-3** ([Figure 4](#), [Figure 8](#), [Figure 9](#)) was assigned for a 25 cm deep crypt encountered immediately within the westernmost extent of excavation C171B. The remains of 3 individuals were encountered in this crypt. A single adult individual of unknown sex was in an extended supine position with head to the north. This individual had suffered ante mortem tooth loss and also exhibited both caries and tartar on their teeth. A subadult skull was placed immediately east of the extended individual's pelvis. Another subadult skull was located just west of the same individual's knees. Both subadult individuals were approximately 4 years old at their time of death. A single ceramic dish ([Figure 13b](#)) was found immediately north of the extended individual. The stone that formed the northern wall for the crypt rested on the upper third of this vessel, indicating that the human and pottery materials had been placed within the grave before the crypt construction was finalized.

**S.D. C171B-4** ([Figure 9](#)) was assigned for pottery cache vessels found barely under the ground surface at the approximate level of the upper stair for Structure B42. While two vessels ([Figure 13c and 13d](#)) were recovered, it may be that the smaller one with the crude face on it served as a lid for the larger urn. Even though barely under the surface when found, it is likely that these materials were once located within the core of the building. Special Deposit C171B-4 is clearly on a ritual axis comprised of the three burials set to the front of Structure B42 and two other caches (the cache vessel on the eastern edge of S.D. C171B-2 and the cache vessels in S.D. C171B-5).

**S.D. C171B-5** was assigned for cache vessels set directly above the eastern wall of the crude cist that was labeled S.D. C171B-6. This cache had been sealed beneath the one well preserved plaster floor found in the plaza. Three distinct cache vessels were recovered at this locus, consisting of a small cylinder, a single finger bowl, and a larger lidded urn ([Figure 13e, 13f, and 13g](#)).

**S.D. C171B-6** ([Figure 4](#), [Figure 9](#)) was assigned for a cist set between the two better constructed crypts in front of Structure B42. Special Deposit C171B-6 was sealed beneath the well preserved plaza floor and was also located direction beneath S.D. C171B-5. The bones that were recovered from within the stone-lined cist were in very poor condition, but proved to be the remains of a single subadult individual that was 2 to 3 years of age at the time of death and was probably extended in supine position with head to the north.

**S.D. C171B-7** ([Figure 4](#), [Figure 14](#)) was assigned for a crypt located within the main trench of excavation C171B. This crypt was north of the primary axis of the majority of the Structure B42 deposits and was set immediately west of the single stone facing remaining on the summit of Structure B42 ([Figure 5](#)). The crypt extended across the entire trench ([Figure 14](#)) and was approximately 40 cm in depth. It had once been sealed with large capstones that had large fallen into the burial. Preservation was very poor in this crypt and very little bone remained. From the small amount of bone that was recovered, it would appear that the crypt held minimally 2 individuals, one an adult and the other a sub-adult about 3 years old. No artifactual material was recovered in association with this crypt.

**S.D. C171B-8** ([Figure 4](#), [Figure 9](#)) was assigned for a concentration of bone located directly in the fill of the building core. The remains do not appear to have been articulated. However, the recovered bone can all be associated with a single adult individual; age and sex cannot be determined. It is possible that the limited cranial and long bone fragments recovered in the vicinity of S.D. 171B-10 should be included with this deposit.

**S.D. C171B-9** ([Figure 4](#), [Figure 15](#), [Figure 16](#), [Figure 17](#)) was assigned for a collapsed tomb found in section at the eastern limit of excavation C171B. The looters' trench in this portion of the structure had penetrated the collapsed fill that engulfed the chambers, but had not disturbed the *in situ* on-floor materials. The tomb was one of the more elaborate ones found at Caracol in that it had a formal chamber and an antechamber as well as an entryway ([Figure 16](#)). The antechamber was at a lower level and was smaller than the main chamber. ([Figure 17](#)). The preserved eastern wall in the main chamber rose to a height of 1.25m, which represented the point at which the spring for the vault occurred. The antechamber was similarly at least 1.25 m in interior height. Wall stubs, a single stone slab wide (ca. 25 cm), formed the eastern wall of the antechamber and provided an 80 cm wide doorway into the main portion of the tomb. The remains of two articulated adult individuals were found in the main chamber. No sex identification was possible given the poor condition of the bone. Both individuals had been placed on their backs with their heads to the south. Both individuals exhibited Type A2 filing on their upper and lower incisors and canines, meaning that each of these teeth were double-notched. The

mandible of the western individual also had ante mortem tooth loss, indicating a more advanced age than the eastern individual. It is possible that the western individual was placed in the chamber at a slightly later date given its position at the extreme western end of the inner chamber. A sizeable number of ceramics ([Figure 18](#)) and artifacts ([Figure 20](#)) accompanied these two individuals. Four vessels ([Figure 18b, 18c, 18g, and 18j](#)) plus a lid with a vulture head handle ([Figure 18a](#)) were found in the main chamber; five more vessels ([Figure 18d, 18e, 18f, 18h, and 18i](#)) were found in the antechamber. The lid ([Figure 18a](#)) exhibits polychrome decoration that matches the decoration on the footed barrel ([Figure 18b](#)), but rather than being atop this barrel (which it also fits), it was set astride a larger bowl ([Figure 18j](#)) in the southwest corner of the chamber; this fact could indicate some minor disturbance in the chamber at the time of the placement of the western individual. All of the vessels in this chamber may be dated to the transition between the Early Classic and Late Classic Period or to ca. A.D. 550. Two of the vessels in the tomb contained artifactual remains ([Figure 19](#)). The bowl ([Figure 18j](#)) in the southwest corner of the main chamber held the remains of a single pyrite earflare ([Figure 19a](#); [Figure 20c](#)); three pieces of a second pyrite earflare were found associated with the eastern individual, one piece between the eastern tibia, one piece beneath the eastern skull, and the central disc below the footed barrel ([Figure 18b](#)). The barrel ([Figure 18b](#)) in the main chamber also contained two pairs of drilled shells ([Figure 19b](#); [Figure 20d, 20e, 20f, and 20g](#)), as well as some animal bone. A third pair of shells that were still occluded ([Figure 20f](#)) was found in the vicinity of the skull of the eastern individual, as was a set of spiked shell discs ([Figure 20a and 20b](#)). A single bone disc ([Figure 20m](#)) was found east of the tibia of the eastern individual and a single broken piece of carved jadeite ([Figure 20j](#)) was recovered from the chest area of the eastern individual. Indications are that the western individual wore a bead necklace when interred as 3 jadeite beads ([Figure 20i, 20k, and 20l](#)) and 5 spondylus beads ([Figure 20n-r](#)) were found beneath and around the western mandible.

**S.D. C171B-10** ([Figure 4, Figure 9](#)) was assigned for a cache that had been located immediately behind the lower step for Structure B42. The cache consisted of 3 bucket-like vessels, 1 finger bowl associated with a human phalange, and a large globular urn that had a crude face appliquéd onto its side and that was capped with a curved lid ([Figure 21, Figure 22](#)). Pieces of one of the buckets in this deposit ([Figure 22d](#)) were actually recovered intermixed among the bones within S.D. C171B-2 and the finger bowl and partial bucket recovered with S.D. C171B-2 ([Figure 11c and 11d](#)) match similar pieces within this cache. Thus, it appears that the crypt for S.D. C171B-2 cut into this earlier cache, disturbing several of the vessels that had been placed within it. Given the prevalence of the bucket form at the earlier end of the Late Classic Period (see A. Chase 1994:172), consistent with the dating for S.D. C171B-9, and the fact that the globular effigy cache vessel is out of place at this earlier date, it may also be speculated that the globular urn and lid may have been a later Late Classic addition to re-consecrate an accidentally disturbed earlier deposit.

## Structure B40

Structure B40 anchored the plaza group on its north side and was the most massive construction in the group, rising some 2 m above the plaza surface ([Figure 23](#)). It was selected for excavation with the hope that it would prove analogous to other north structures at Caracol; Caana's Structure B19 and the Central Acropolis' Structure A34 both produced basal interments, while Structure A3 produced a tomb at its summit; Structures B19 and A3 also yielded Terminal Classic incensarios on their main axes. Toward this end, a single axial trench was placed into Structure B40 ([Figure 3](#)). This excavation was completely backfilled at the conclusion of the field season.

**Suboperation C171C** constituted a single axial trench placed into Structure B40 that measured 7.4 m by 1.5 m ([Figure 24, Figure 25](#)). It was dug to plaza level in the interior of the structure and resulted in the discovery of earlier architecture as well as two special deposits, one of which was a tomb. Bedrock was not encountered in the excavation. Architecturally, the latest version of Structure B40 was not well preserved and no formal structure plan could be discerned on the summit. Three lower steps, probably associated with Structure B40-1<sup>st</sup>, were identified at the plaza level ([Figure 25](#)). Within construction core at the summit of Structure B40, the remains of two single stone facings and an associated floor were encountered ([Figure 25](#)); these architecture features represent Structure B40-2<sup>nd</sup>. A construction floor was also encountered in the core of the

building some 30 cm below the plaster floor at the summit; this construction surface later proved to have served as a cap for a tomb and to have been bounded by large upright boulders on its southern side (Figure 23). Part of an earlier step was found approximately 30 m beneath the latest plaza step and set back about 10 cm (Figure 26). This step was constructed over an earlier floor and was associated with a cross-wall for a small platform that once ran east (Figure 26), and which would have been earlier than -2<sup>nd</sup>. The floor upon which the step was set was cut through to place S.D. C171C-2, so it too is earlier than Structure B40-2<sup>nd</sup>. Other indications of earlier construction activity included a plaster floor beneath the tomb floor (Figure 24). Investigations into Structure B42 proved it to have been in use from the early Early Classic ("Protoclassic"), based on the 2 deposits described below, through the Terminal Classic era, based on the recovery of a partial modeled-carved bowl in the humus levels of the building's summit (Figure 27).

**S.D. C171C-1** was assigned for 2 vessels found in the fill outside of the corner of a tomb (Figure 28). The ceramics were discovered before the tomb was found. Excavation immediately north of the materials revealed that the tomb's southwest corner had either collapsed or been removed in such a way as to have permitted entry into the chamber. It is quite possible that the two vessels found face down in the fill outside the tomb corner originally came from inside this chamber. Twenty small pieces of animal bone are also recorded as coming from the vicinity of these vessels; some human bone was scattered in the fill matrix that was above these vessels. The northernmost vessel was an appliquŽd collared bowl with three exterior handles; its exterior was unslipped, but its interior was slipped brown and the interior lip was gooved (Figure 29b). The southernmost vessel was a polychrome tetrapod with its feet removed; the interior of this vessel exhibits what appears to be a porcupine tied onto a whale as well as four stylized toads (Figure 29a), perhaps representing a unknown Maya mythical scene. Both vessels date to the early Early Classic. The appliquŽd collared bowl is quite similar to another found in the Structure B36 platform during the 2004 field season (A. Chase and D. Chase 2005:26).

**S.D. C171C-2** was assigned for the tomb that was discovered deep within the core of Structure B40 (Figure 24, Figure 28, Figure 30, Figure 31). The chamber was oriented on a north-south axis and measured 2.2 m by 1.2 m in area by 1.2 m in height. The northern end of the chamber was closed by leaning 3 large slabs from a base wall toward the center capstones (Figure 24); the side two slabs were in place while the central one had collapsed inward, leading to the partial infilling of the chamber with dirt. Nothing was intact on the tomb floor; the chamber appeared to have been largely emptied in antiquity and, thus, the suspicion that the vessels in S.D. C171-1 had originally come from within the chamber. The limited bone and teeth that were recovered above the tomb floor indicated that a minimum of two individuals, an adult and a subadult, had once occupied the chamber. Resting at the top of the dirt matrix that had come to infill the chamber were the seemingly complete remains of a brocket deer with its two small antlers. The deer bone was introduced into the chamber after it had been largely infilled with dirt, indicating the possibility of multiple entries into this tomb over a lengthy period of time.

## **Structure B44**

Structure B44 is a range building that defines the southern edge of the plaza. It rises only about 90 cm above the plaza surface. It was selected for excavation in order to try to gain complementary information that would help understand the sequence of construction and use relative to Structures B40 and B42. To accomplish this, a single axial trench was placed into Structure B44 (Figure 3, Figure 32). This excavation was completely backfilled at the conclusion of the field season.

**Suboperation C171D** consisted of an axial trench placed over Structure B44 that measured 6.7 m by 1.5 m (Figure 32, Figure 33). Excavations revealed that this construction was accomplished as a single building effort. Architectural features recovered include the basal plaza step as well as indications that the summit of the building supported a bi-level substructure (Figure 34), as indicated by a preserved plaster floor and facings. No deposits were found in association with this excavation.

## **Summary of Excavations in the Structure B42 Group**

Excavations undertaken within the Structure B42 Group during 2005 indicate a long history of occupation. The earliest deposits were located in the northern building, Structure B40, and date to the very beginning of the Early Classic Period. It is likely that even earlier Preclassic remains are hidden somewhere within this plaza, especially as bedrock was not reached in any of the excavations and Early Classic materials were fairly well represented in the building fills. It is similarly probable that Early Classic interments are also located within this group, probably on an earlier axis in the vicinity of Structure B42. The Late Classic is well represented within this plaza. The Late Classic sequence starts with the double-chambered tomb from the rear of Structure B44 that dates to the transition between the Early and Late Classic Periods and then continues with the series of burials placed within the plaza to the front of the building. The latest Late Classic burials appear to have been made in the upper portion of S.D. C171B-2 based on associated ceramics (although S.D. C171B-7 could be even later). Terminal Classic materials were either discarded or purposefully placed towards the front of the building. It is likely that these Terminal Classic materials represent primary trash that was temporarily deposited on the southern side of the frontal stairway projection; however full excavation of this area was not possible because of a large tree in this locus. Archaeology indicates that all three of the excavated structures in this group were in use during the Late Classic Period. At least the northern and eastern buildings continued to be used into the Terminal Classic Period.

## **Structures at the Northern End of the C Group: The I20 Group**

At the northeast corner of the broader C Group plaza defined by Structures I19 and B60 lie a set of three structures that look suspiciously like a late group appended onto an epicentral area. Structures I20, I21, and B59 form their own architectural complex (Figure 35) and were hypothesized to comprise a Terminal Classic Period residential group (although this group would be somewhat atypical in not having its own raised platform). The positioning of these three buildings relative to the other C Group structures, when combined with known archaeological data that indicated a Late Classic to Terminal Classic date for C Group palaces (specifically Structures B62 and B64 excavated in 1994), suggested that there was an excellent probability that all three of these buildings were late (i.e., Terminal Classic) constructions. It would not prove surprising if careful cleaning of the C Group plaza in the vicinity of these structures did not yield Terminal Classic house pads to the west and south (similar to those found during the 2004 field season on the Structure B36 terrace) that would better define a formal group. During the 2005 field season, two of the three identified structures in the I20 group were investigated.

## **Structure B59**

Structure B59 is a square mound located in a northeast corner area of the broader C Group plaza that is defined by the eastern range building, Structure B60, the northern range building, Structure I19, and the western platform that is surmounted by Structures B61, B62, and B64 (Figure 1). Structure B59 is located immediately northeast of Structure B60. It was selected for excavation because of the possibility that it was a shrine that would yield primary deposits, hopefully of a very late date; it proved to be neither a shrine nor to have associated deposits. The structure was penetrated by a single trench that was combined with areal excavation (excavation C172B). A second excavation (C172E) was placed immediately north of the building across a possible reservoir or sump (see Figure 35). Both excavations were completely backfilled at the conclusion of the field season.

**Suboperation C172B** consisted of the trenching and associated areal excavation of Structure B59 (Figure 36, Figure 37). The axial trench was 7.65 m in length and was approximately 1 m wide, completely encompassing the alley between the two central benches (Figure 38, Figure 39). It became clear quite early that Structure B59 was not an eastern building substructure of piled-up fill material, but rather the remains of a collapsed stone

building that had once been vaulted. The central portion of the excavation was filled with overlapping large rectangular limestone slabs, which had at one time formed a vaulted stone roof; these slabs began to appear within the humus level and extended down to rest directly on the floor of the central alleyway (Figure 36). One other excavated building at Caracol, Structure A7, had yielded a analogous collapsed roof with the overlapping slabs resting directly on a structure floor. Areal excavation of Structure B59 resulted in an extension of excavation C172B south an additional meter outside of the building and an additional 2.3 within the building (Figure 37). The areal excavation revealed a square building completely infilled with raised benches except for a central alleyway (90 cm wide) that extended two-thirds of the way into the room. Two stone piers, 60 cm square, rose from the raised surface of the bench floors to either side of the alleyway at its end. These piers are not known from other structures at Caracol, although a disrupted square area of plaster flooring approximately 95 cm square, suspected as resulting from the removal of just such an architectural feature, was recovered from within Caracol Structure A10 (see 1999 field report at [www.caracol.org](http://www.caracol.org)). As found, the exterior facing stones for the wall of the building were missing; the lack of these stones in the building collapse indicates that stone-robbing may have taken place. In the building interior, only the lower facing stones were present; the interior walls all appear to have collapse outward based on stone fall (see Figure 39), possibly a result of the stone robbing of the building's exterior facing stones. The facing stones for the step-up into the building's alleyway were present in the front of Structure B59 and rested on a slightly outset plinth. Excavation to the front of Structure B59 also revealed a frontal platform some 2 m west of the formal edifice. Trenching the building showed that it had been built as a single construction unit and that the benches were not added afterwards, but were instead integral to the original plan; the stones for the benches extended down to a fill layer that had been placed to level the underlying platform surface. This basal fill layer rested on a dark soil horizon, which presumably represented an old surface level. The bench facings originally rose 75 cm above the basal fill layer, but with the addition of the central alleyway, the actual bench height varied between 45 and 50 cm above plastered floor in the alleyway. The eastern extent of the Structure B59 axis was quite disturbed on the building's axial line. The fills behind the raised bench at the end of the alleyway were also different, consisting of larger stones that rested on the old surface level (Figure 38). The rear wall was not present in this area (Figure 39) and it is possible that there might have been some other feature appended to this portion of the building. In fact, if there were an additional feature at the rear of the building on its axis, the overall plan of the structure would resemble that of a sweathouse (for comparative purposes, see plan of steam room of Structure 3E3 at Chichen Itza; Ruppert 1952:80-83). In this case, a "firebox" would have been appended to the eastern side of Structure B59. The unusual stone roof slabs, the deep central alleyway, and the small frontal entrance (which was less than 1 m in width) would all support such an interpretation. No deposits or *in situ* trash were found in association with the building. Based on the sherd materials sealed beneath the floor of the alleyway, Structure B59 was built in the Late Classic era or later.

**Suboperation C172E** was assigned for an excavation unit placed over a sump immediately north of Structure B59 and south of Structure I21. The excavation measured 3.92 m north-south by 2 m east west (Figure 40, Figure 41). Only the humus was stripped out of this area. The pattern of stone fall indicate that a depression had indeed existed here. A crude facing was encountered about 1 m south of Structure I21, but the excavation was closed prior to establishing the existence of any formally constructed facings to either the north or south sides of this sump. A sizeable amount of trash was found within this excavation, including a pyrite piece from a mirror, a stalagmite fragment, a human patella, a large amount of animal bone, and two reconstructable vessels. Smashed *in situ* at the bottom of the sump were the complete rim of a very large unslipped olla and approximately half of a small unslipped bowl (Figure 42). It is suspected that further excavation here would produce the remnants of a more formally constructed reservoir that was immediately adjacent to Structure B59. If Structure B59 were in fact a sweathouse, it would have made sense to have had a source of water immediately adjacent.

## Structure I20

Structure I20 is a raised structure with its own stairway that sits atop the eastern end of the long range building, designated Structure I19, which comprises the northern limit of Caracol's C Group. The summit of Structure I20 is roughly 2.25 m above the present plaza surface. It was selected for excavation because it was a discrete northern building and it was hoped that it would produce one or more basal burials of a late date, mimicking similar situations in Structure B19 and Structure A34; this expectation was met. To accomplish this goal, an axial trench was placed into Structure I20 and, subsequently, a smaller excavation was placed to the east of this trench to investigate a feature encountered in the main trench (Figure 35). These excavations were completely backfilled at the conclusion of the field season.

**Suboperation C172C** was assigned for an axial trench into Structure A34 that measured 9.25 m north-south by 2 m east-west (Figure 43, Figure 44, Figure 45). Bedrock was reached at two places within this excavation. The locus showed evidence of multiple constructions based on fill materials, although it is unlikely that any were earlier than the Late Classic Period. Removal of the humus immediately revealed a series of facings (Figure 46), showing evidence for a frontal stairway leading up first to a broad platform and then to a series of stepped levels at the summit of the building. At minimum, two distinct buildings are indicated by these facings. At the front of the building were two stairways. The latest stair was poorly preserved, but is represented by a massive basal step, which is slightly offset from and overlays a better constructed step that is associated with a plaster floor for an earlier stairway inset. At the summit, at least two different sets of steps can be discerned and there is evidence for an earlier inset corner set on a plaster floor within the trench (Figure 46). Excavation of the summit humus revealed approximately half of a modeled-carved vessel associated with the uppermost facings (Figure 47a), indicating that the use of this building continued into the Terminal Classic era; excavation at the base of Structure I20 also recovered sherds from Pantano Impressed bowls of a similar date. Penetration of the summit also yielded two deeply buried and fairly well-preserved plaster floors. The uppermost one disappeared in the middle of the trench, but may have connected with the broad frontal building terrace or, alternatively, with a facing that was not uncovered. The lower plaster floor capped two large stones for a wall facing north and abutted another northern facing 1.25 m south of the first facing. These lower facings and plaster floor represent the earliest construction at this locus. In the middle of Structure I20, where a broad platform was postulated to have existed, the fill was relatively continuous, changing only to large boulders immediately above bedrock. A possible cache, S.D. C172C-1, was recovered directly set in this fill. Excavation in the front of Structure I20 recovered the remains of a stairway inset. The buried stairway extension was almost congruous with the eastern section for Structure I20 (Figure 45) and the rear facing for this inset extended across the entire trench, rising 95 cm above an associated plaster floor. The bottom portion of this rear facing had collapsed (Figure 43) and its excavation (Figure 44) revealed a burial intruded through the floor and under the facing that was designated S.D. C172C-3. This burial was covered with large capstones (Figure 48); a single bowl, designated S.D. C172C-2, had been set over these capstones within the grave. The ceramics associated with the burial permit these activities to be dated to the Late to Terminal Classic Period. Deeper excavation to the front of Structure I20 found no plaza floors, but did encounter bedrock (Figure 45).

**S.D. C172C-1** was designated for a small unslipped olla (Figure 47c) found within construction fill of Structure I20 (see Figure 45 for location) that may represent an intentional cache.

**S.D. C172C-2** was assigned to a partial vessel (approximately two-thirds) that rested in the fill immediately above the capstones for S.D. C172-3 (Figure 48). The vessel was an outflaring rimmed bowl with a slight ring base (Figure 47b) that contextually must date to the Late to Terminal Classic Period. While unslipped, it was exhibited a brown-colored surface and had been burnished. The positioning of a vessel directly over capstones occurs in other contexts at Caracol; two dishes were broken and included in the fill over the Structure A3 tomb and other vessels (dish, plate, and cache vessels) were set over capstones for crypts in residential groups in the southeastern portion of Caracol.

**S.D. C172C-3** was assigned to a burial encountered in a grave that was intruded through a plaster floor and underneath a facing west of a stairway outset (Figure 49, Figure 50). The burial had then been covered with a later stairway that hid the earlier construction features. The roots of a palm tree had severely disrupted the southwestern portion of the grave. The bones were not in a very good state of repair, nor were the associated artifacts

(Figure 52) or ceramic vessels (Figure 50, Figure 51), although it was possible to make out many of their design elements. The adult individual in the grave had been laid out in a supine position with head to the south; no sex identification possible. The individual's teeth were inlaid with pyrite; the maxillary teeth had inlays extending from first pre-molar to first pre-molar on either side; the mandibular teeth probably had inlays in the incisors (lateral left present) but not in the premolars (the canines were not present). Four polychrome vessels were set in the leg area (Figure 50). A plate and cylinder were over the femurs and two deep bowls were set over the tibia. These vessels date the interment to the very late Late Classic Period. A large number of artifacts also accompanied the interment. A cowerie shell (Figure 52a), drilled for suspension, and a modified deer bone (Figure 52k), possibly used as a tool, were recovered in the western part of the grave beneath the southernmost deep bowl. A bone rasper (Figure 52p) was beneath the ceramic plate at the western edge of the grave. A bone pin (Figure 52l) rested on the inside of the individual's right femur. A bone labret, inlaid with pyrite pieces on its two sides (Figure 52j), was recovered from within the vase east of the right femur. A palm tree had severely disrupted the southern part of the chamber, where many artifacts were found. Two jadeite discs (Figure 52h and 52i), which may have functioned as earflares, were found to either side of the area where the decomposed skull was located. Three bone hairpins (Figure 52m-52o) were found in the chamber above the skull area. The southern area of the grave, from the vicinity of the skull to the end of the chamber, was also full of small shell beads (Figure 52b-52g); some 330 shell beads are recorded as coming from this area. This count is possibly inflated because most of these beads were shell discs that easily fractured down the middle. However, it is suspected that these shells had been sewn into a head piece that may have been attached to the individual's hair with the bone pins that came from the same area.

**Suboperation C172D** was separated from excavation C172C by a balk, but was placed immediately east of that excavation to investigate the suspected stairway extension found at the eastern limit of the main trench (Figure 35). The investigation measured 2.5 m north-south by 1.5 m east west. This excavation succeeded in recovering the remains of four well preserved steps (Figure 53), as well as a heavier line of stone along the western limit of the excavation, suggesting the existence of a possible stair balustrade. It did not prove possible to test for a different structural axis, which would have been in alignment with this set of stairs at the summit of Structure I20, because of an extremely large tree. Artifacts recovered from this surface excavation included a complete granite mano and a partial bark-beater (Figure 54).

### **Summary of Excavations in the Structure I20 (C) Group**

Excavations undertaken in the I20 Group during the 2005 field season indicate that this area was heavily utilized during the Late Classic Period and, presumably, into the Terminal Classic as well. These archaeological data are consistent with information gathered during the 1994 field season indicating a similar use life for the stone palaces in the C Group. While Early Classic sherds were mixed into fill recovered from deep within Structure I20, the bulk of this substructure contained Late Classic materials, indicating a construction that was largely built during the late Late Classic Period and that was modified into the Terminal Classic era. In spite of the fact that a burial was encountered in excavation C172C, it is considered unlikely that Structure I20 was utilized as a residential structure. Given its prominent position in public space on the north side of the C Group, it is likely that it served a different function and that the individual interred here was being placed in a high status location. Structure B59 also appears to have been a special-function public building, tentatively identified as a sweathouse. The excavations undertaken during 1994 and 2005 demonstrate that the C Group played a major role in Late to Terminal Classic Caracol.

### **Significance**

Information that is collected during each field season at Caracol adds to our broader understanding of the site. Among other goals, the 2005 investigations sought to build on investigations of small epicentral structures that had been undertaken during the 2000, 2003, and 2004 field seasons. Taken together, this body of data not only permits comparison of how epicentral structures were utilized within broad social and economic



systems, but also permits the wider analysis of contemporary variation in material remains. From this vantage point, it is significant that both Structure I20 and Structure B59 were found to constitute "public space," meaning that each of these buildings transcended any strict residential unit, even though late, presumably non-elite, living platforms like Structure I21 were placed nearby. In contrast, the Structure B42 group provided evidence of a long-term residential unit with occupation spanning some 600 years. Interestingly, no evidence for craft production was found within the excavations in this group; given the area's proximity to the epicenter and isolation from agricultural fields, it is thought likely that the group's inhabitants functioned within an epicentral bureaucracy.

Because of the recovery of relevant materials and deposits, the investigations undertaken during 2005 in the I20 and B42 areas permit a better definition of the latest occupation and ultimate abandonment of Caracol at the end of the Classic Period. Both groups produced late burials and caches. These confirm the use of traditional ceramics in the mortuary realm into the Terminal Classic Period (see also A. Chase and D. Chase 2006). However, both areas also yielded clear Terminal Classic ceramic markers. All of these markers are associated with the latest use of the investigated structures. For Structure I20, the markers consist of a modeled-carved cylinder and possibly a Pantano Impressed bowl. For Structure B40, the marker consisted of a modeled-carved bowl. For Structure B42, the markers consisted of a modeled-carved bowl, a modeled-carved cylinder, a footed and fluted brownware cylinder, and a three-pronged burner. It is important to note that only certain Terminal Classic vessel forms were encountered in this excavation. With the exception of the burner, all are what would be considered "serving vessels." The modeled-carved vessels on the summits of B40 and I20 would have to be considered to be *in situ*. The Structure B42 vessels were found to the south side of the front stairway; this location would have been appropriate for the placement of sheet refuse & material that would have been collected and redeposited had the site not been abandoned. In no case is the full palace sub-assembly (A. Chase and D. Chase 2004, 2006), like that found in neighboring Barrio and in the Structure B64 palace, present. At least for the Structure B42 Group, a suggestion must be made that there was a proximity-based trickle-down effect of certain high-status goods.

Like most excavations, the 2005 investigations also raise new questions. These questions have to do with the transition between the Late to Terminal Classic Periods at Caracol and with the spatial variation in Terminal Classic remains at the site. Why were modeled-carved ceramics not incorporated into burials? Present archaeological data from Caracol would suggest that modeled-carved cylinders were not considered appropriate in the mortuary realm. People died and were buried while modeled-carved ceramics were in use and it would appear that polychrome ceramics, much like those that were found in S.D. C172C-3 or in S.D. C171B-2, were included within their burials & making the analytical separation of Late Classic from Terminal Classic exceedingly difficult. Other questions revolve about Caracol's economic system. Were markets still in use during the Terminal Classic? And, if so, how and why were some goods kept out of the system & as is indicated by the existence of status-linked artifactual inventories? Did the trickle-down effect of the Terminal Classic palace inventory apply to the ends of causeway termini & areas important for the social and economic integration of Caracol during the Late Classic Period? Or, was social and economic power completely centered in the epicenter during the Terminal Classic Period? These and other questions will hopefully be answered as investigation continues at Caracol in the years to come.

## Acknowledgements

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**TABLE 1:**  
**Caracol Project Members: 2005 Field Season**

Staff:

Arlen F. Chase C1  
Diane Z. Chase C2

Amanda Groff C150  
Susan Stans C169

James Crandall C170  
Sean Kopaniasz C171  
Patrick Rohrer C172

Belizean Labor:

Rita Wilshire

Angelica Meneses  
Margarita Quintaros

Carlos Ivan Mendez

Gustavo Mendez Sr.  
Gustavo Mendez Jr.  
Carlos Castillo  
Jaime Iglesias  
Asterio Morales

On-Site Visitors:

Chris Parkinson (UCF Biology colleague)  
Elayne Zorn (UCF Anthropology colleague)

Petra Cunningham-Smith (UCF Maya Studies student)  
Mark Sullivan (UCF Maya Studies student)  
Barbara Verchot (UCF Maya Studies student)  
Jason Wenzel (UCF Maya Studies student)

**Figures**

[Figure 1.](#) The B Quadrangle of the Caracol map, showing the location of Structures B40, B42, B44, B59, and I20 Ð all excavated during the 2005 field season.

[Figure 2.](#) General plan of the Structure B42 Group showing the location of excavations relative to buildings.

[Figure 3.](#) Photograph of Structure B42 excavations (C171B) looking east.

[Figure 4.](#) Section of excavation C171B [south wall] that penetrated Caracol Structure B42.

[Figure 5.](#) Plan of excavation C171B after the removal of the humus, showing building and plaza features.

[Figure 6.](#) Drawing of carved slate monument fragment recovered from the surface of Caracol Structure B42.

[Figure 7.](#) Terminal Classic ceramics recovered from within the humus and collapse overlaying the front stairway area of Structure B142: (a) Sahcaba Modeled-Carved; (b) Monterey Modeled; (c) Cohune Composite; (d) Sahcaba Modeled-Carved.

[Figure 8.](#) Photograph of Special Deposits C171B-2, C171B-3, and C171B-6 at the western end of excavation C171B.

[Figure 9.](#) Detailed plan of the western end of excavation C171B, showing the location of Special Deposits C171B-1, C171B-2, C171B-3, C171B-4, C171B-5, C171B-6, C171B-8, and C171B-10.

[Figure 10.](#) Lower plan of Special Deposit C171B-2, showing human bones and associated pottery vessels stuffed into the crypt.

[Figure 11.](#) Pottery vessels associated with S.D. C171B-2: (a) Zacatel Cream Polychrome; (b) Zacatel Cream Polychrome; (c) Valentin Unslipped; (d) Ceiba Unslipped; (e) Ceiba Unslipped.

[Figure 12.](#) Artifacts associated with S.D. C171B-2: (a) and (b) unmodified "moon" snails; (c) drilled animal tooth; (d), (e), (f) modified shell; (g) complete obsidian blade.

[Figure 13.](#) Vessels recovered in association with Special Deposits in excavation C171B: (a) Hebe Modeled [S.D. C171B-1]; (b) Machete Orange Polychrome [S.D. C171B-3]; (c) Ceiba Unslipped [S.D. C171B-4]; (d) Hebe Modeled [S.D. C171B-4]; (e), (f), and (g) Ceiba Unslipped [S.D. C171B-5].

[Figure 14.](#) Upper and lower plans of the crypt for S.D. C171B-7 in excavation C171B.

[Figure 15.](#) Photograph of S.D. C171B-9, looking south.

[Figure 16.](#) Plan of S.D. C171B-9 recovered in excavation C171B.

[Figure 17.](#) Cross-sections of the double-chambered tomb for S.D. C171B-9.

[Figure 18a](#)[Figure 18b.](#) Vessels associated with S.D. C171B-9: (a) and (b) Saxche Orange Polychrome [lid found on top of vessel in Figure 18j], (c) Veracal Orange; (d), (e), and (f) Saxche Orange Polychrome; (g), (h), and (i) Pajarito Orange Polychrome; (j) Saxche Orange Polychrome.

[Figure 19.](#) Detailed plan of vessel interiors from S.D. C171B-9: (a) plan of pyrite pieces [Figure 20c] in bottom of vessel in Figure 18j; (b) plan of shells [Figure 20d,e,g, and h] in vessel in Figure 18b.

[Figure 20.](#) Artifactual material associated with S.D. C171B-9: (a) and (b) carved shell [possibly ear ornaments]; (c) carved pyrite, probably from an earflare [pieces of second on chamber floor]; (d),(e), (f), (g), and (h) shells perforated for suspension; (i), (j), (k), and (l) jadeite beads; (m) carved bone; (n), (o), (p), (q), and (r) *spondylus* shell beads.

[Figure 21.](#) Photograph of vessels recovered as part of S.D. C171B-10, looking west.

[Figure 22.](#) Vessels from S.D. C171B-10: (a) Hebe Modeled; (b) Valentin Unslipped [pieces of upper vessel also recovered in S.D. C171B-2]; (c) Ceiba Unslipped; (d) Valentin

Unslipped [matches vessel in S.D. C171B-2].

[Figure 23](#). Photograph of Caracol Structure B40 and excavation C171C, looking north.

[Figure 24](#). Section of excavation C171C [east wall].

[Figure 25](#). Plan of excavation C171C after the removal of humus, showing features recovered.

[Figure 26](#). Plan of a lower step and cross wall in excavation C171C.

[Figure 27](#). Terminal Classic bowl [Sahcaba Modeled-Carved] recovered on the summit of Structure B40 in excavation C171C.

[Figure 28](#). Plan of Special Deposits C171C-1 and C171C-2 in excavation C171C.

[Figure 29](#). Vessels recovered from S.D. C171C-1:  
(a) Ixcario Orange Polychrome; (b) possibly Corriental Appliqued.

[Figure 30](#). Photograph looking down at capstones and tomb designated S.D. C171C-2.

[Figure 31](#). Cross-section of tomb designated S.D. C171C-2.

[Figure 32](#). Photograph of excavation C171D into Caracol Structure B44, looking south.

[Figure 33](#). Section of excavation C171D [east wall] into Structure B44.

[Figure 34](#). Plan of excavation C171D following the removal of the humus to reveal construction features.

[Figure 35](#). General plan of the Structure I20 Group, showing the location of excavations relative to buildings.

[Figure 36](#). Photograph of Caracol Structure B59, showing collapsed vault stones on building floor in central alley, looking west.

[Figure 37](#). Photograph of Caracol Structure B59, following removal of collapsed vault stones, looking east.

[Figure 38](#). Section of excavation C172B [north wall] into Structure B59.

[Figure 39](#). Plan of excavation C172B, revealing more than half of Structure B59.

[Figure 40](#). Section of excavation C172E [west wall] through a ground depression, immediate north of Structure B59 and south of Structure I21.

[Figure 41](#). Plan of excavation C172E.

[Figure 42](#). Partial pottery vessels recovered following removal of humus in excavation C172E [both Valentin Unslipped].

[Figure 43](#). Photograph of collapsed terrace facade in excavation C172C, following removal of humus and collapse [S.D. C172C-3 was located beneath collapsed area].

[Figure 44](#). Photograph of excavation C172C into Caracol Structure I20, showing recovered features, looking north.

[Figure 45](#). Section of excavation C172C [east wall] into Structure I20.

[Figure 46](#). Plan of excavation C172C, showing recovered architectural features.

[Figure 47](#). Vessels recovered in association with excavation C172C into Structure I20:

(a) Sahcaba Modeled-Carved [on summit floor]; (b) undesignated unslipped bowl [S.D. C172C-2]; (c) possibly Ceiba Unslipped [S.D. C172C-1].

[Figure 48](#). Plan of Special Deposit C172B-2 and the capstones over Special Deposit C172B-3 in excavation C172C.

[Figure 49](#). Plan of Special Deposit C172C-3 in excavation C172C.

[Figure 50](#). Photograph of pottery vessels in S.D. C172C-3, looking west.

[Figure 51](#). Pottery vessels associated with S.D. C172C-3:

(a) and (b) Zacatel Cream Polychrome; (c) and (d) Batcab Red Polychrome.

[Figure 52](#). Artifactual material associated with S.D. C172C-3:

(a) cowerie shell; (b)-(g) shell beads [selection]; (h) and (i) jadeite discs [earflares]; (j) labret [central bone with 2 pyrite inlays]; (k) bone scoop; (l) bone needle; (m)-(o) bone hairpins; (p) bone rasper.

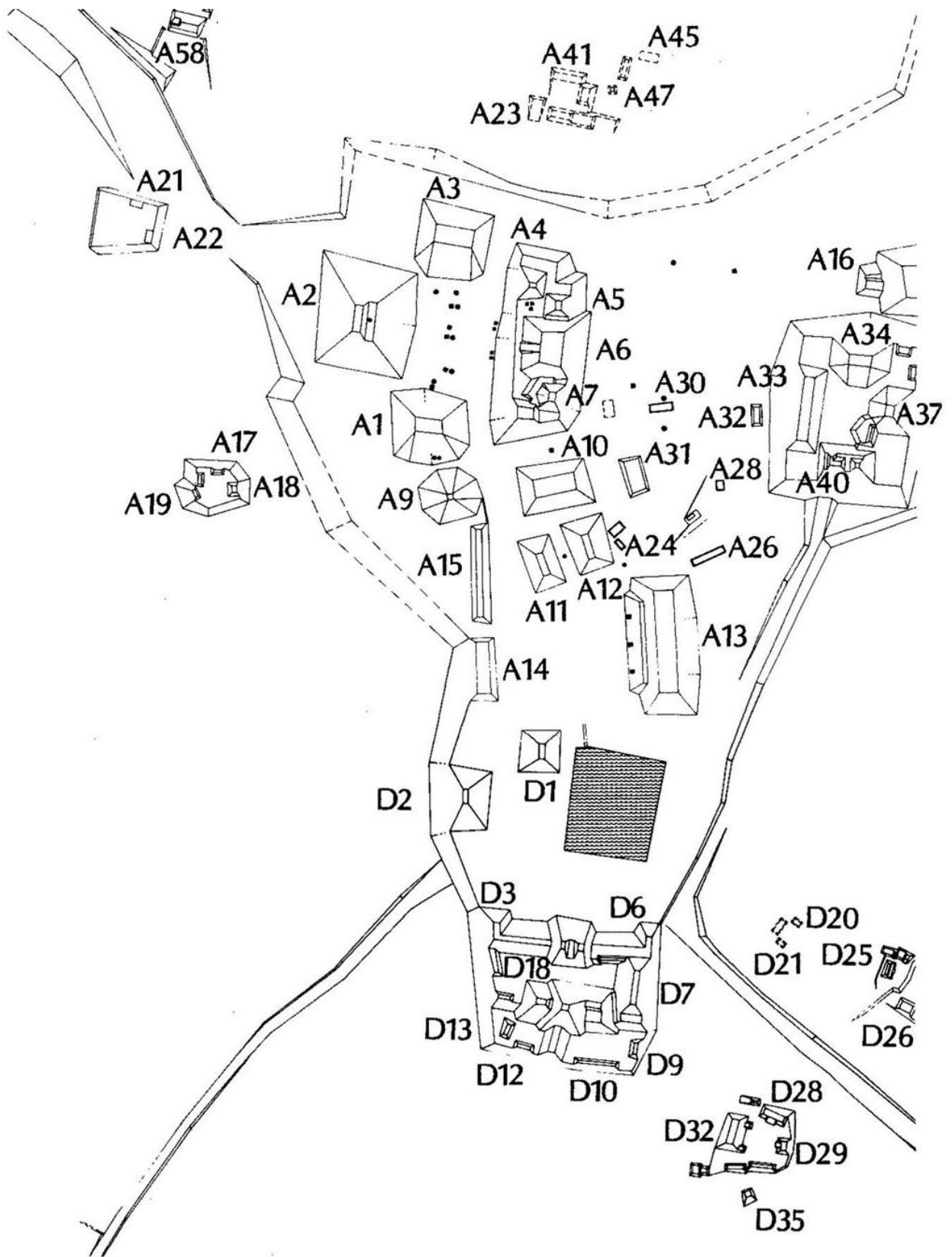
[Figure 53](#). Plan and section [east wall] of excavation C172D into Structure I20.

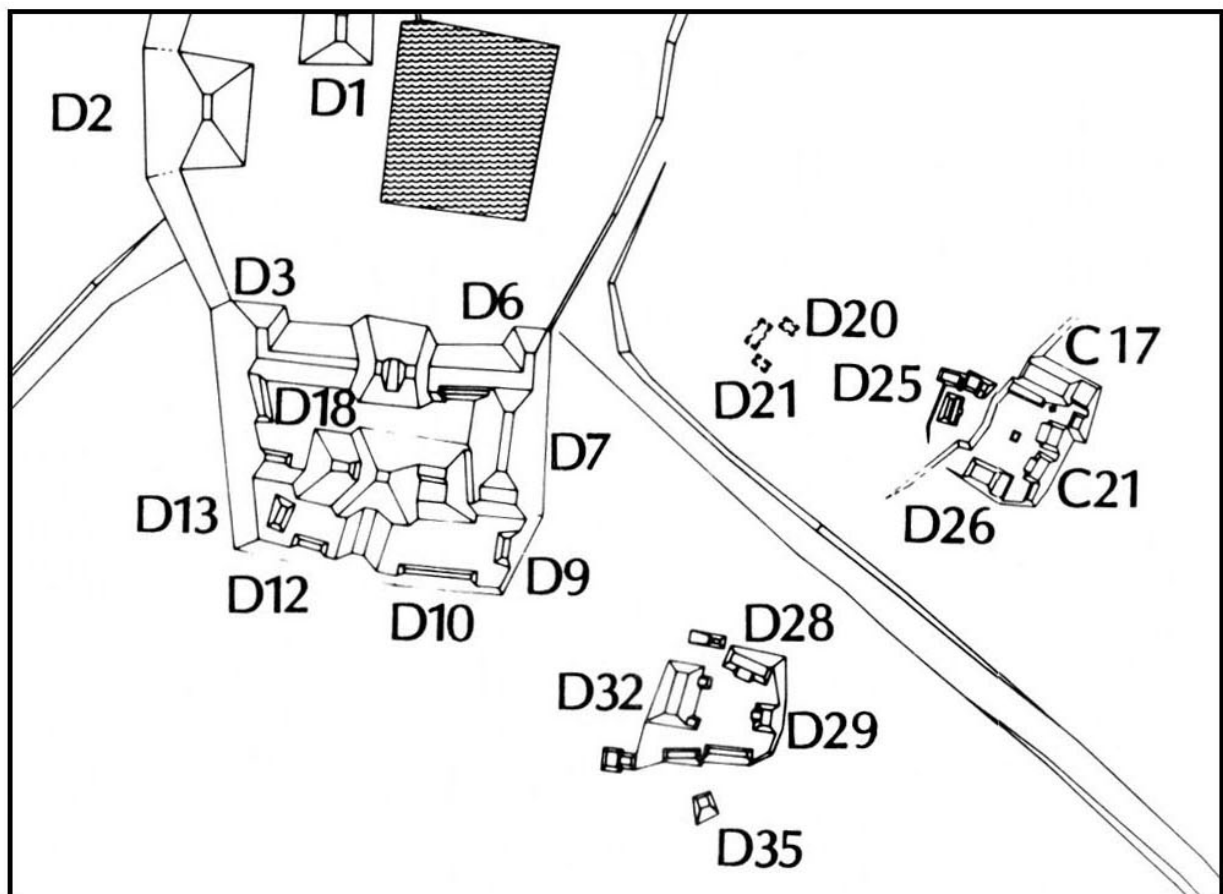
[Figure 54](#). Artifactual material recovered in excavation C172D:

(a) limestone bark beater; (b) granite mano.







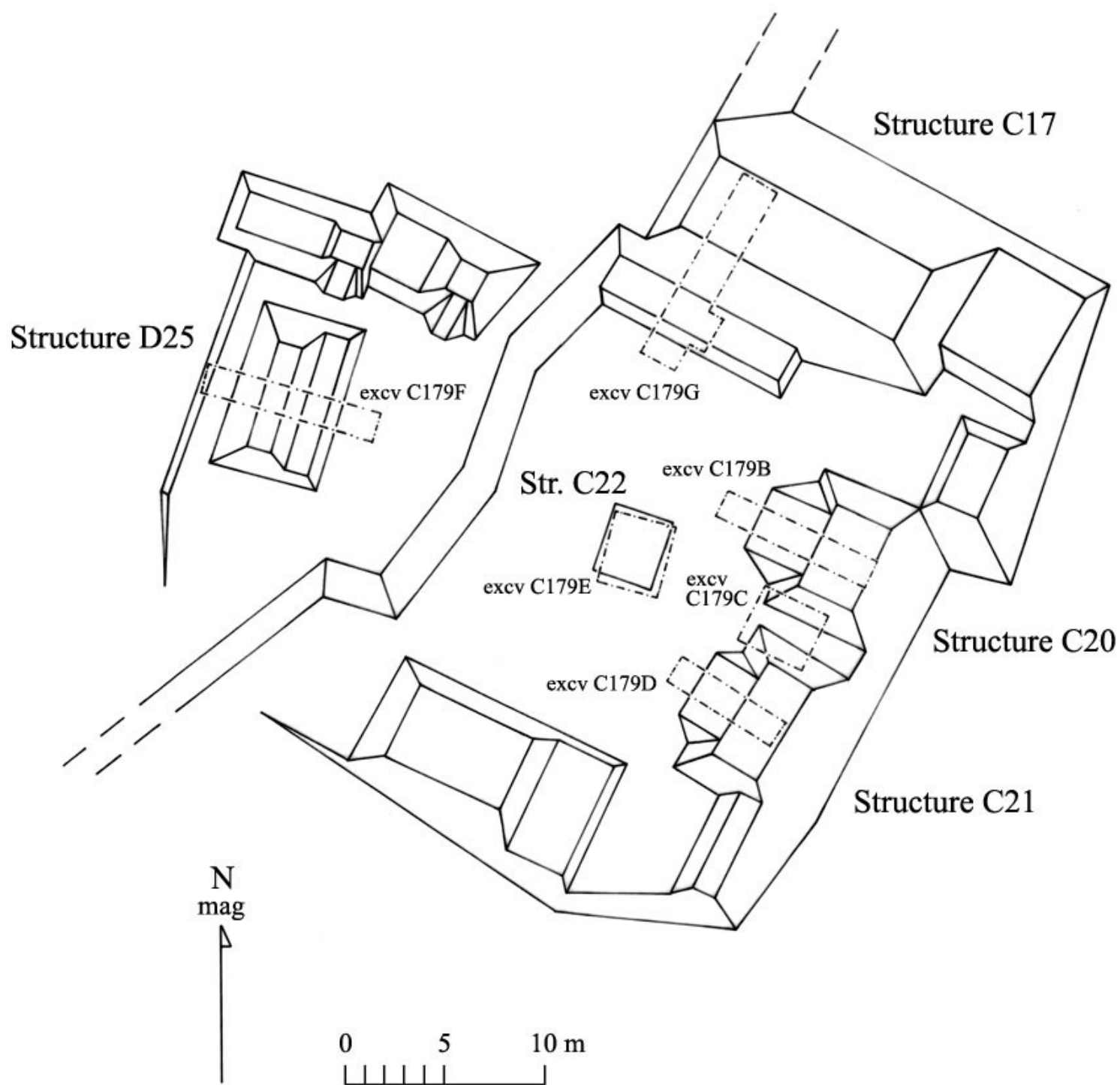








# “Culebras”





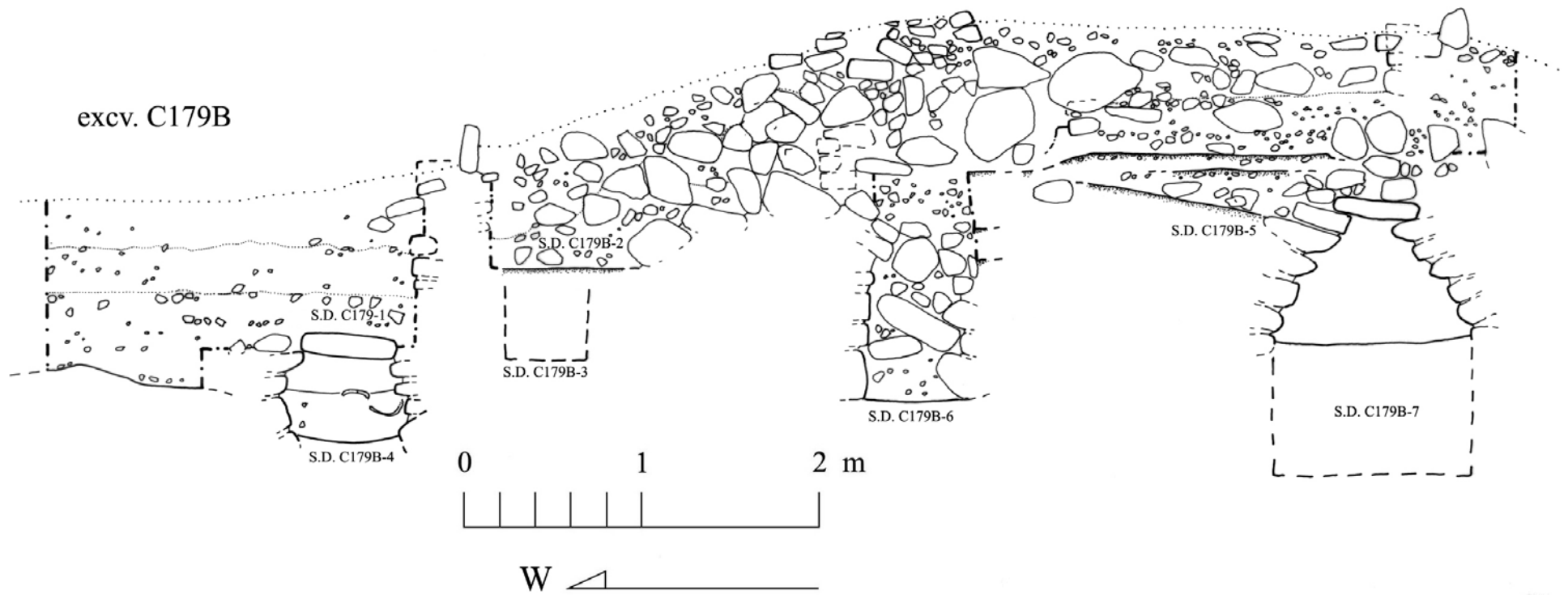








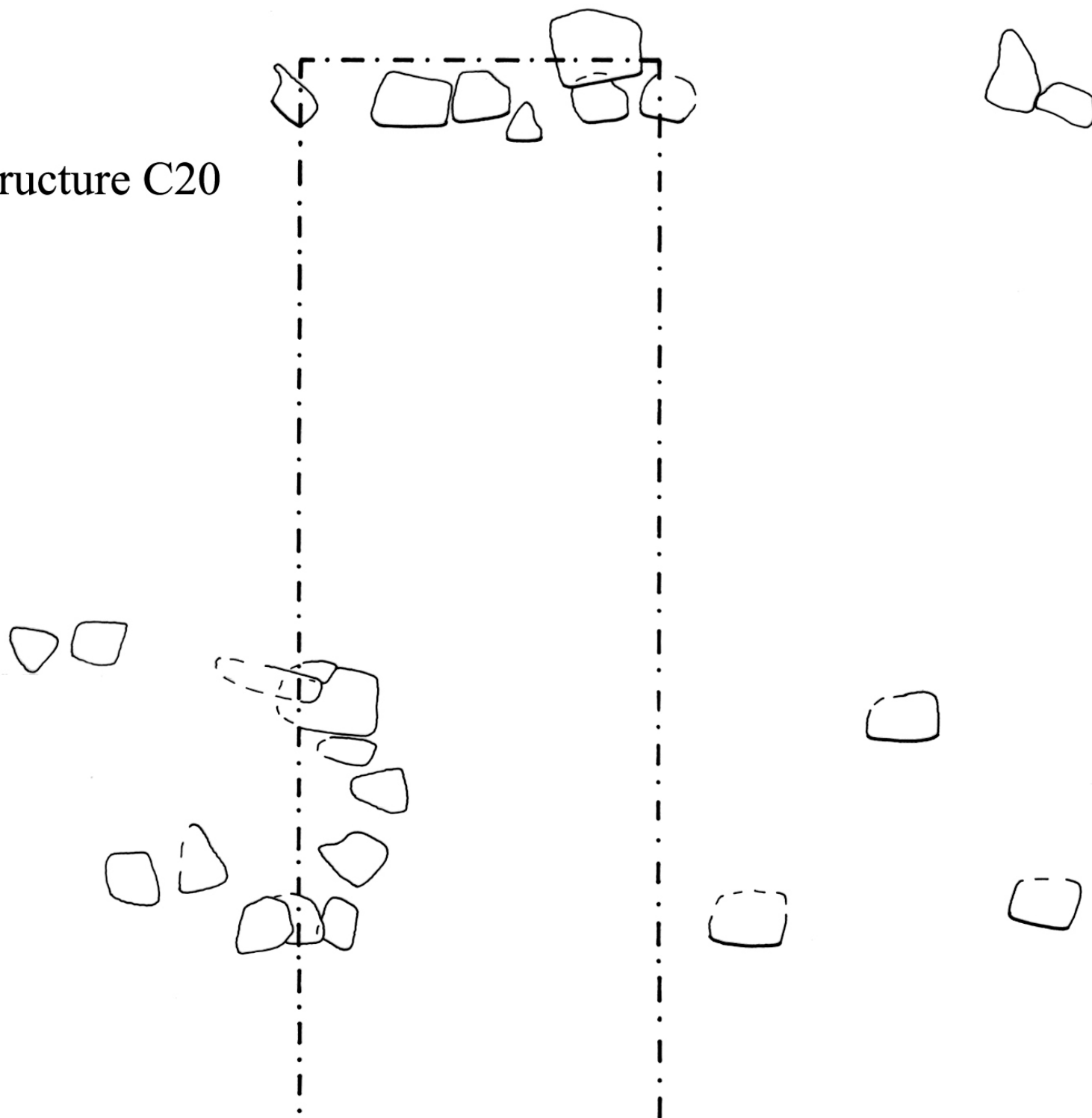
# CARACOL Structure C20

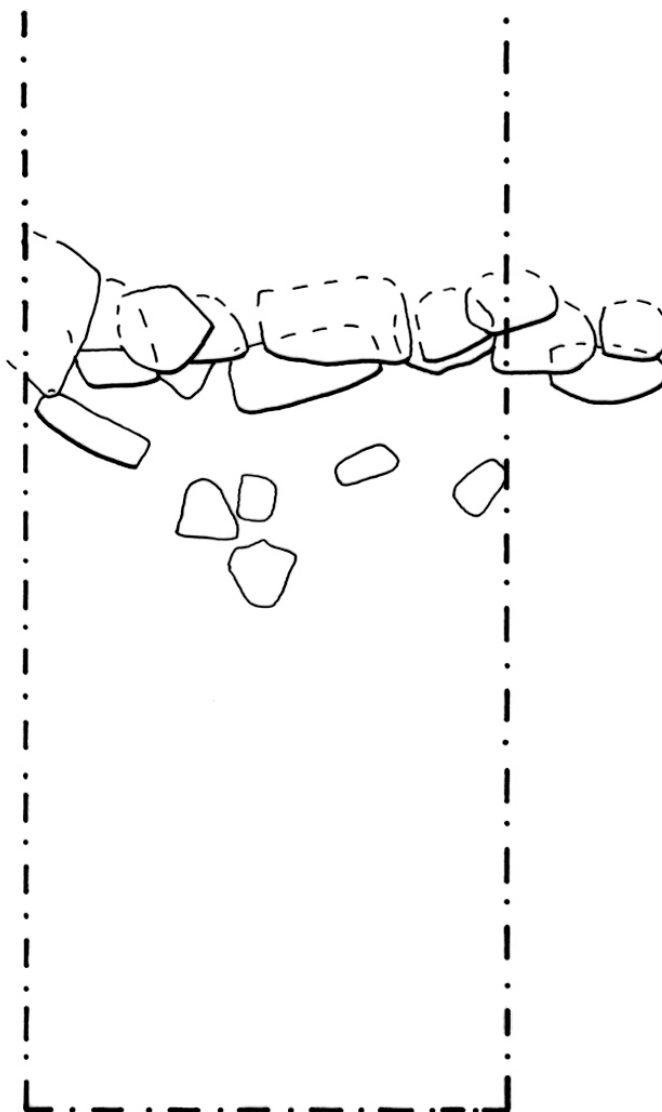
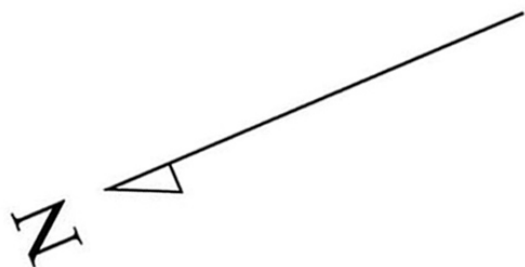
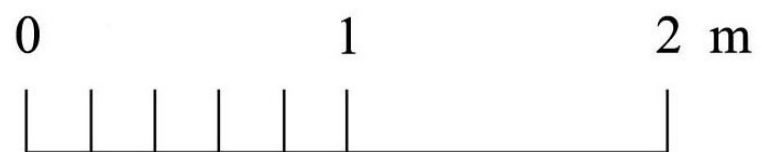




CARACOL Structure C20

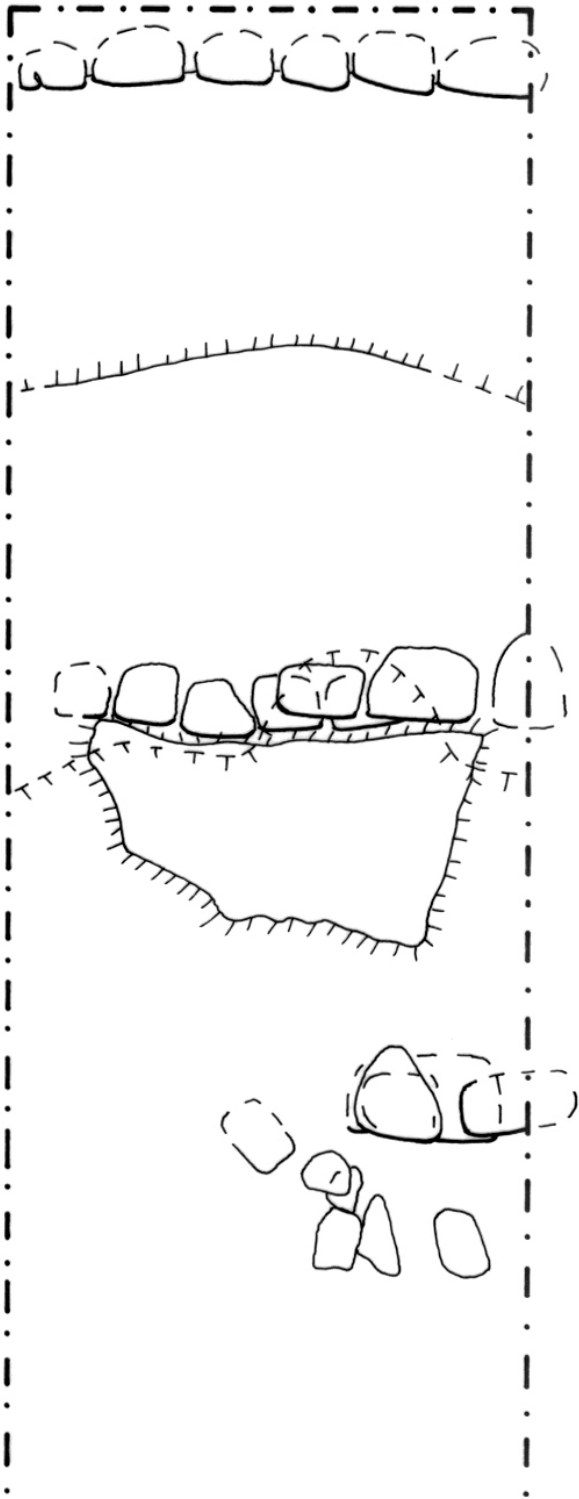
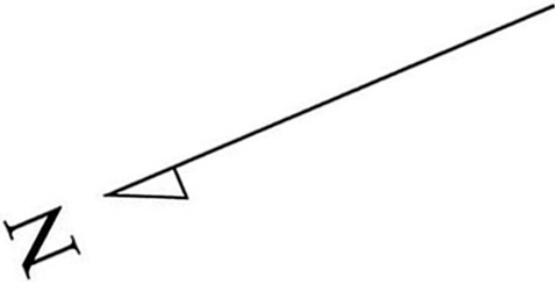
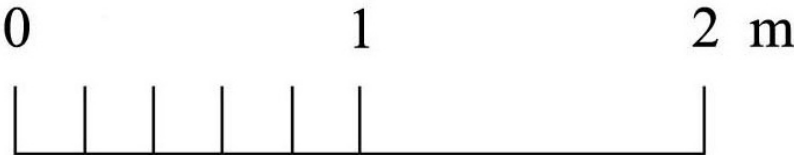
excv. C179B

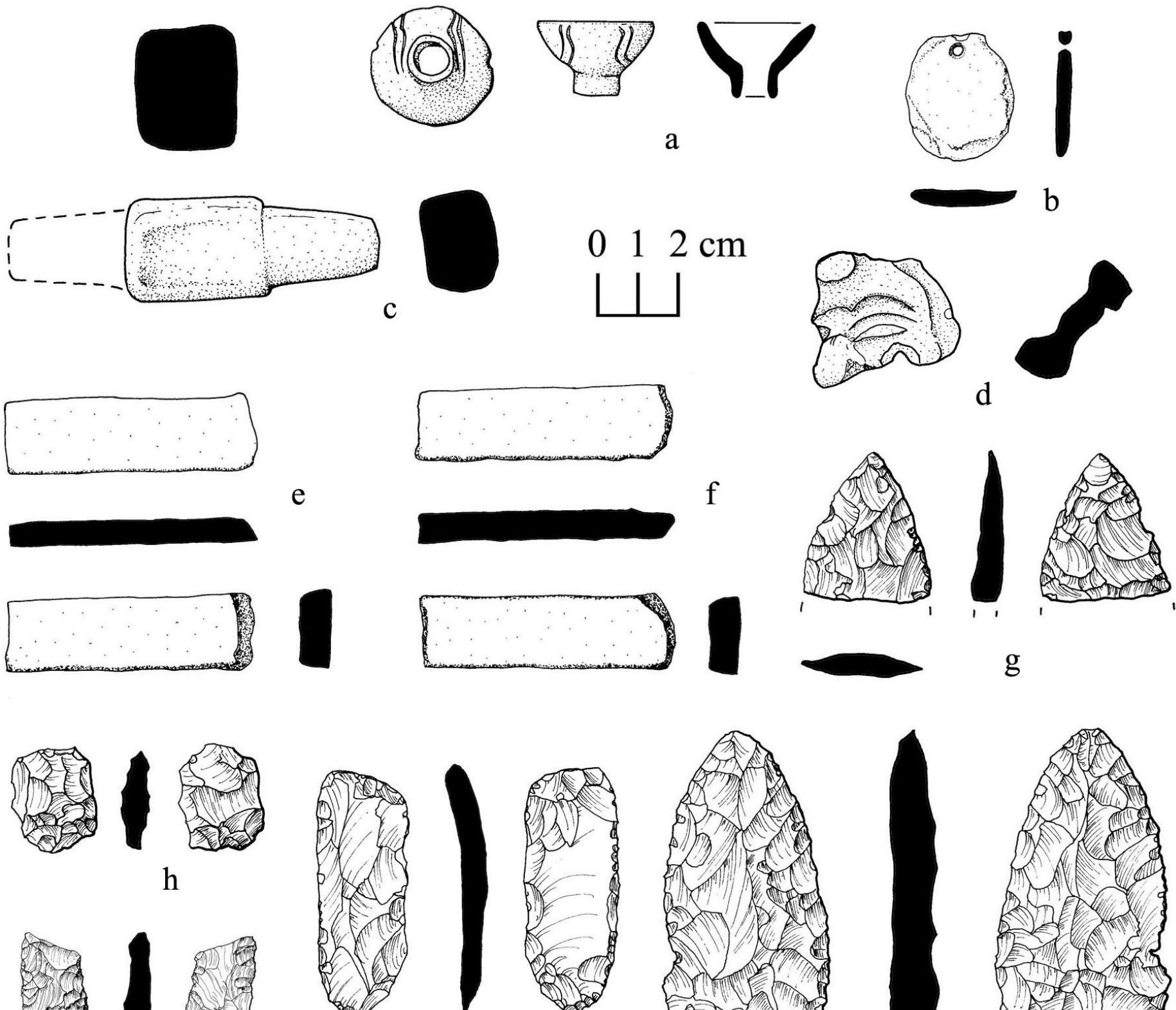


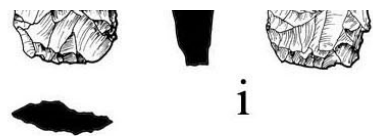


# CARACOL Structure C20

excv. C179B



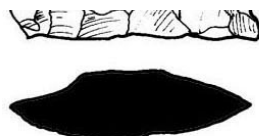




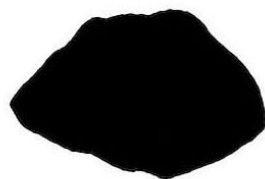
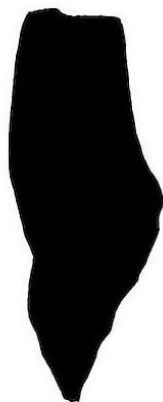
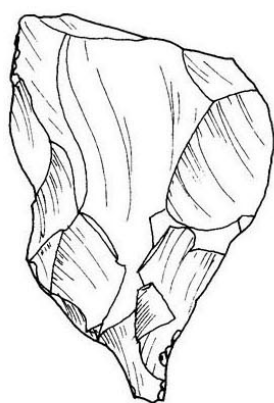
i



j

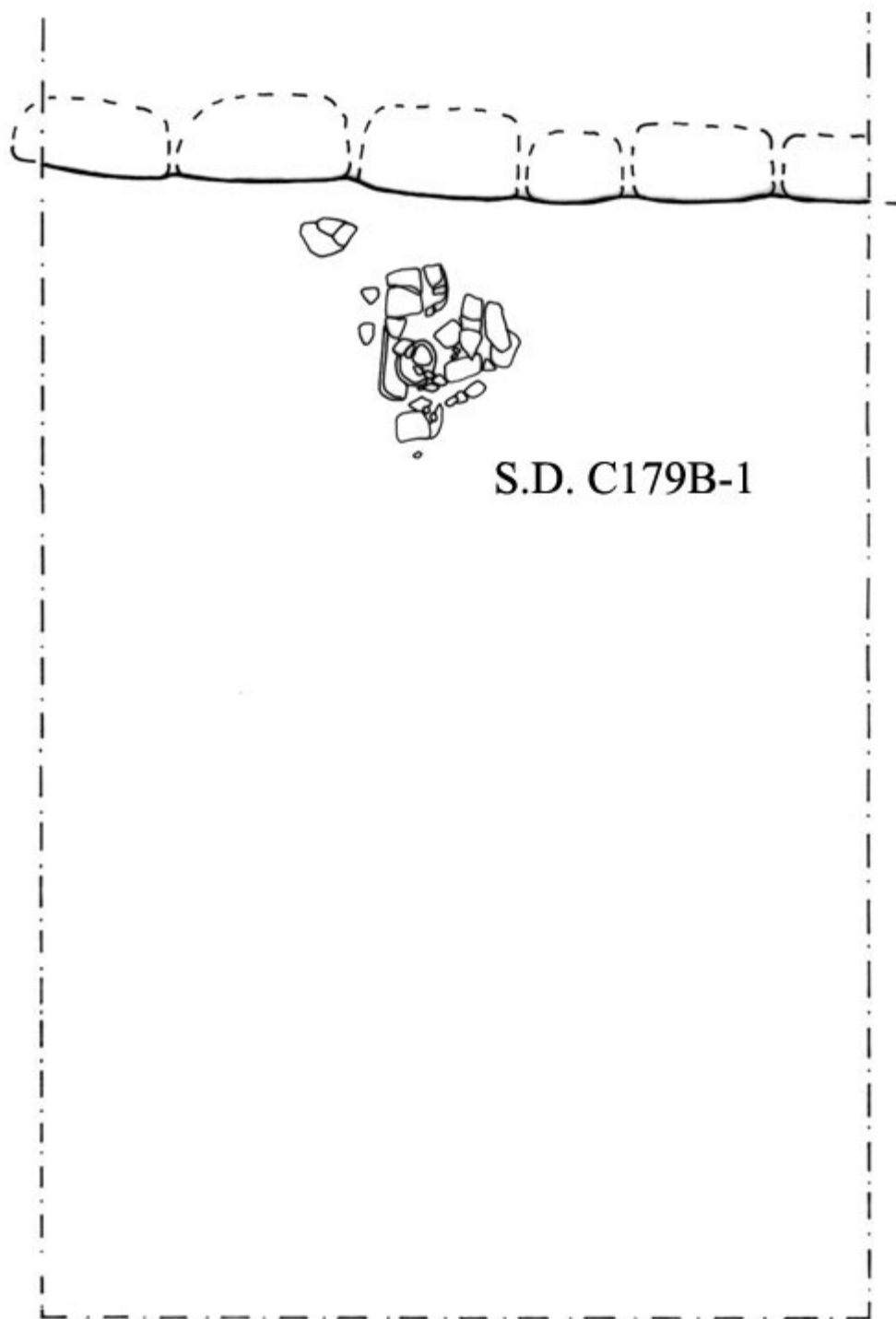


k



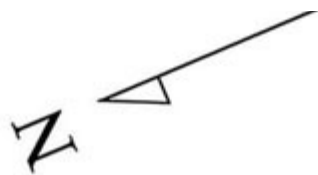
l

excv. C179B

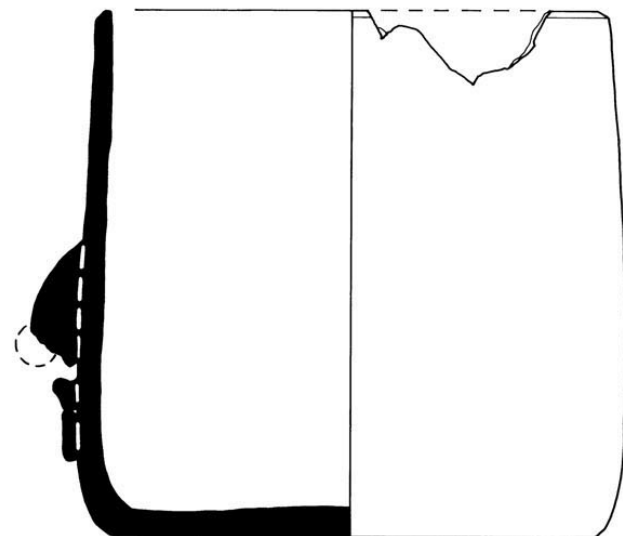
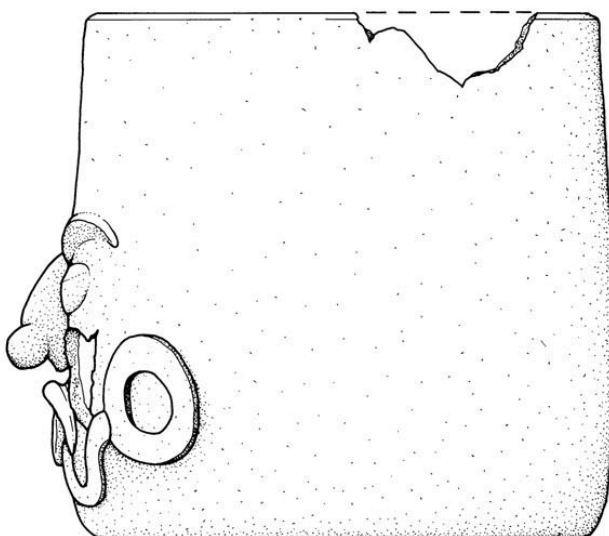
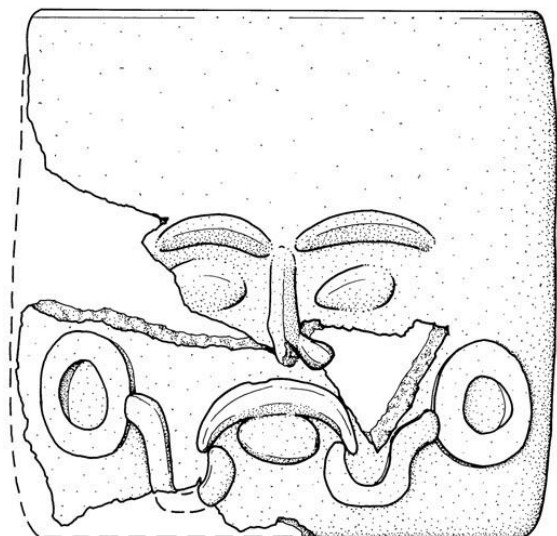
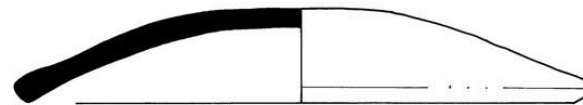
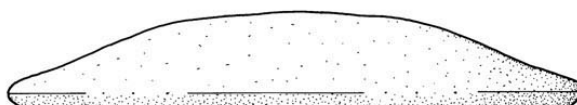
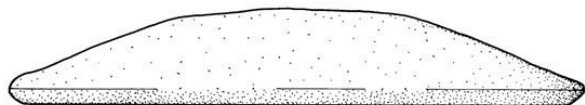


S.D. C179B-1

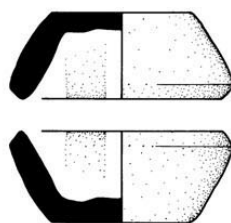








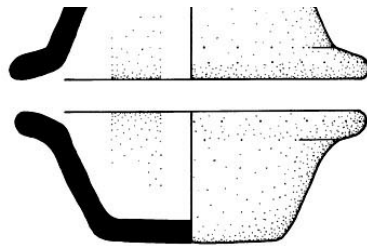
a



b

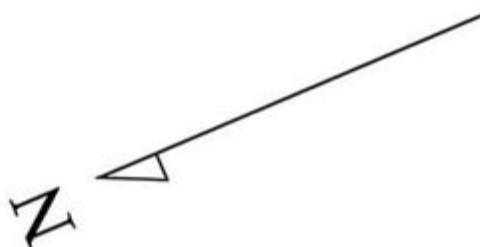
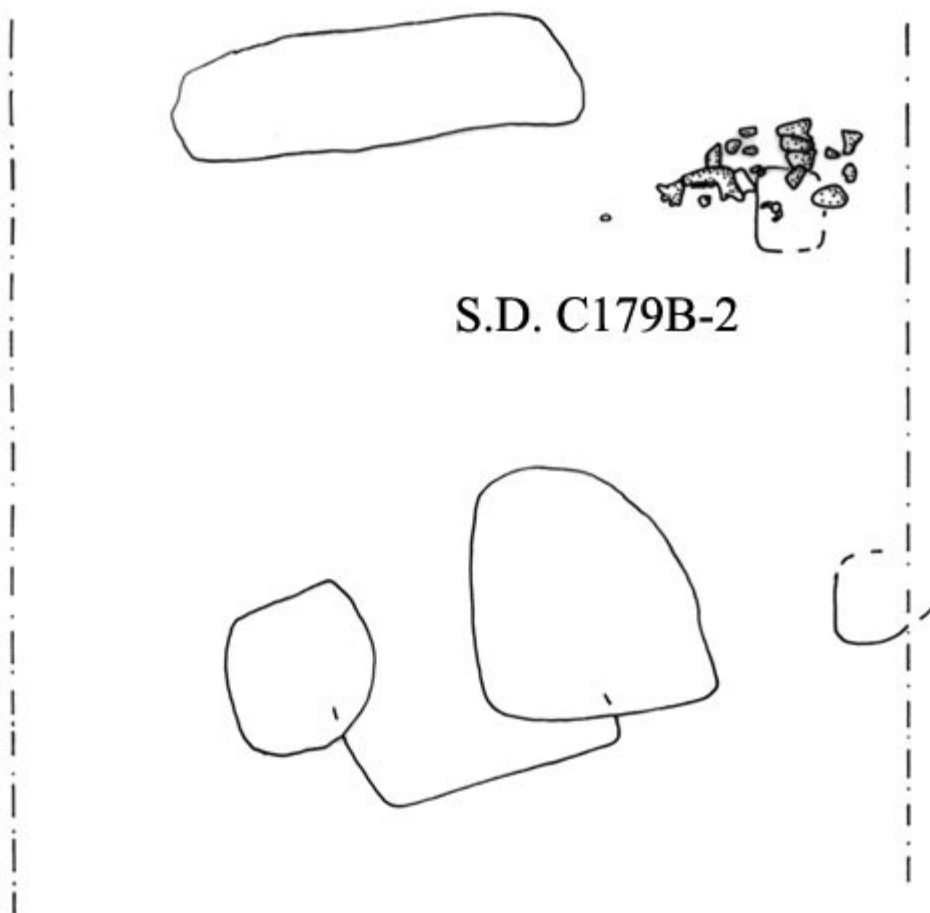
0 1 2 cm





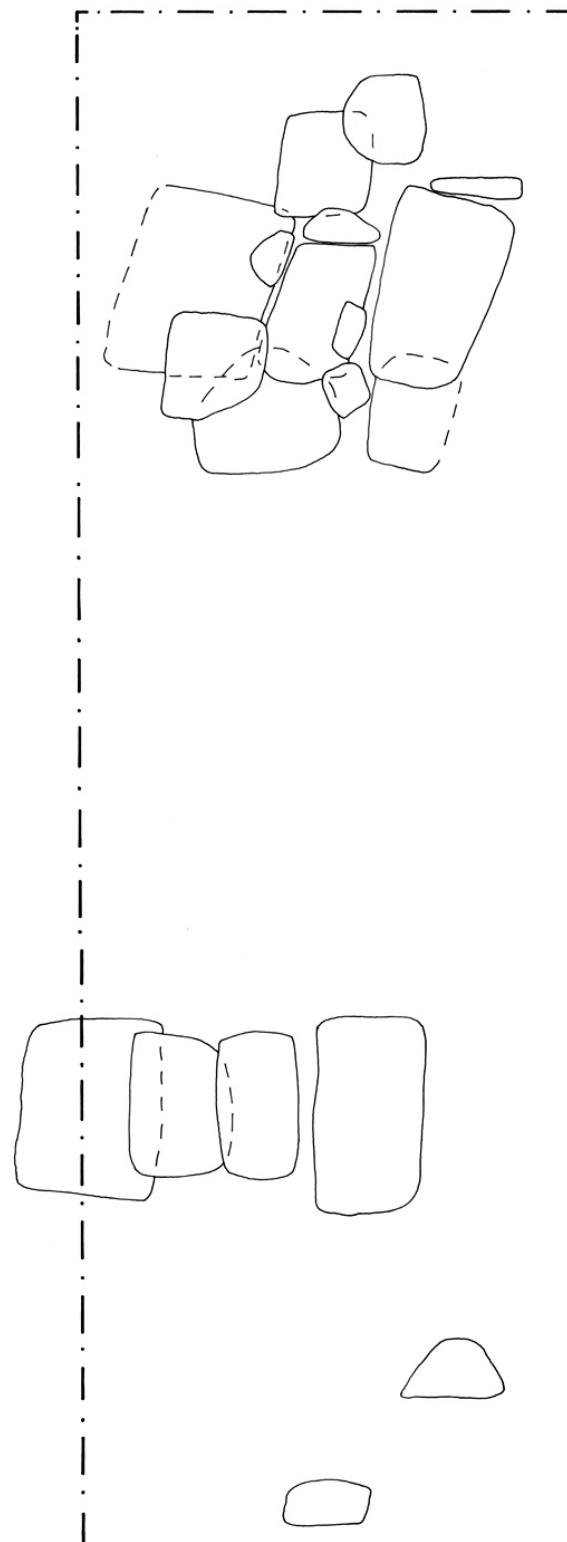
C

excv. C179B



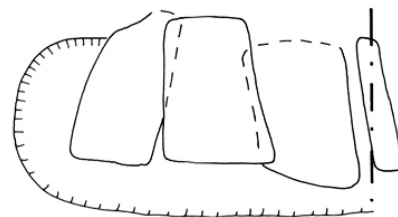
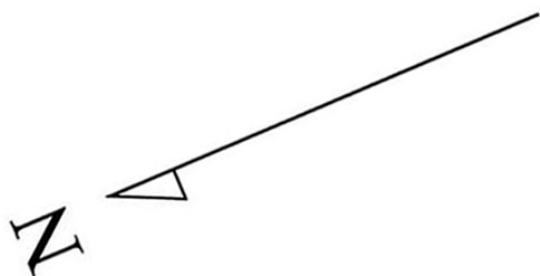
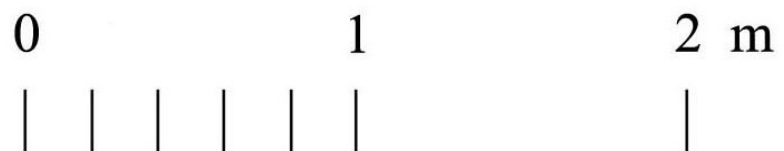
# CARACOL Structure C20

excv. C179B

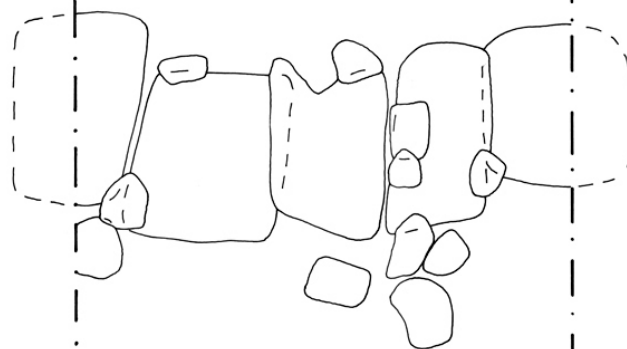


S.D. C179B-7

S.D. C179B-6



S.D. C179B-3



S.D. C179B-4







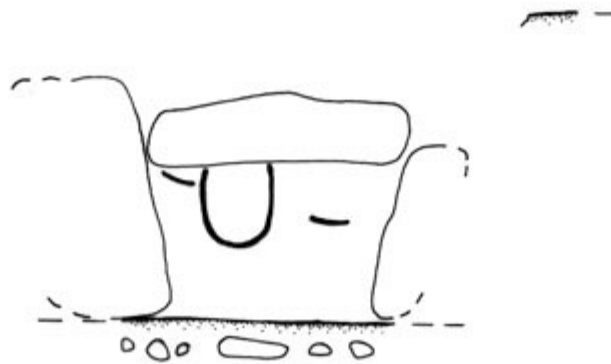




excv. C179B



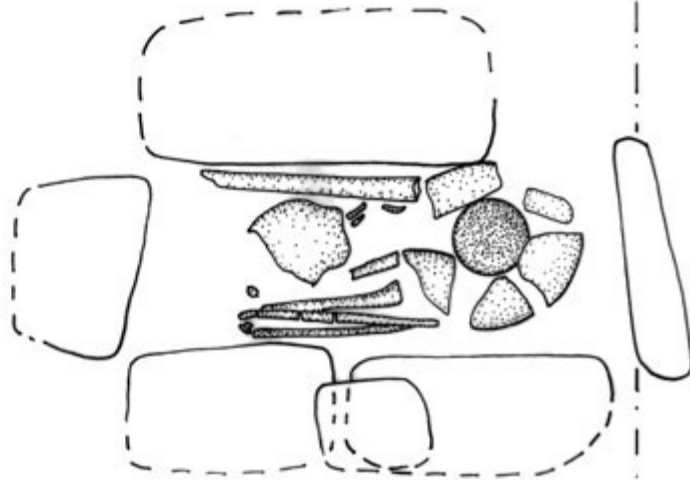
S.D. C179B-3





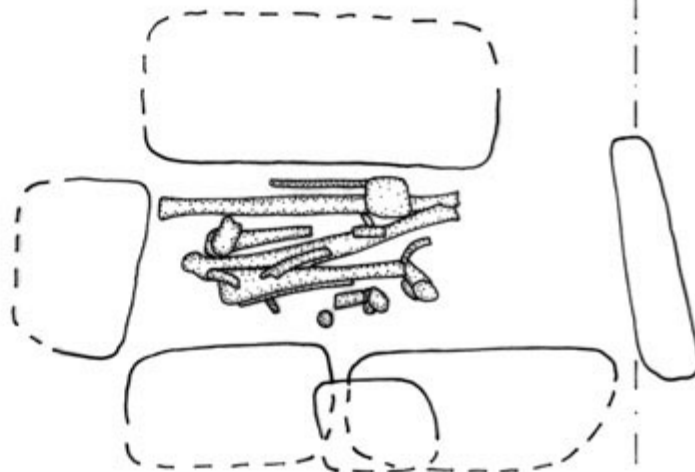
excv. C179B

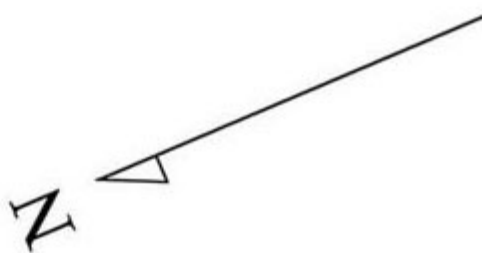
upper plan

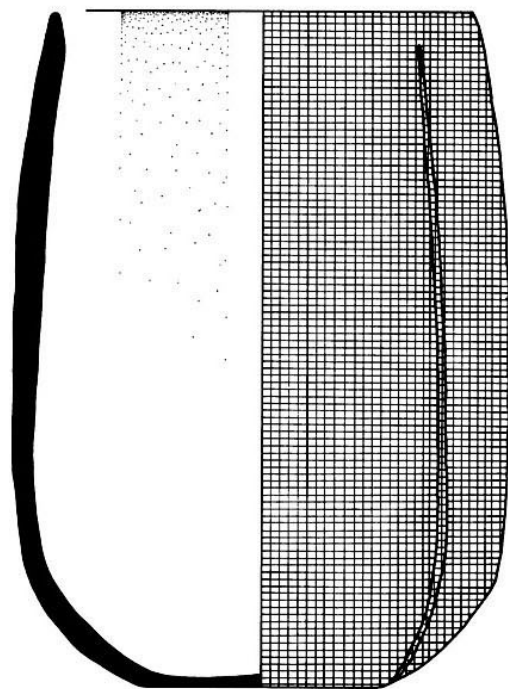


S.D. C179B-3


lower plan



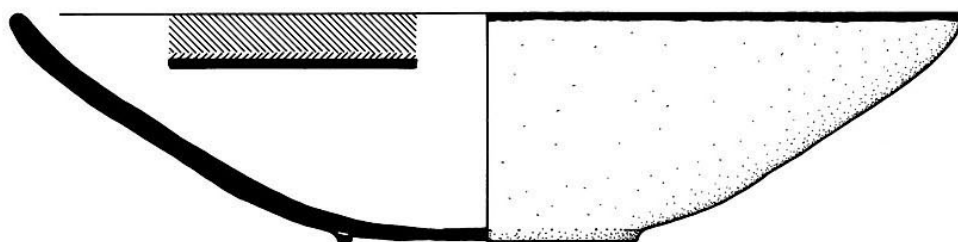




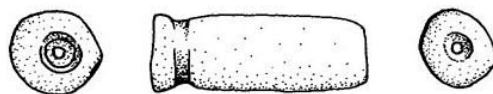
0 1 2 cm



a




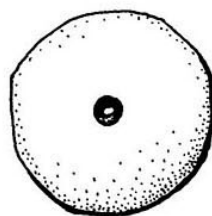
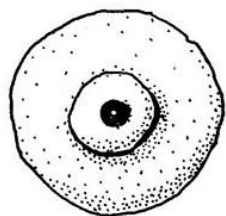
b



c

0 1 2 cm





d



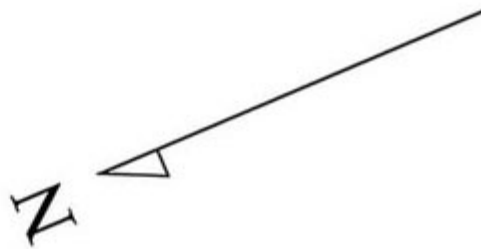
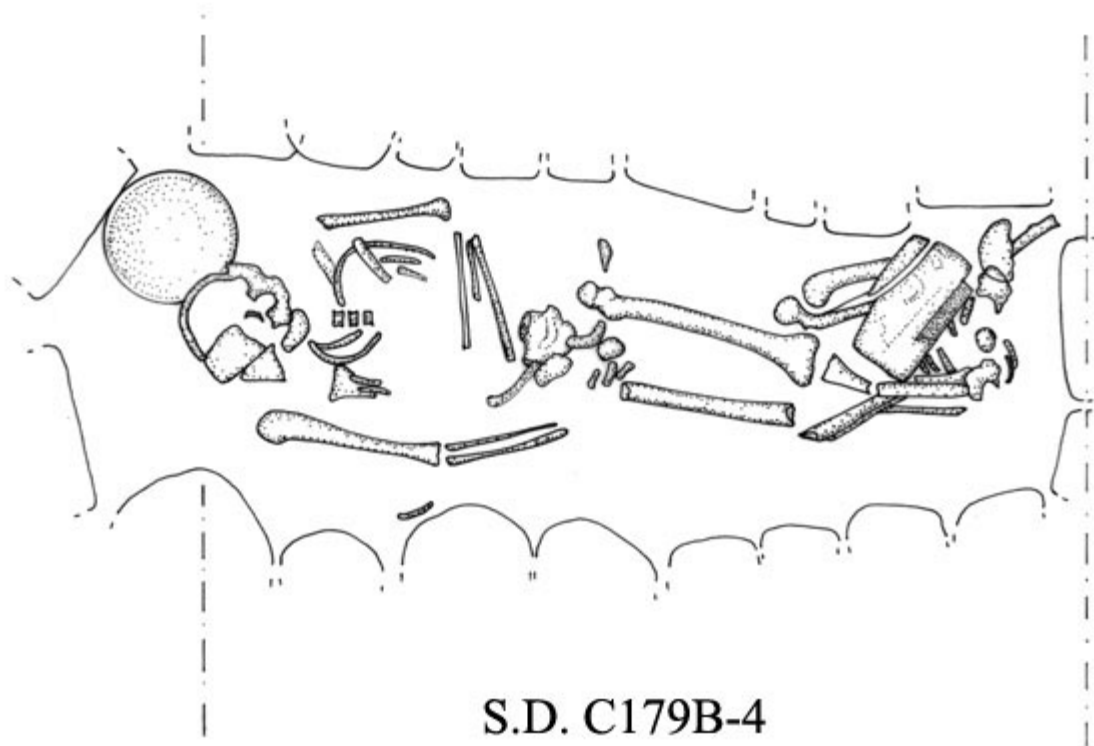








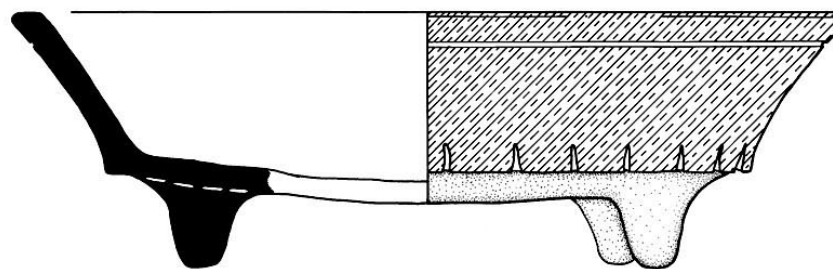
excv. C179B





a

0 1 2 cm



b













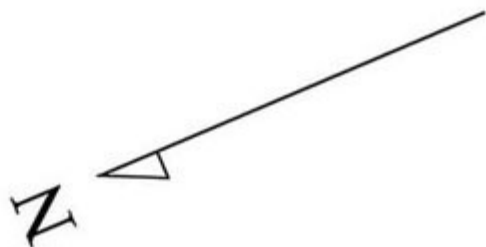






excv. C179B

S.D. C179B-5









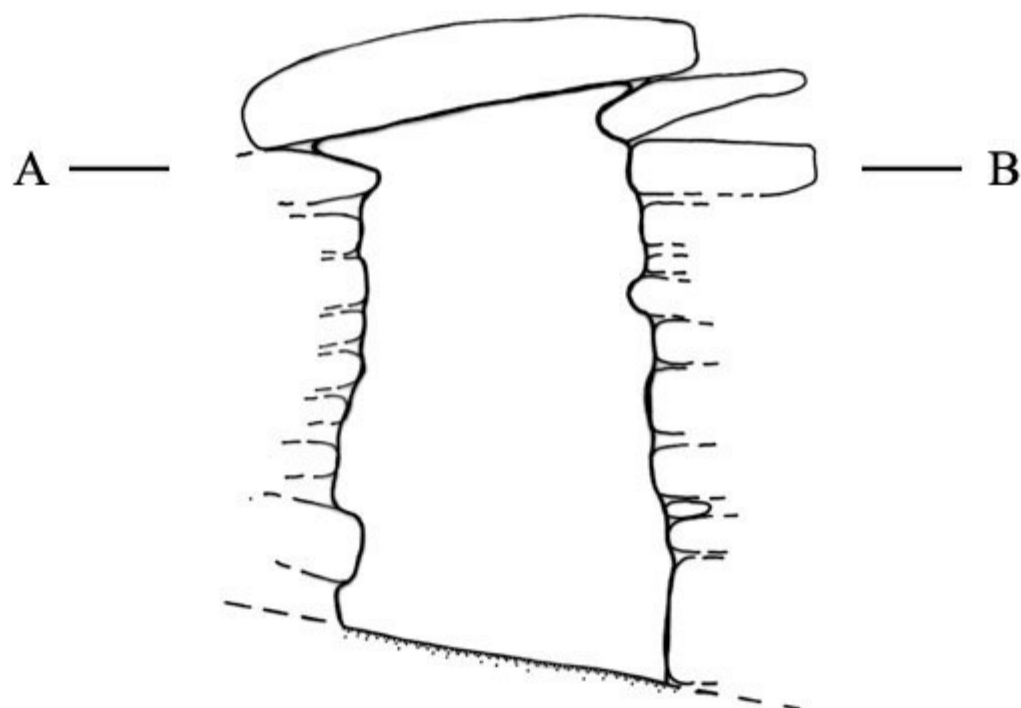




excv. C179B

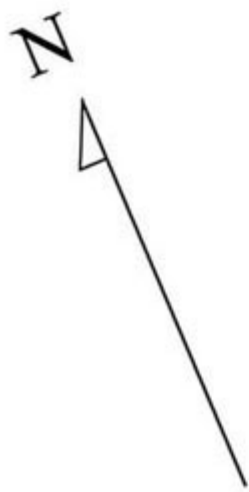
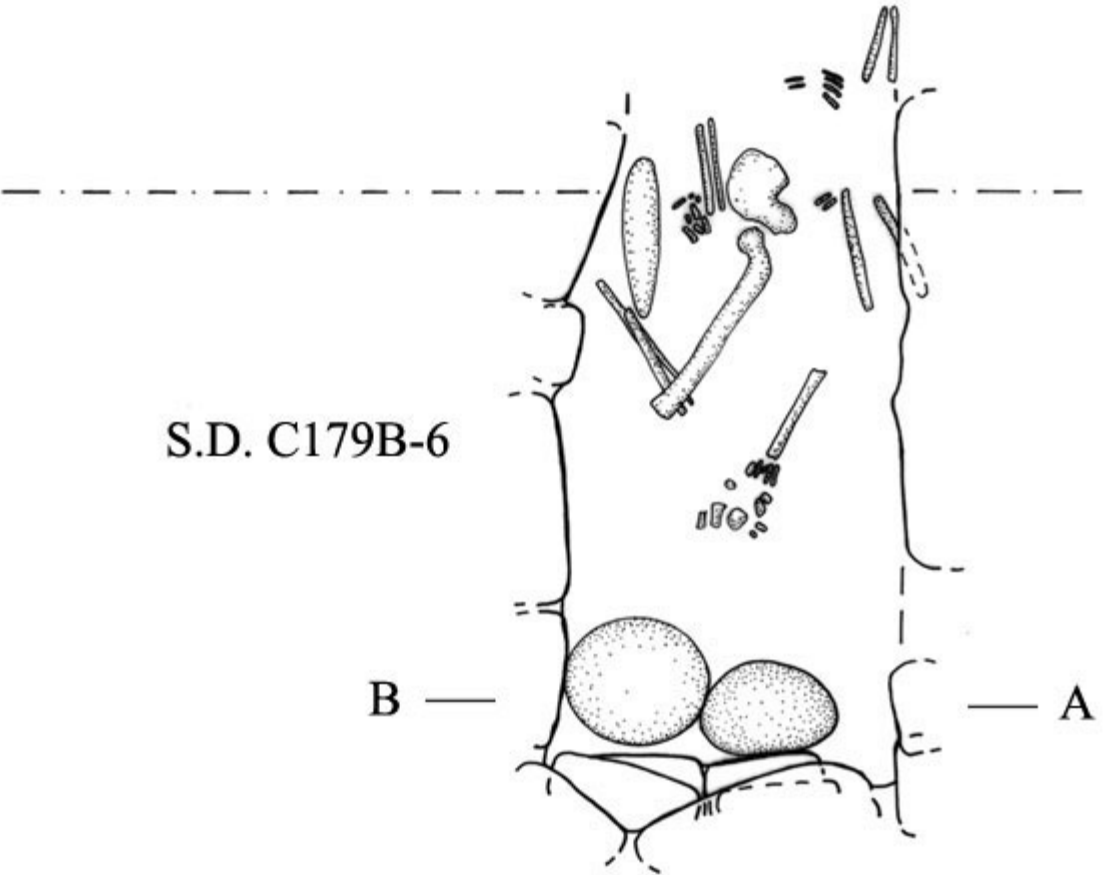


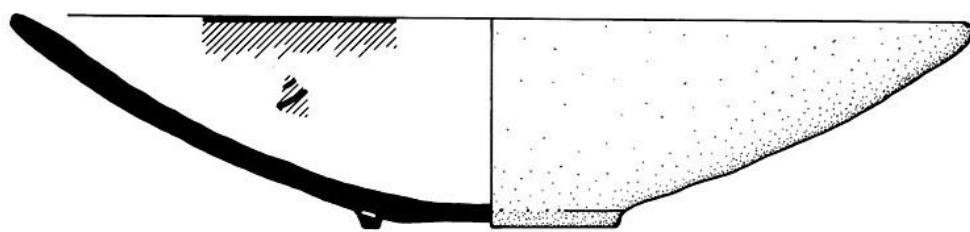
S.D. C179B-6



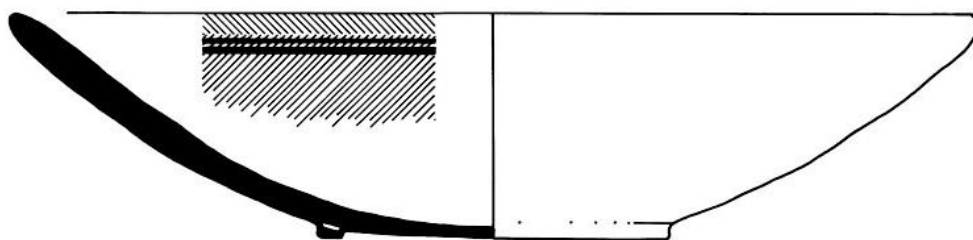


excv. C179B

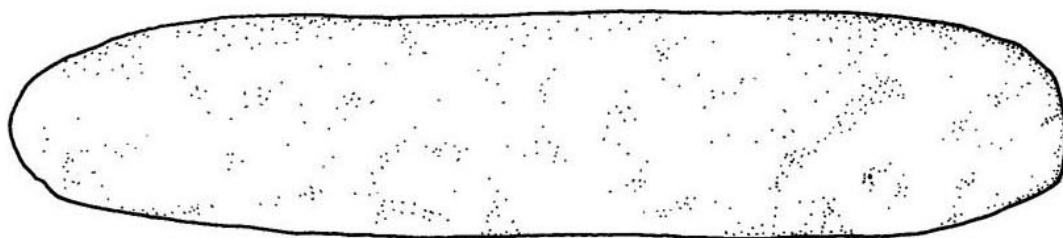
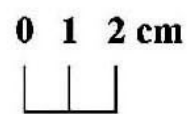




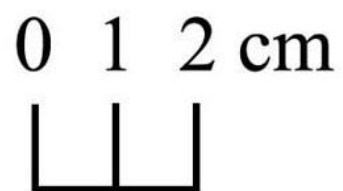
a



b



c



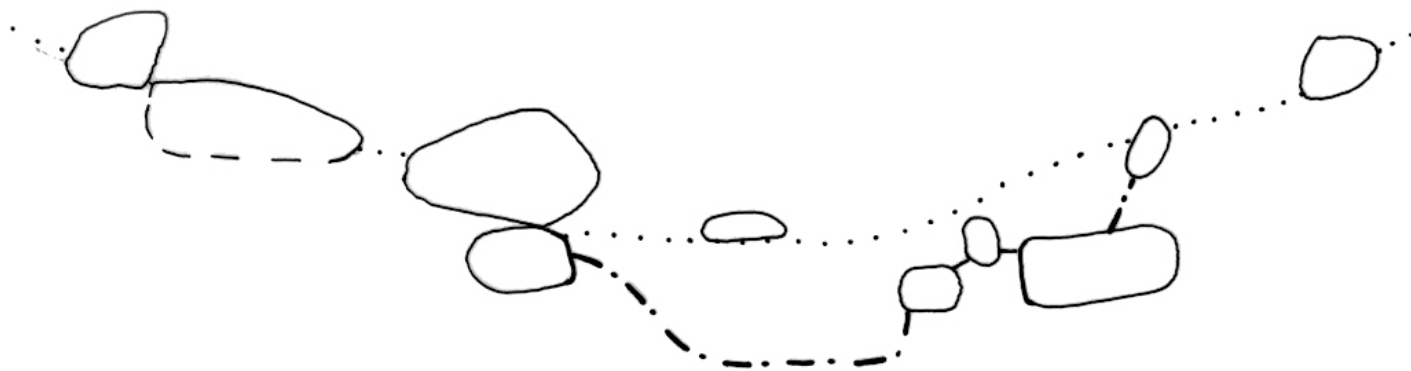








excv. C179C





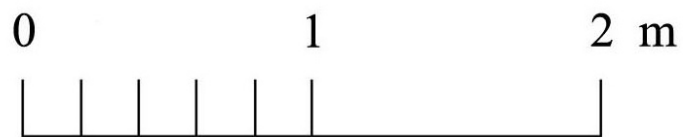
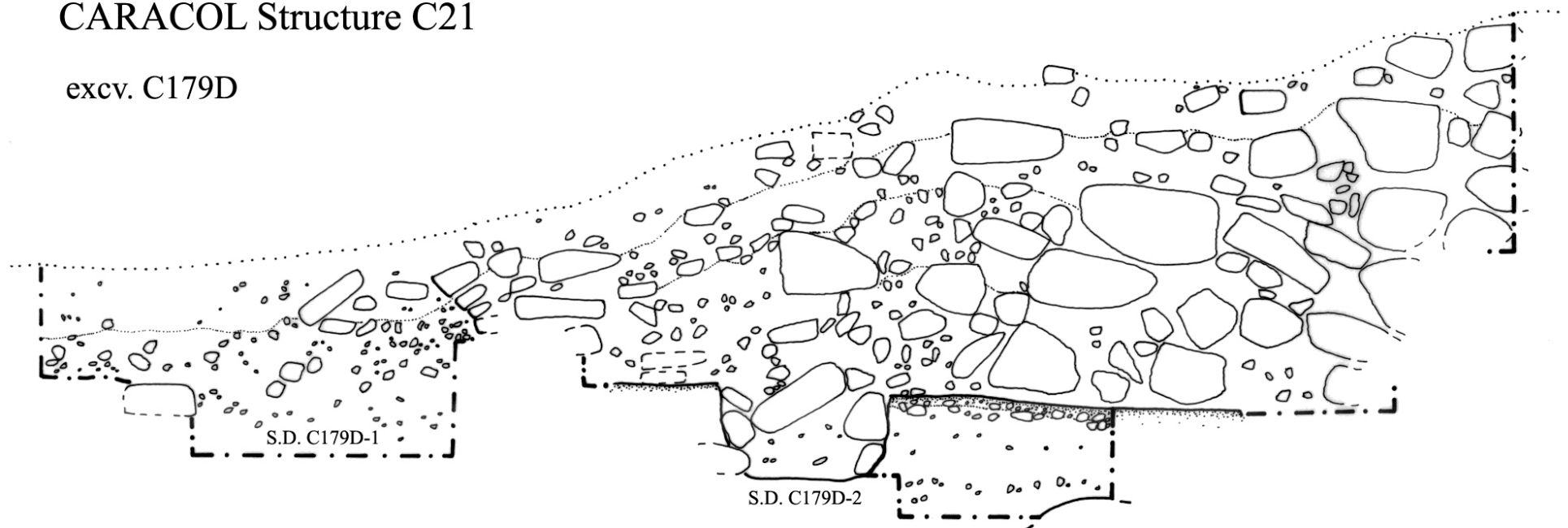






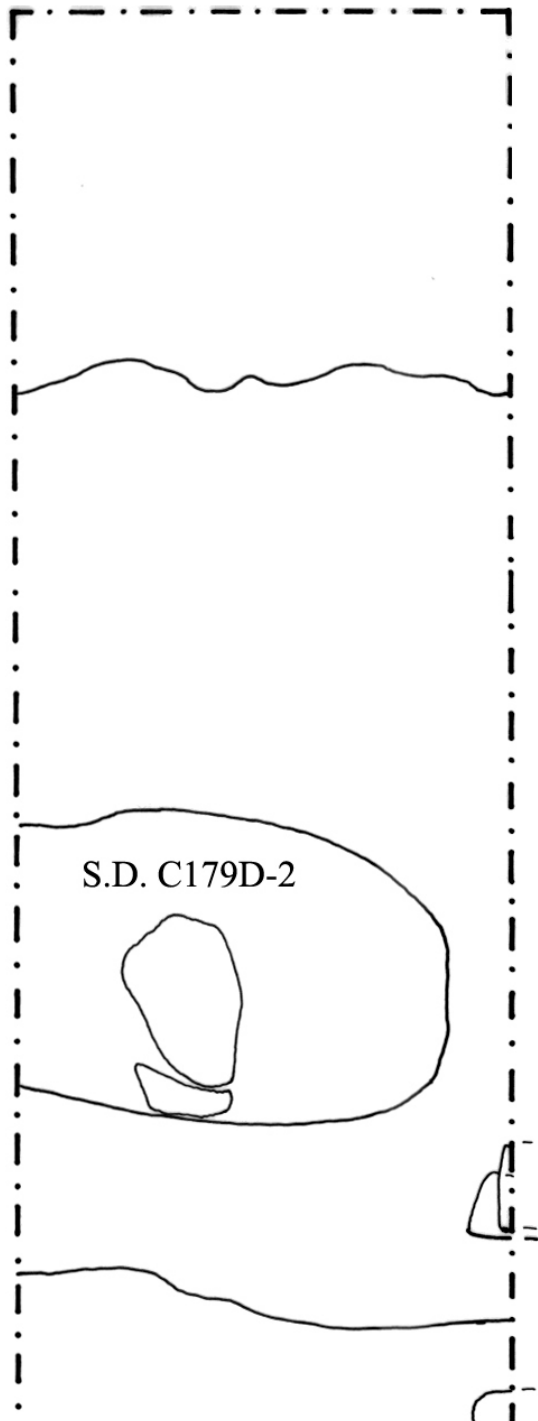
# CARACOL Structure C21

excv. C179D



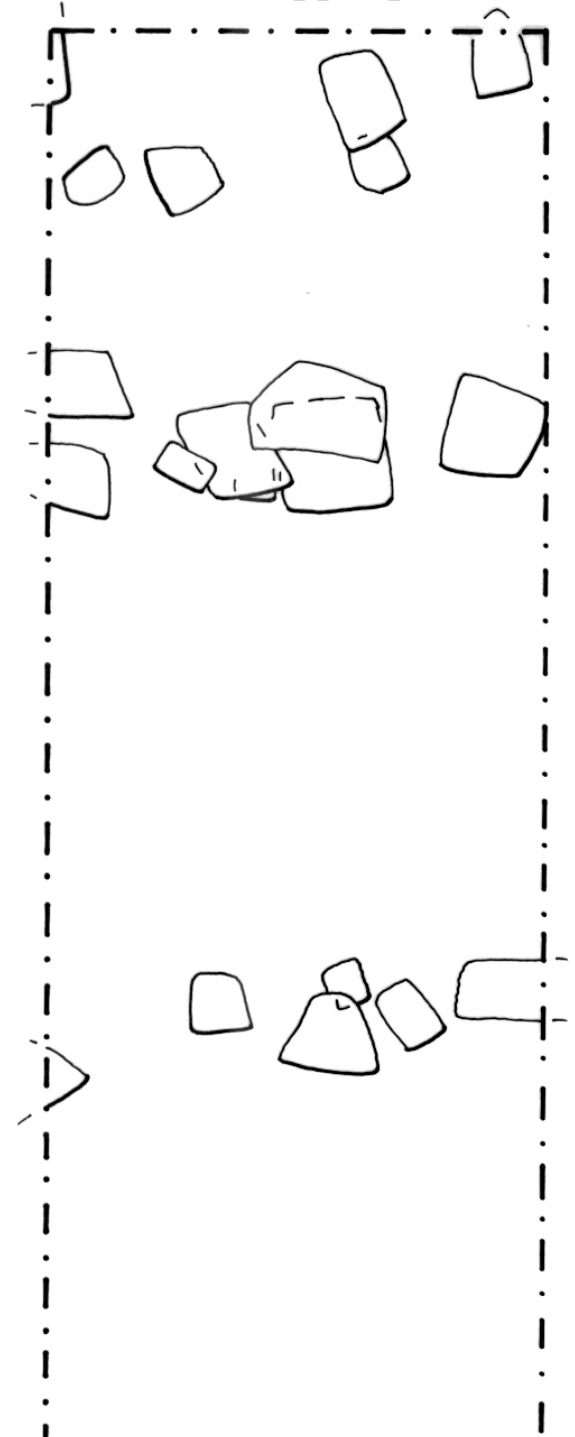
# CARACOL Structure C21

lower plan

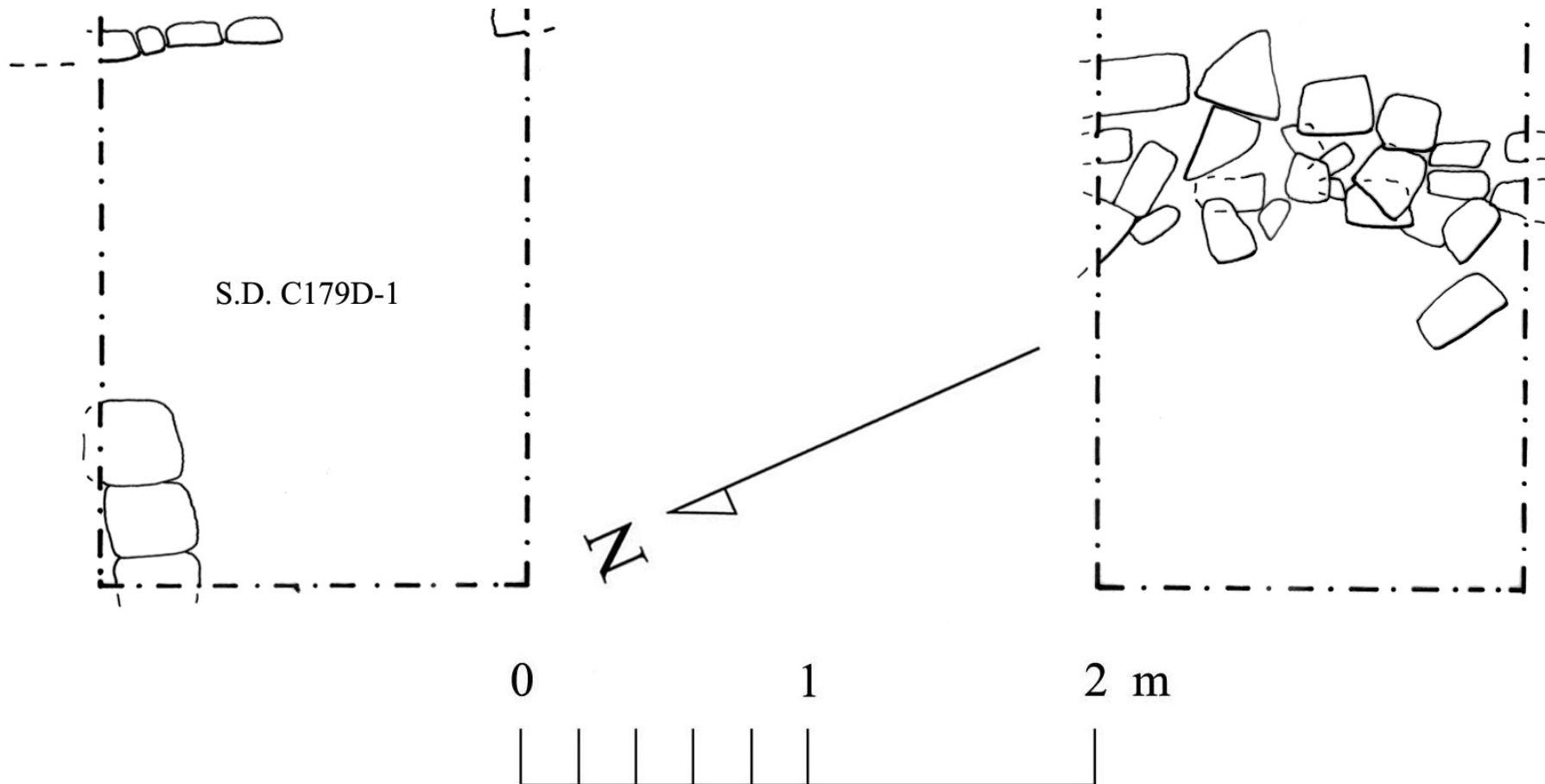


excv. C179D

upper plan





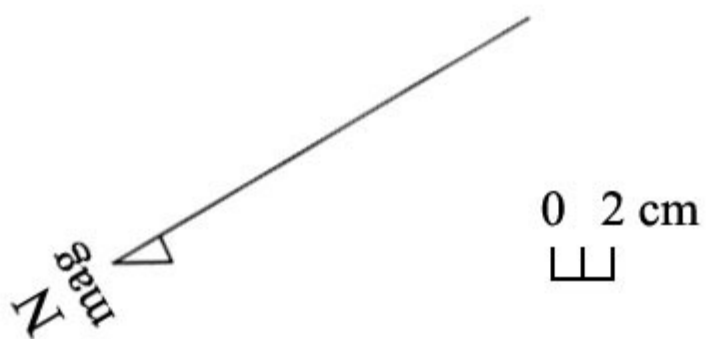
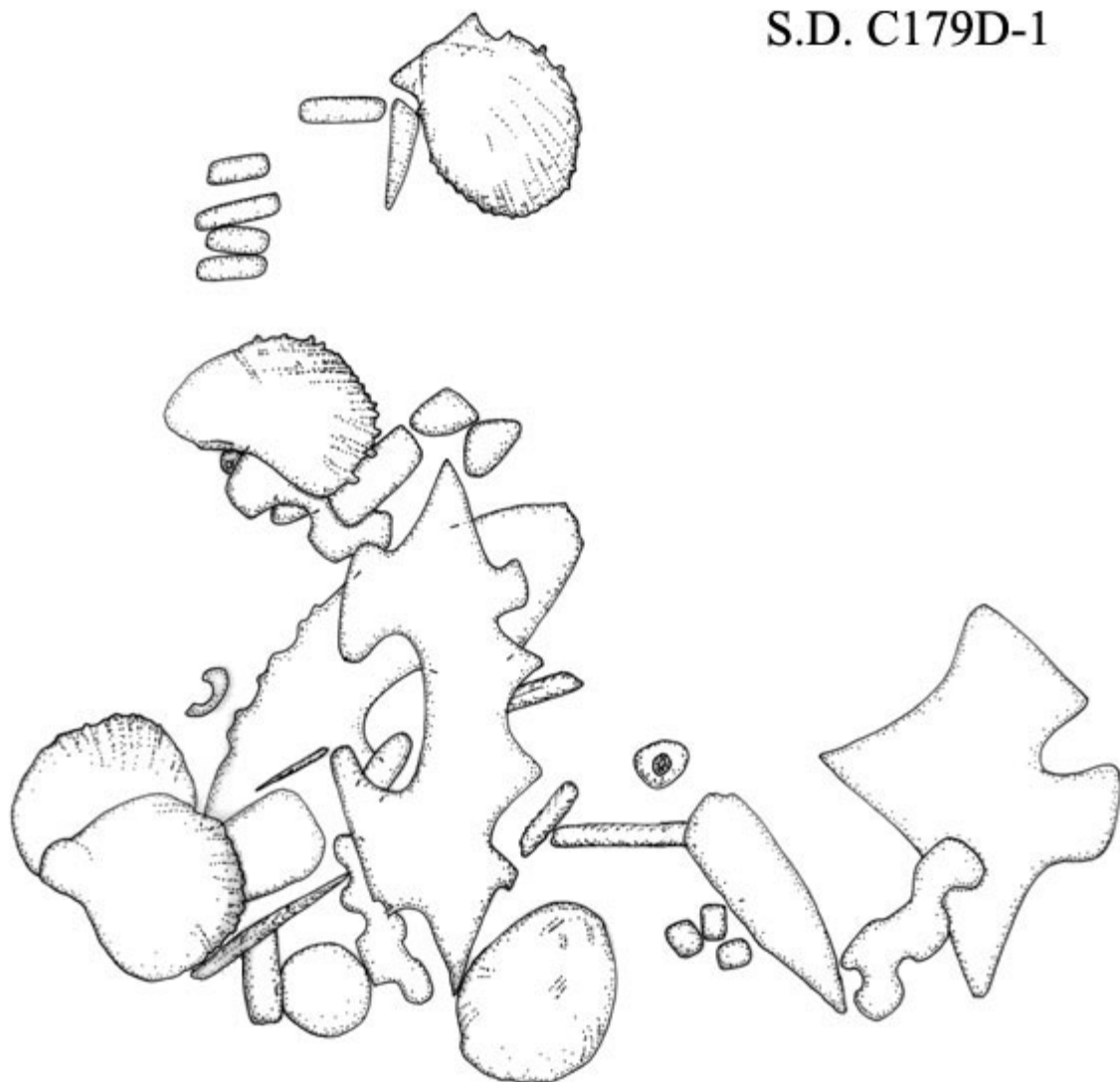


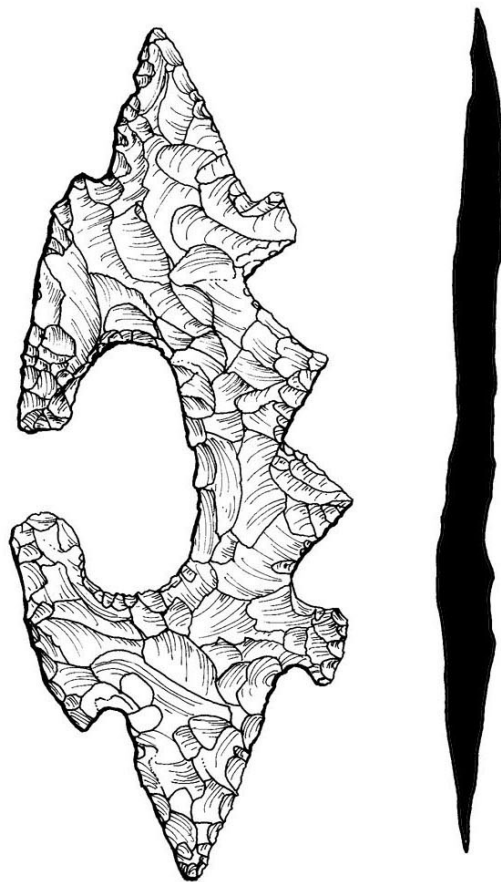




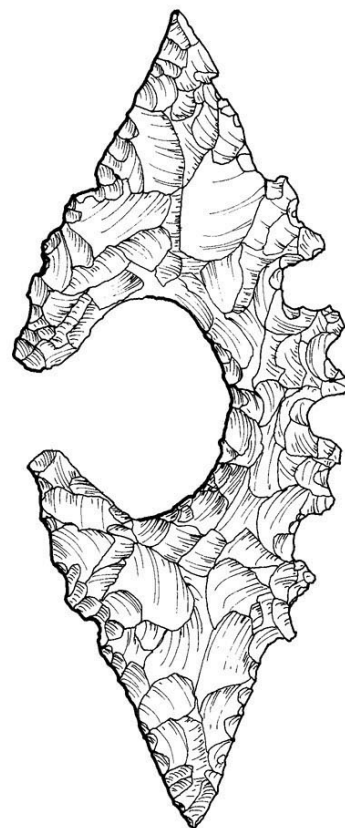
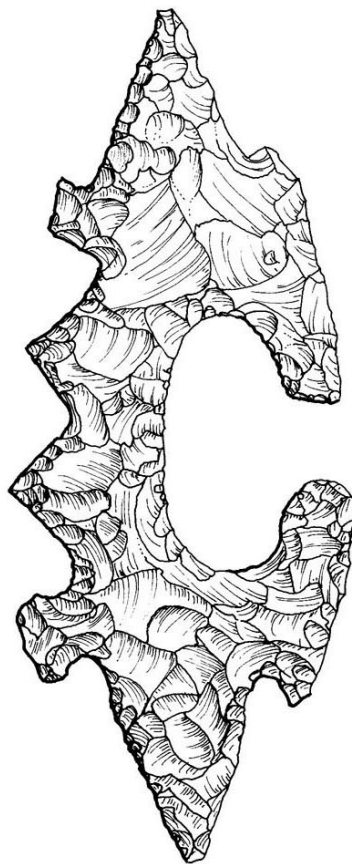


S.D. C179D-1

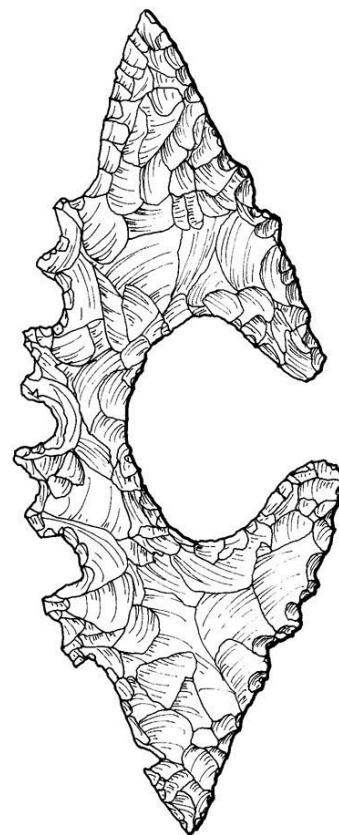




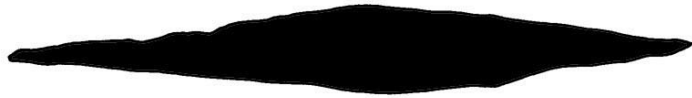
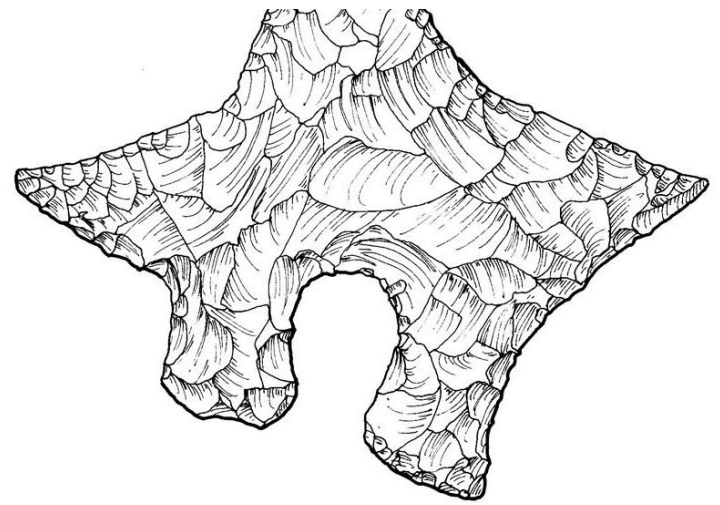
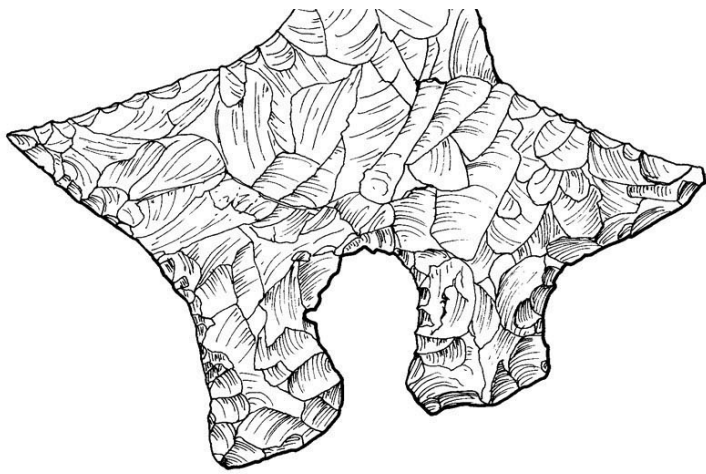
a



b

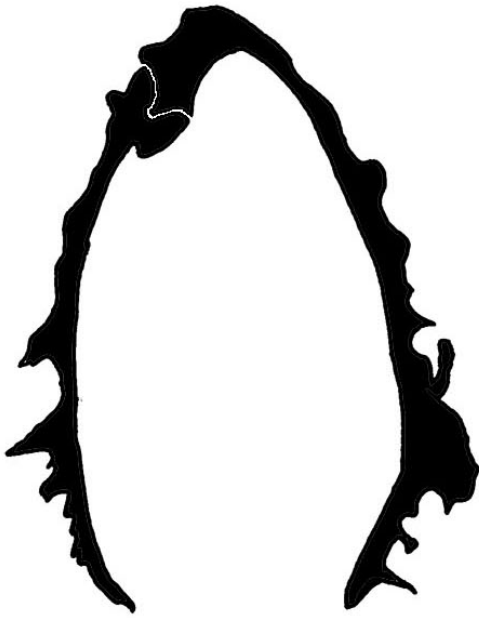




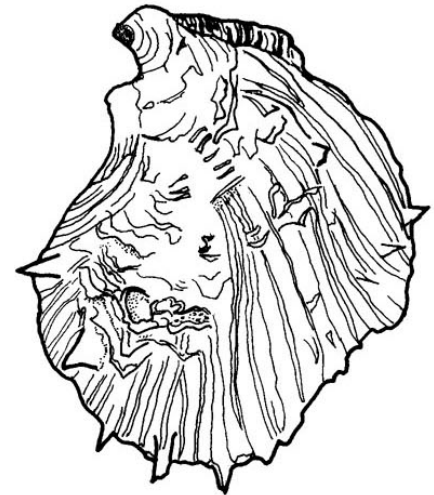


c

0 1 2 cm  
└─┬─┘



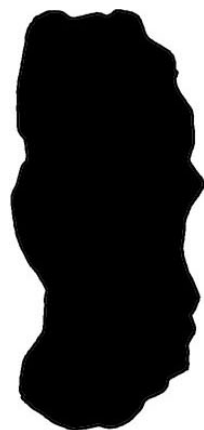

d



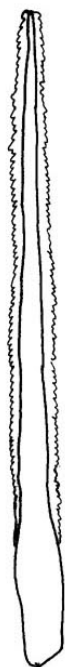
e

f

0 1 2 cm



g



h

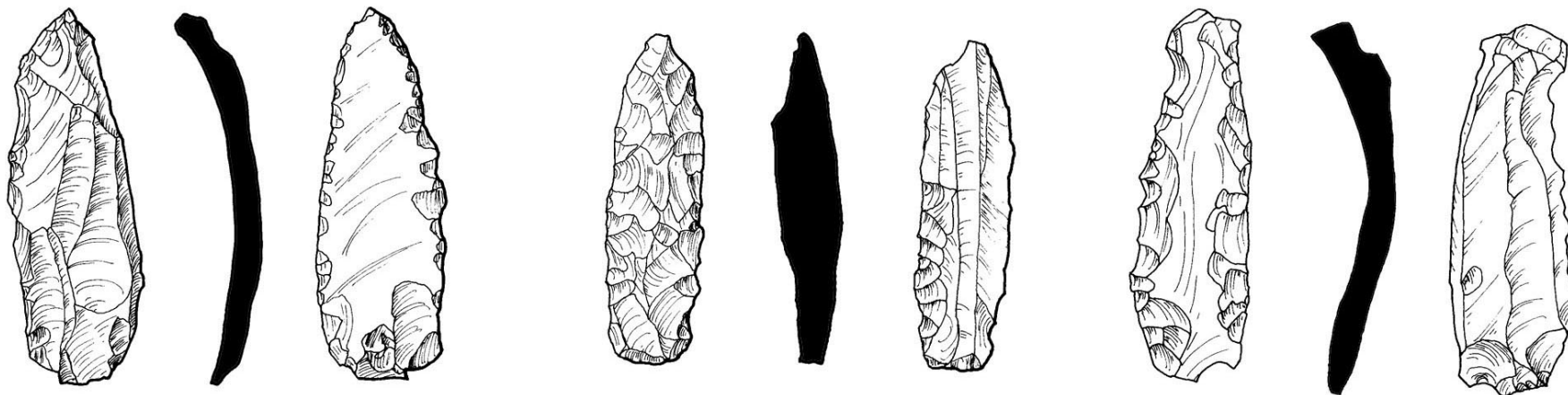


i



j

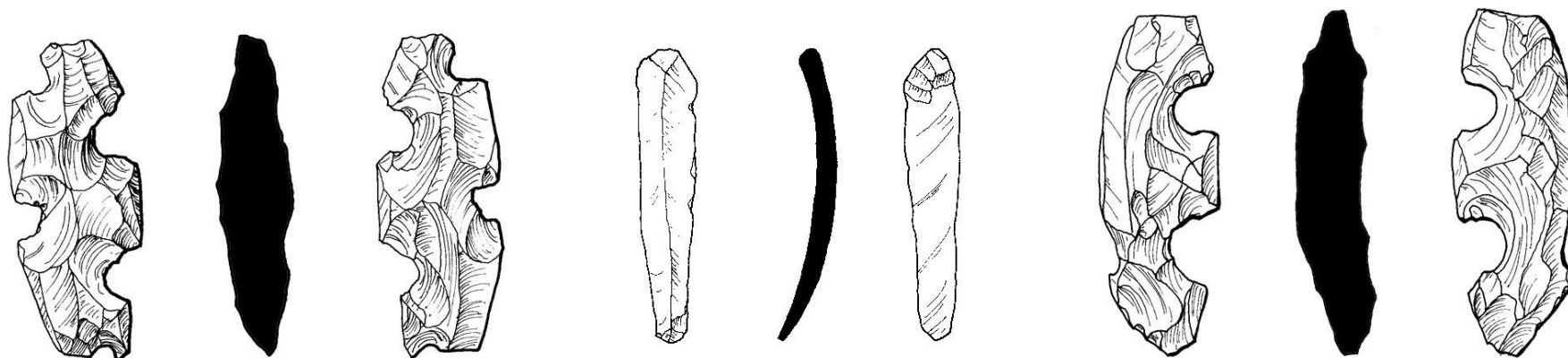





k

l

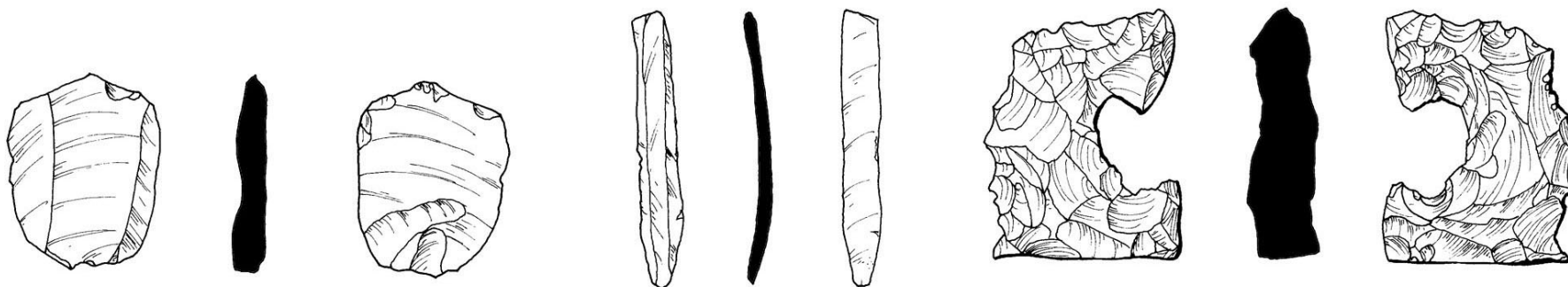
m




n

o

p







q



r



s



t



u



v



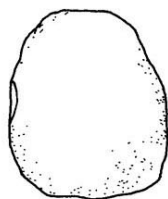
w



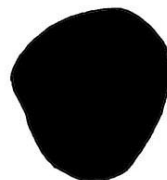
x



y



z



aa



0 1 2 cm



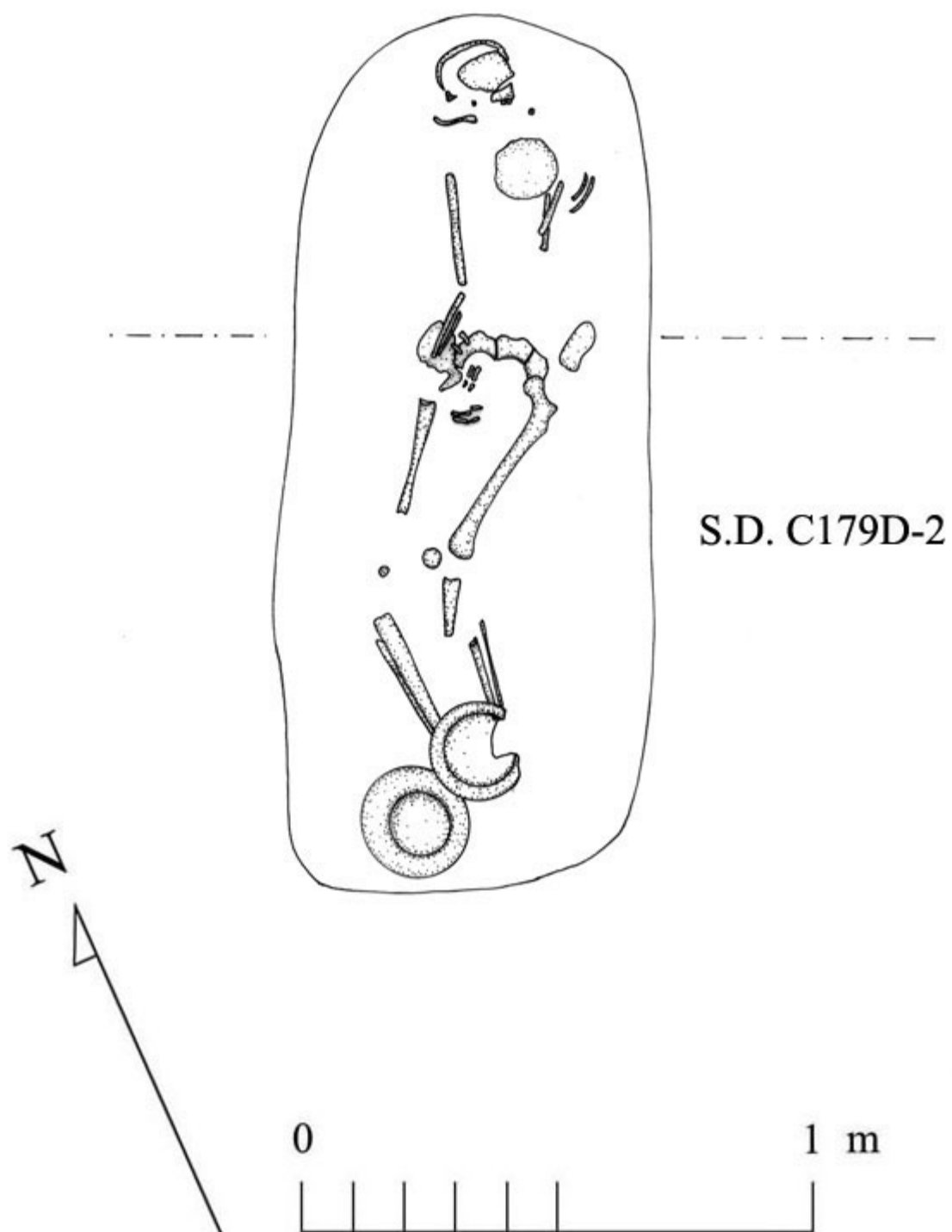




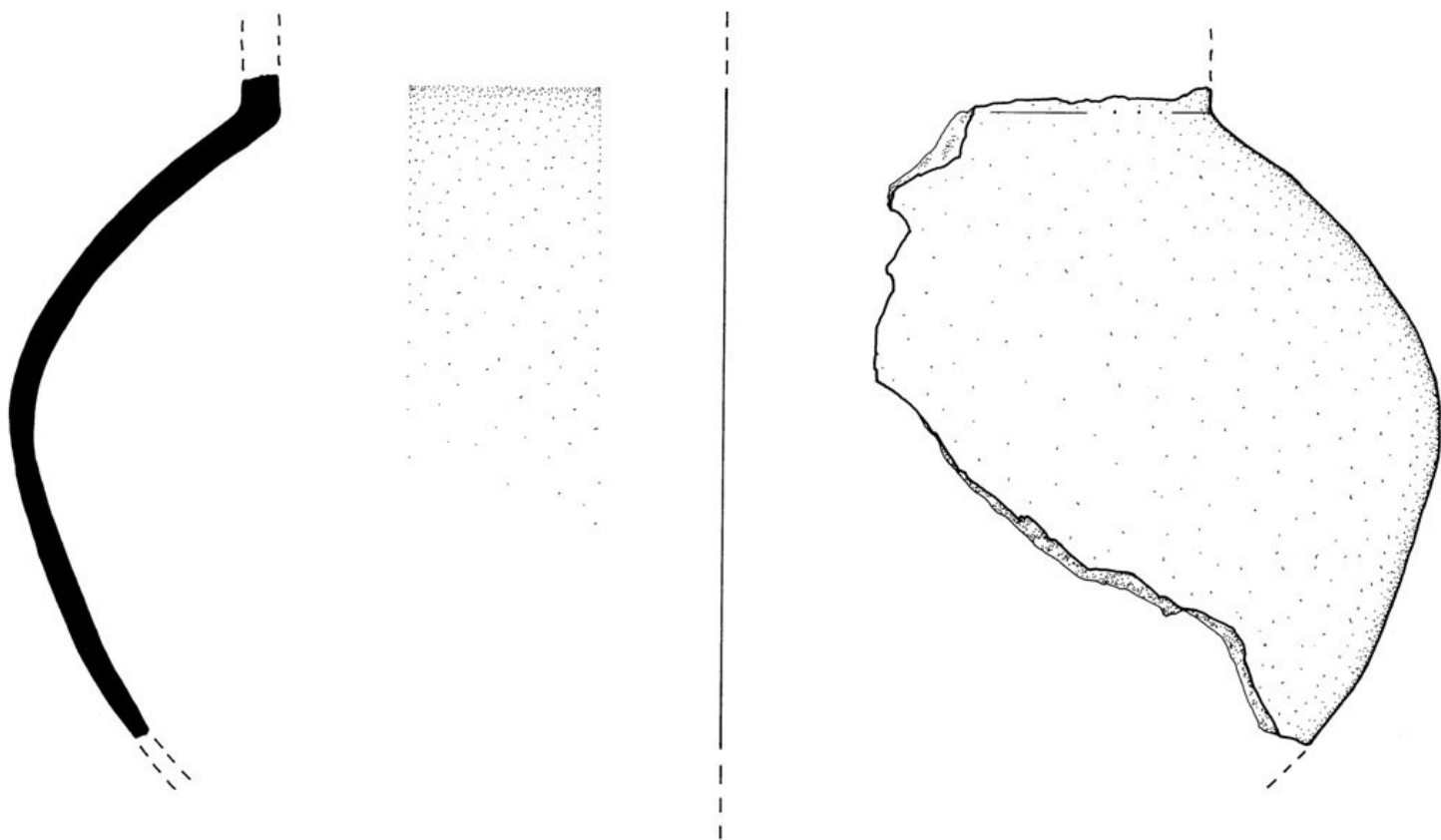




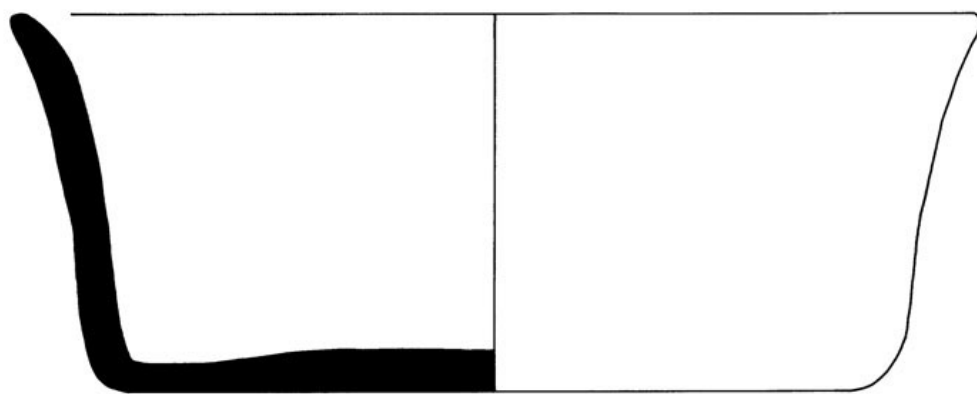
excv. C179D








a



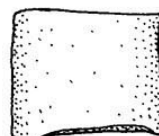
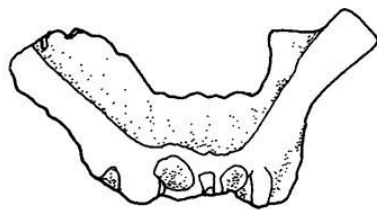
b

0 1 2 cm

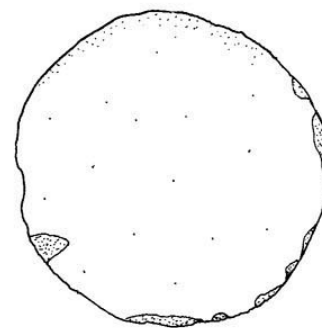
A scale bar with three segments, labeled 0, 1, and 2 cm.



a



b



c



d



e



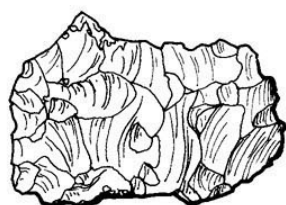
f



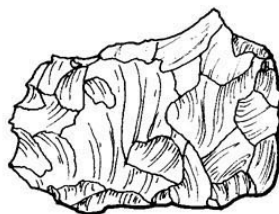
g



h



i

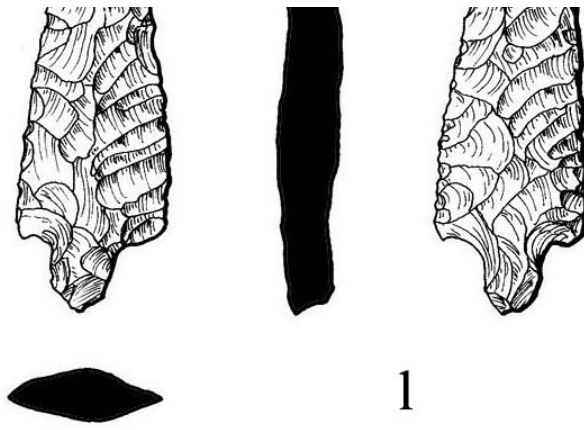


j



k





0 1 2 cm  
└─┬─┘

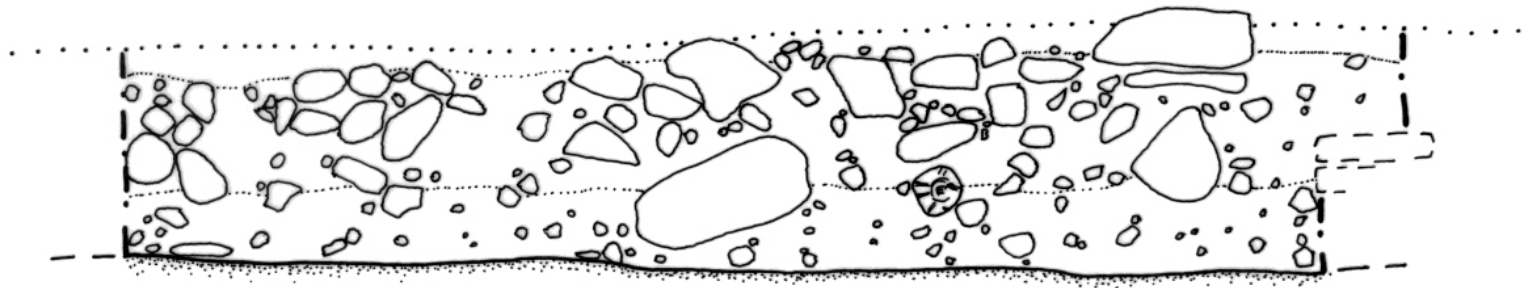
1







excav. C179E



0 1 2 m



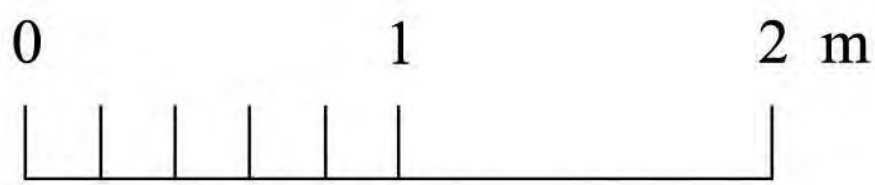
W



excv. C179E



S.D. C179E-1





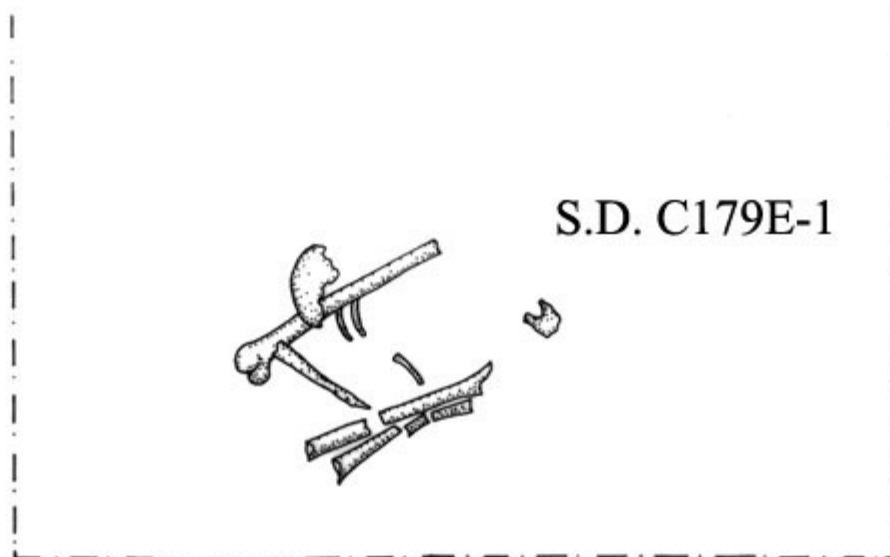






excv. C179E

central penetration

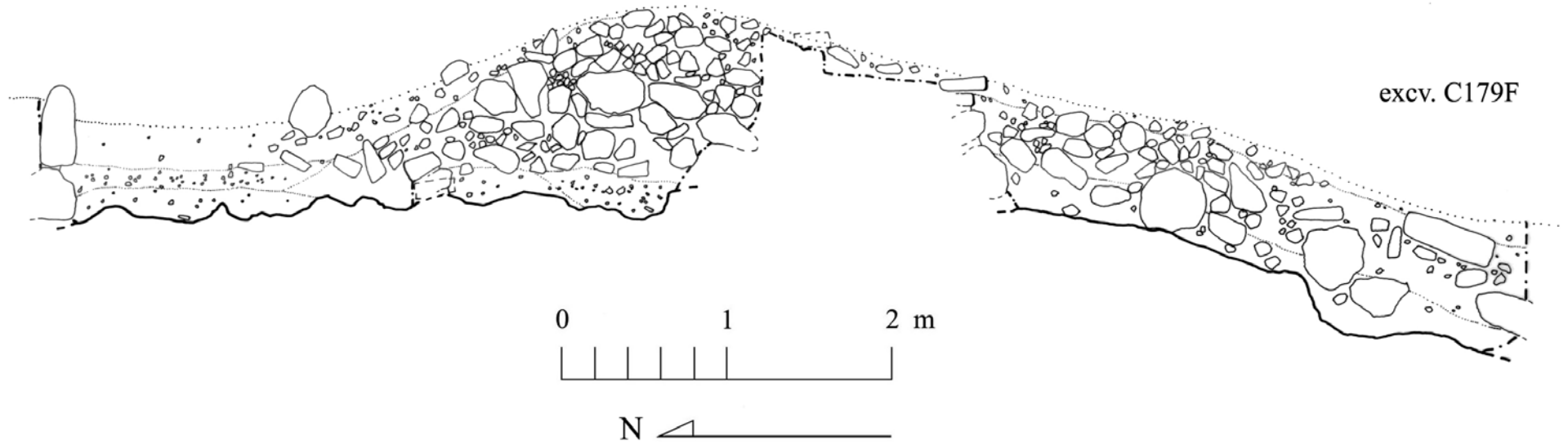






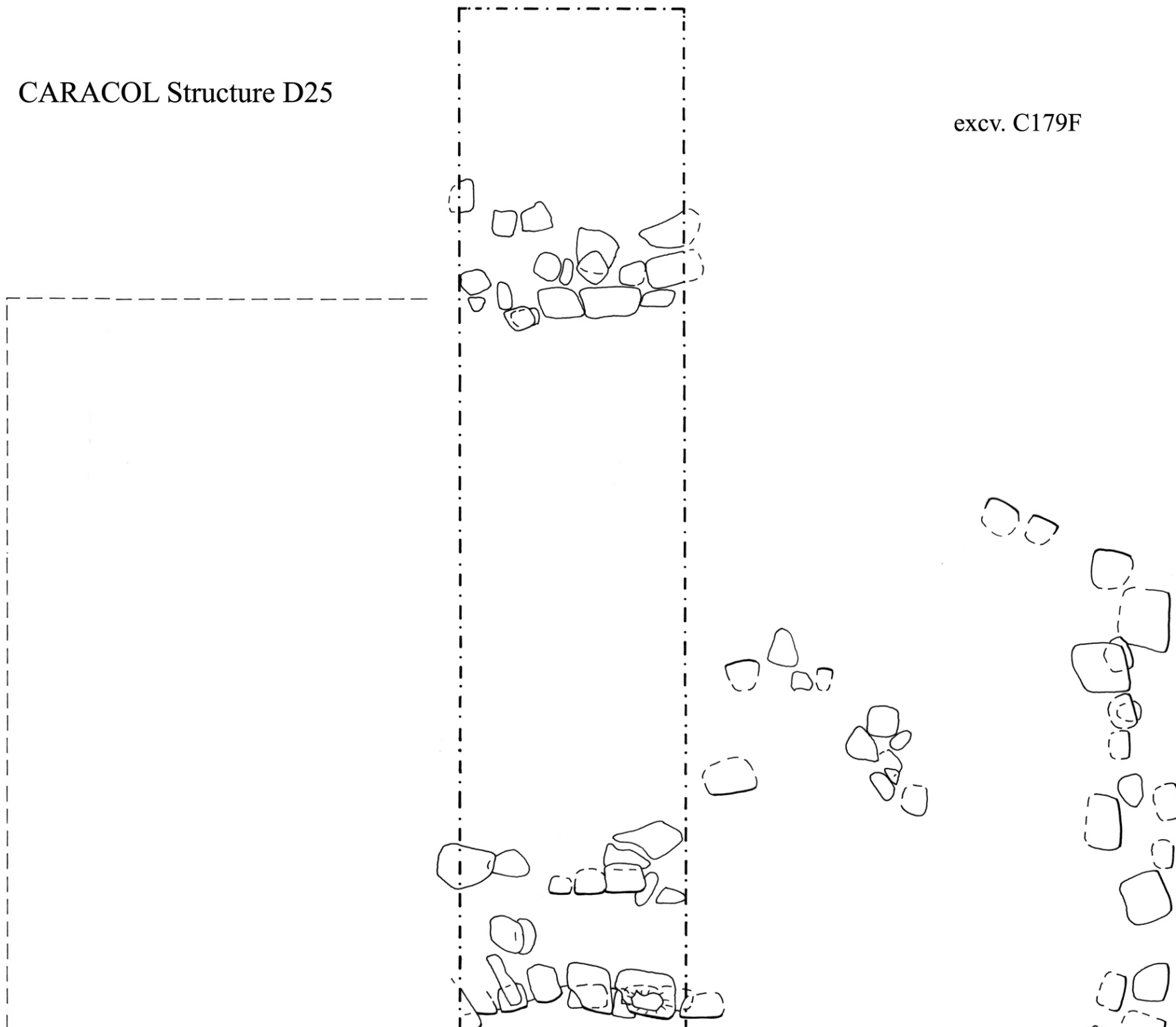


# CARACOL Structure D25

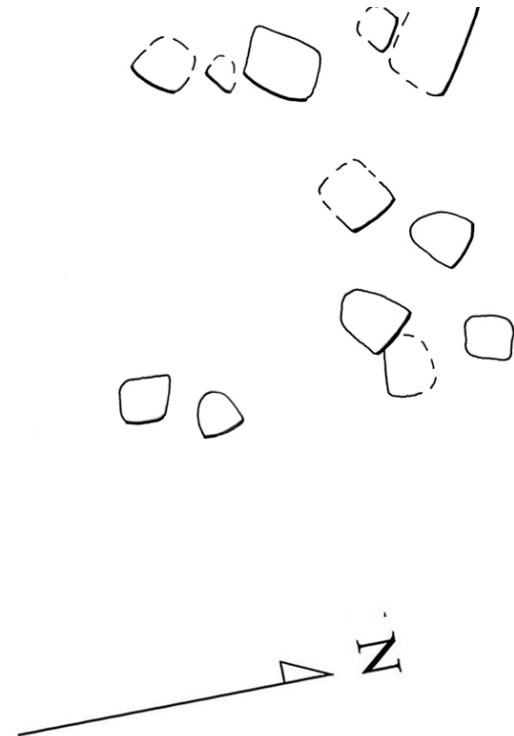
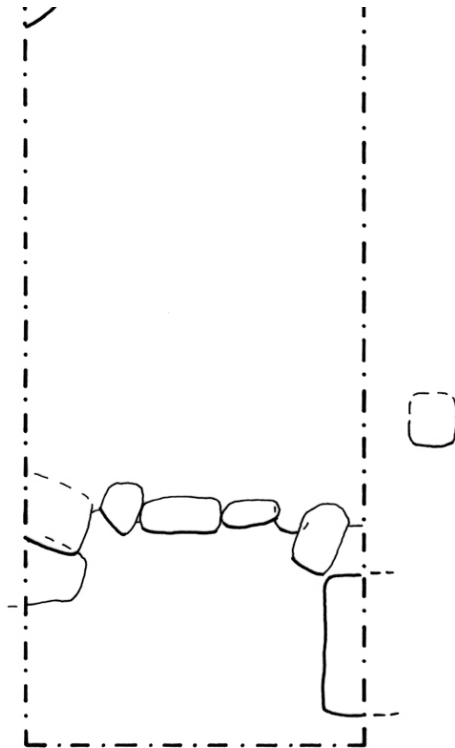
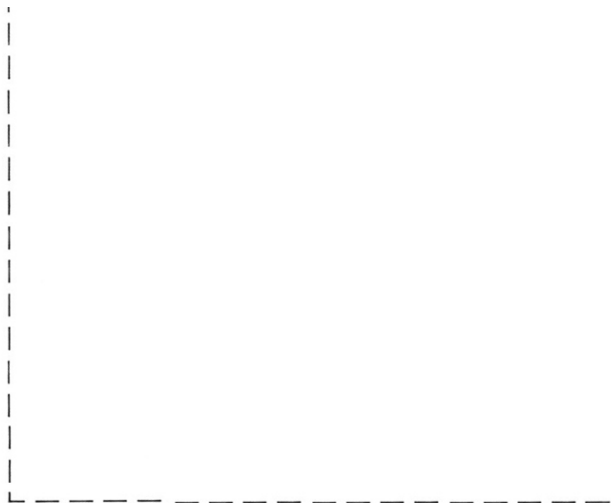


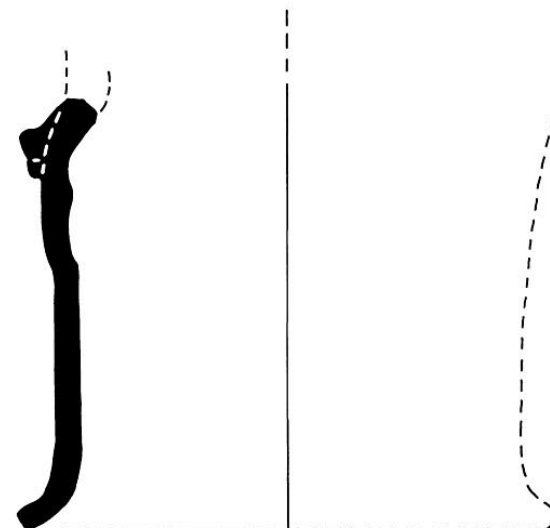
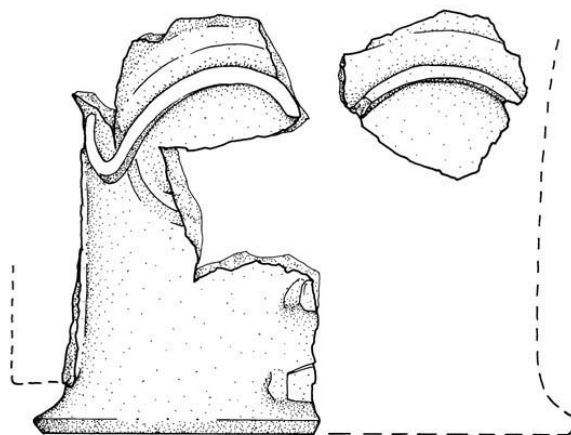
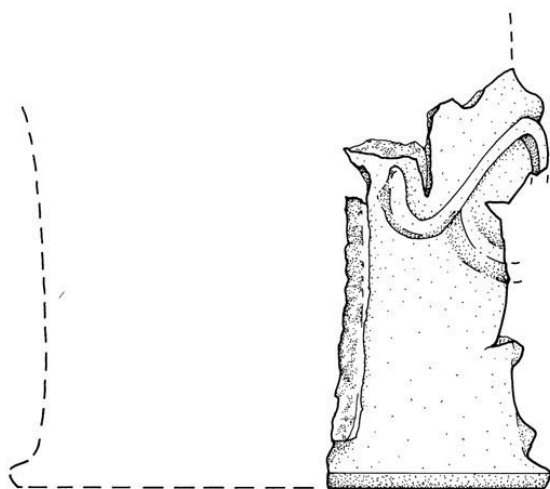
CARACOL Structure D25

excv. C179F




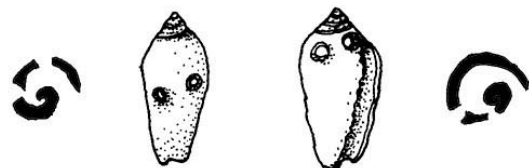




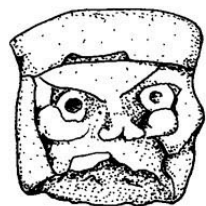


0 1 2 cm

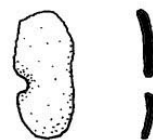
A scale bar consisting of a horizontal line with vertical tick marks at 0, 1, and 2 cm.



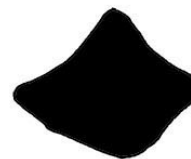
a



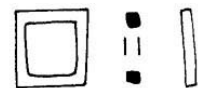
b



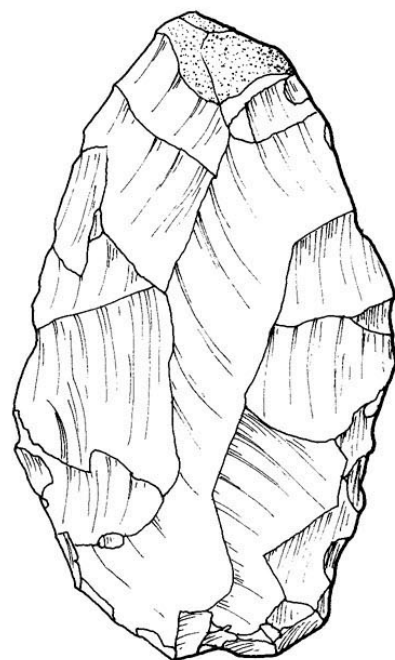
c



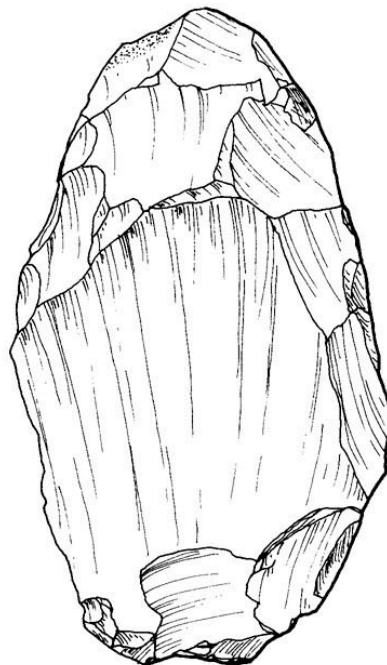
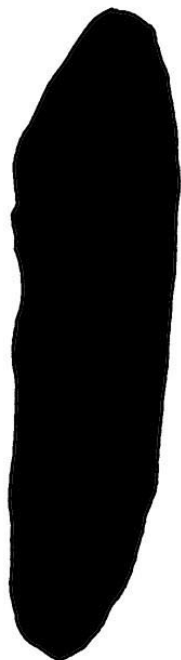
e



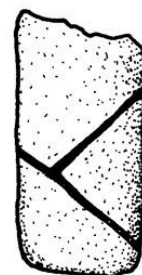
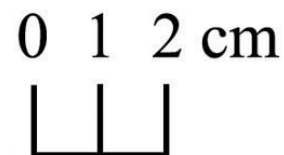
d



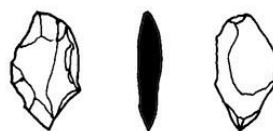
g



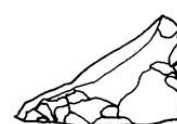
f



i



h





j



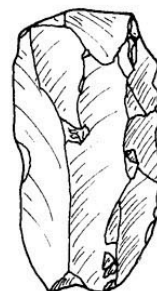
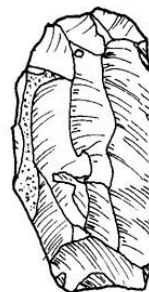
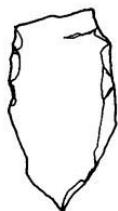
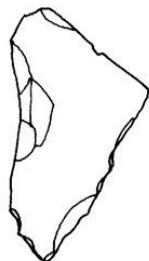
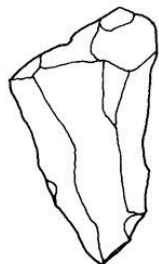
k



m



l



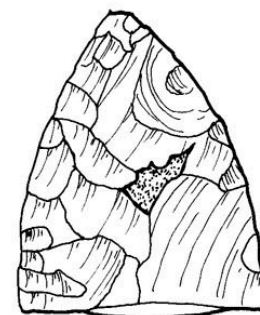
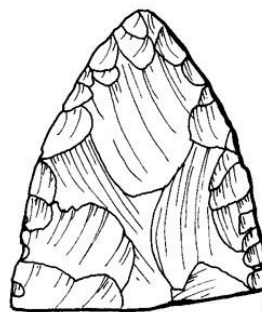
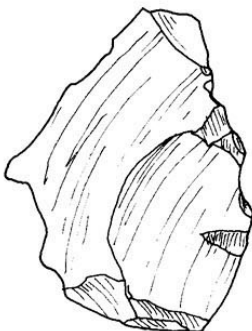
n



o



p



q



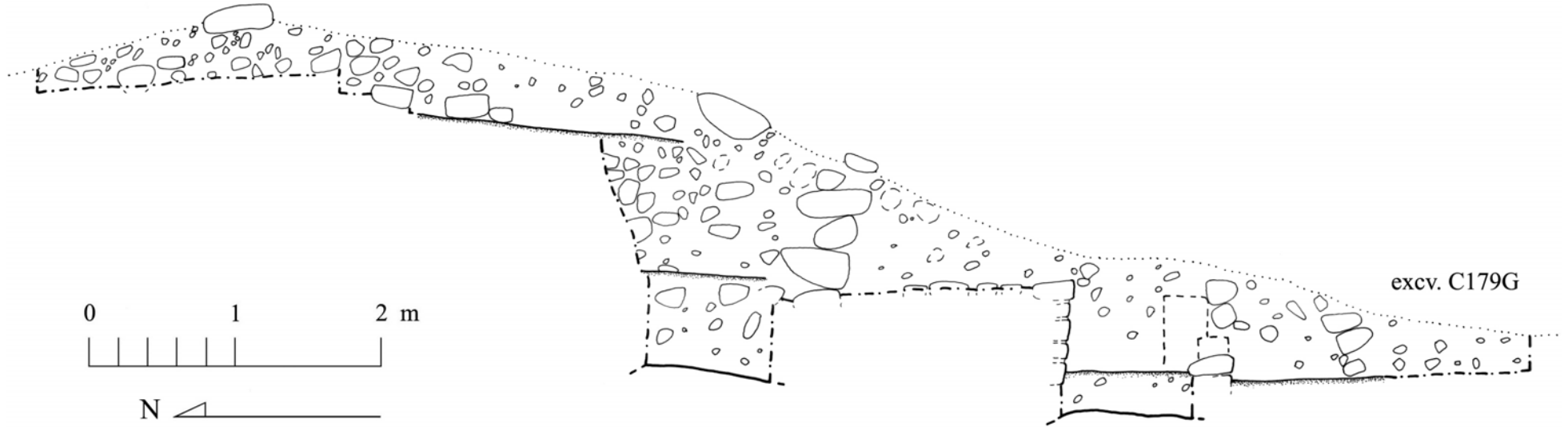
r







# CARACOL Structure C17





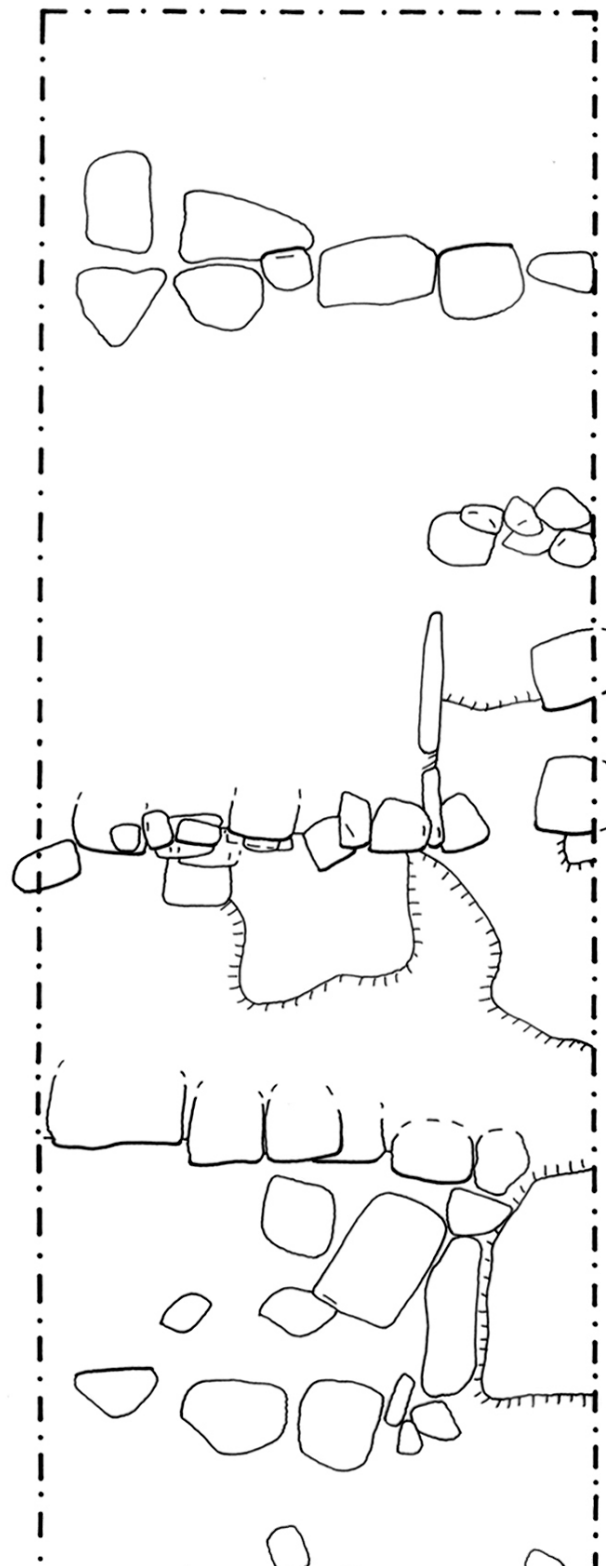






# CARACOL Structure C17

excv. C179G



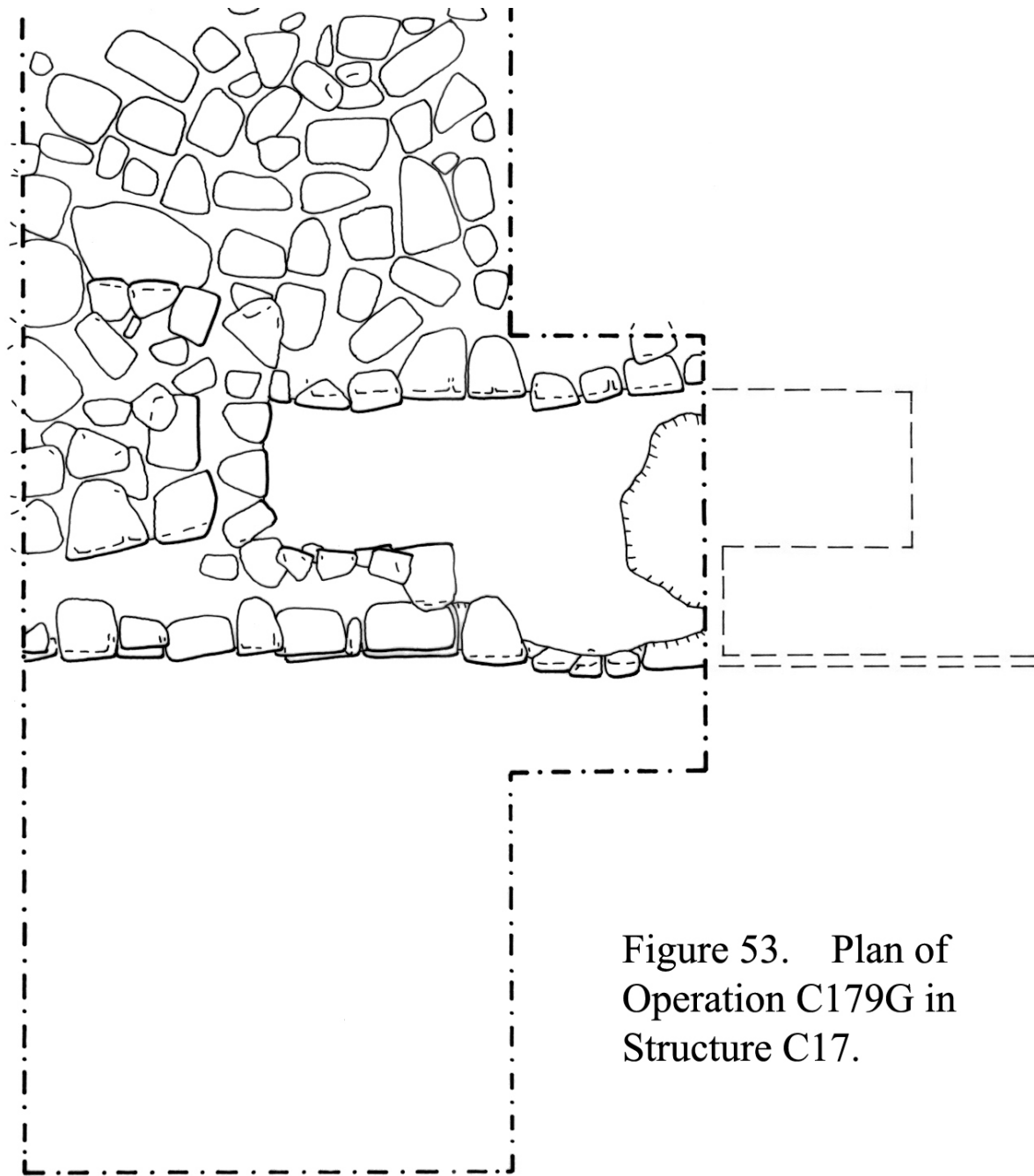
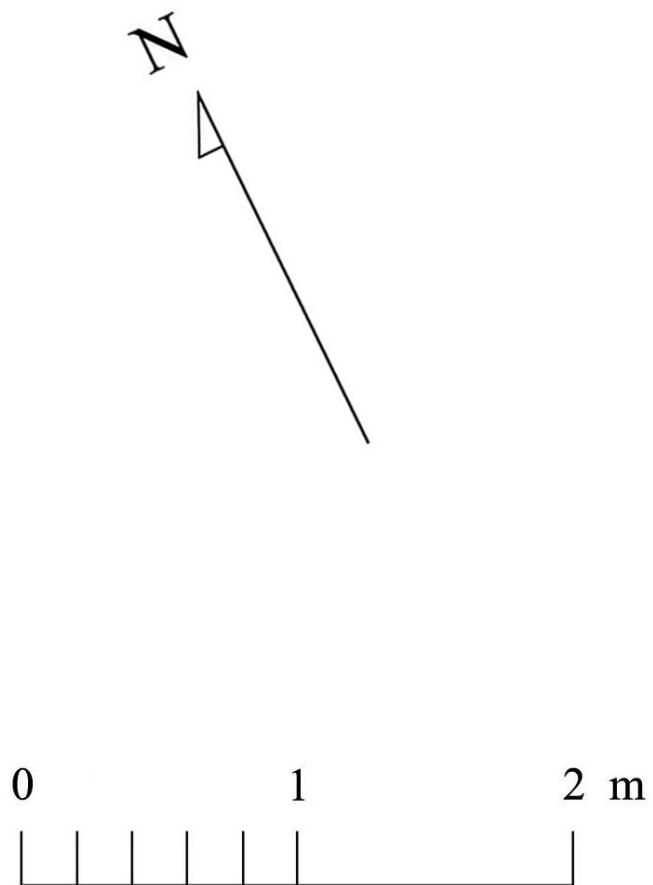
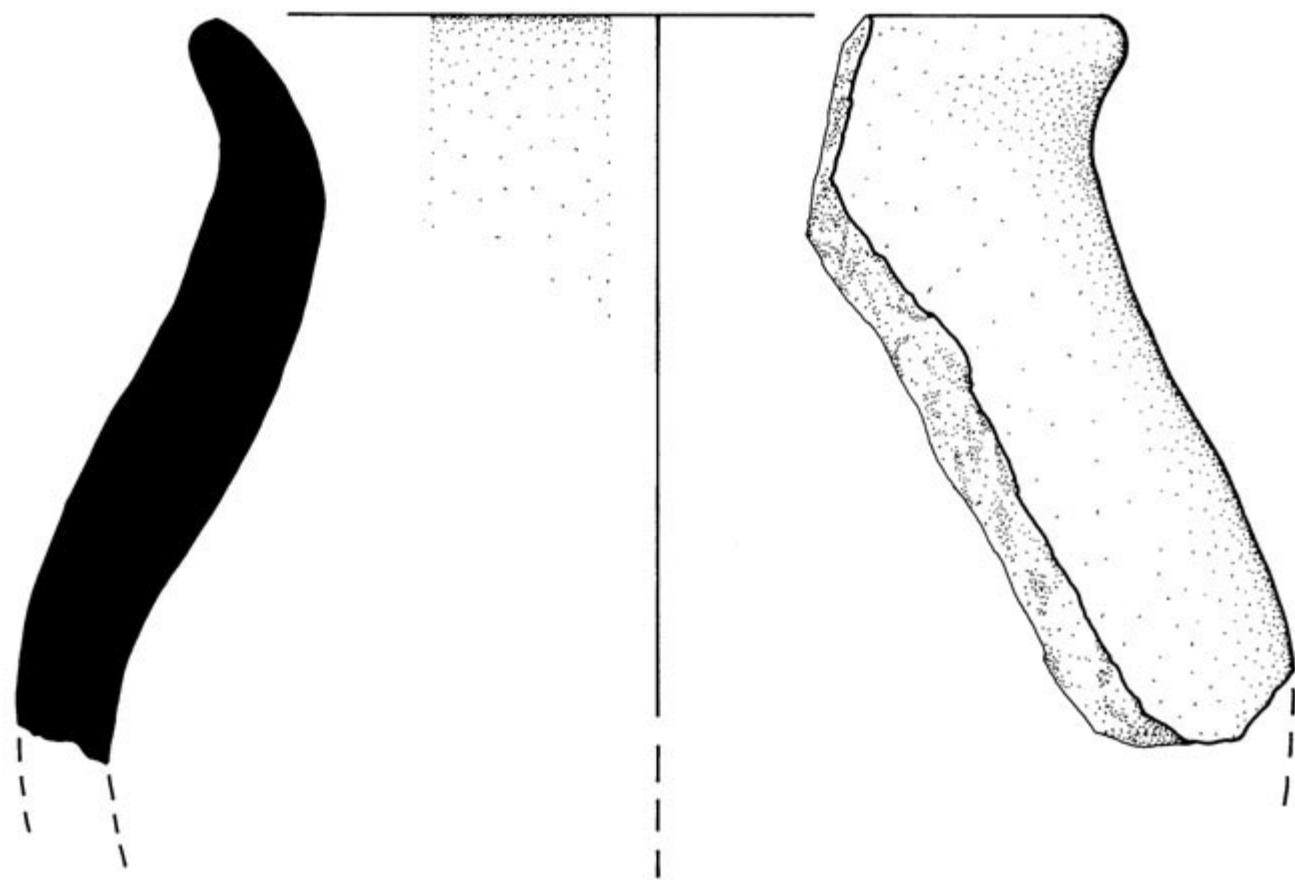
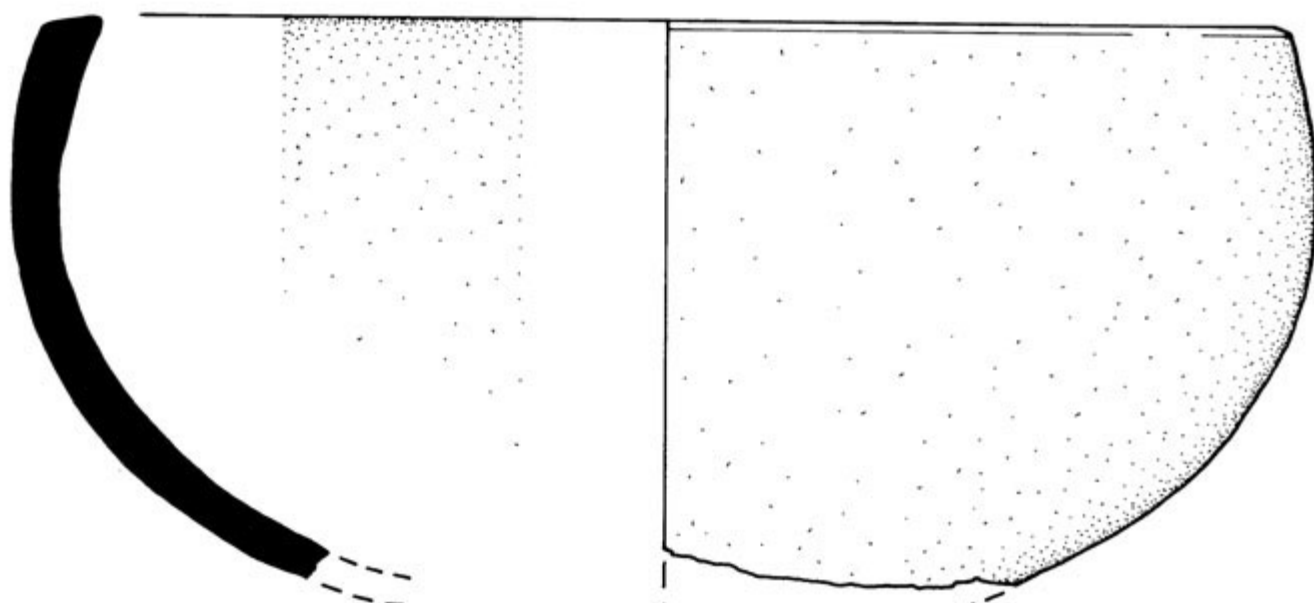


Figure 53. Plan of  
Operation C179G in  
Structure C17.




a



b

0 1 2 cm





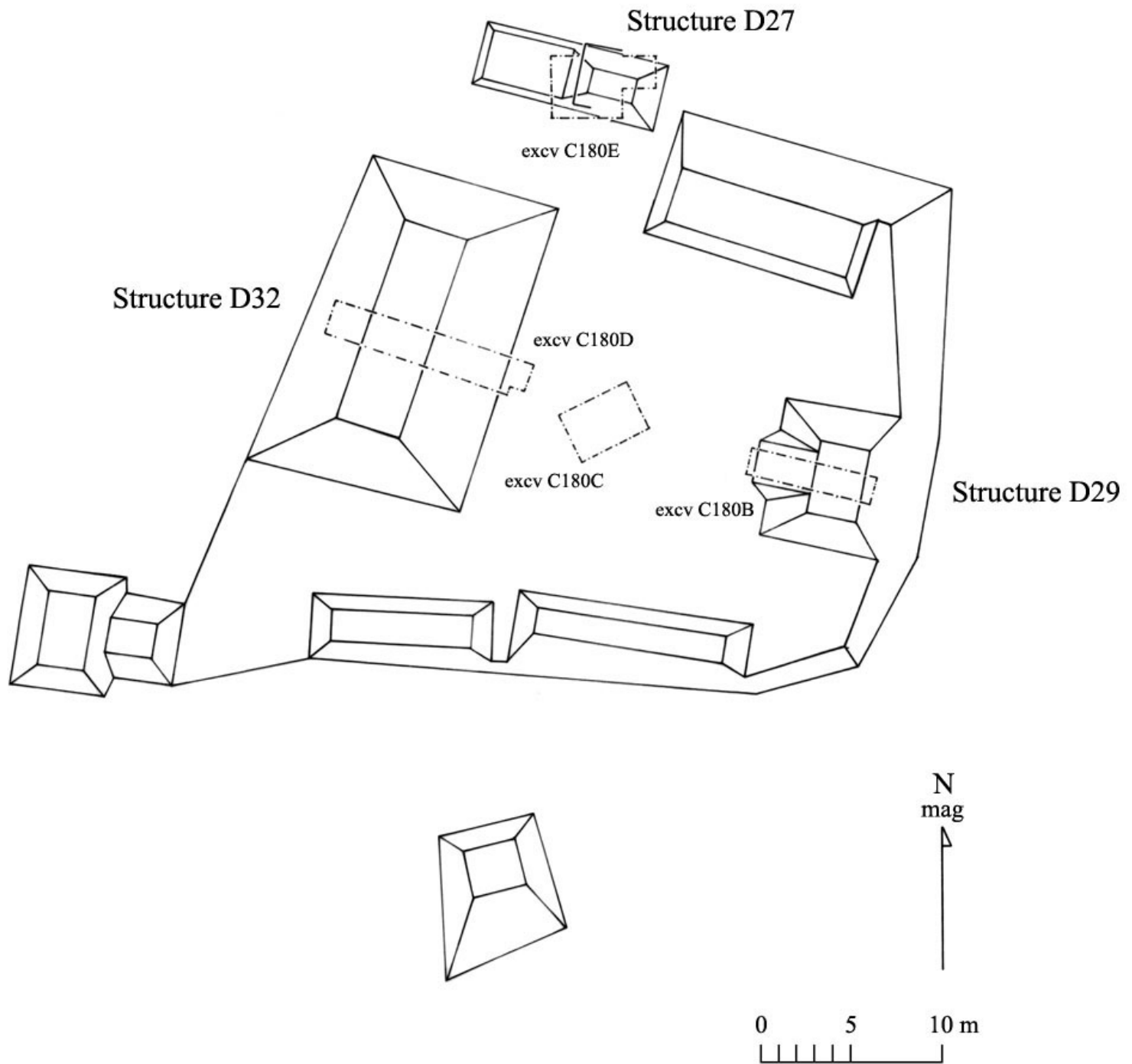








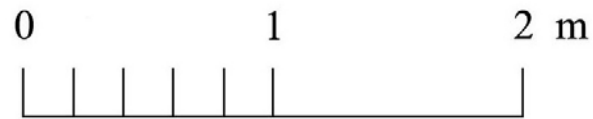
# “Palmitas”



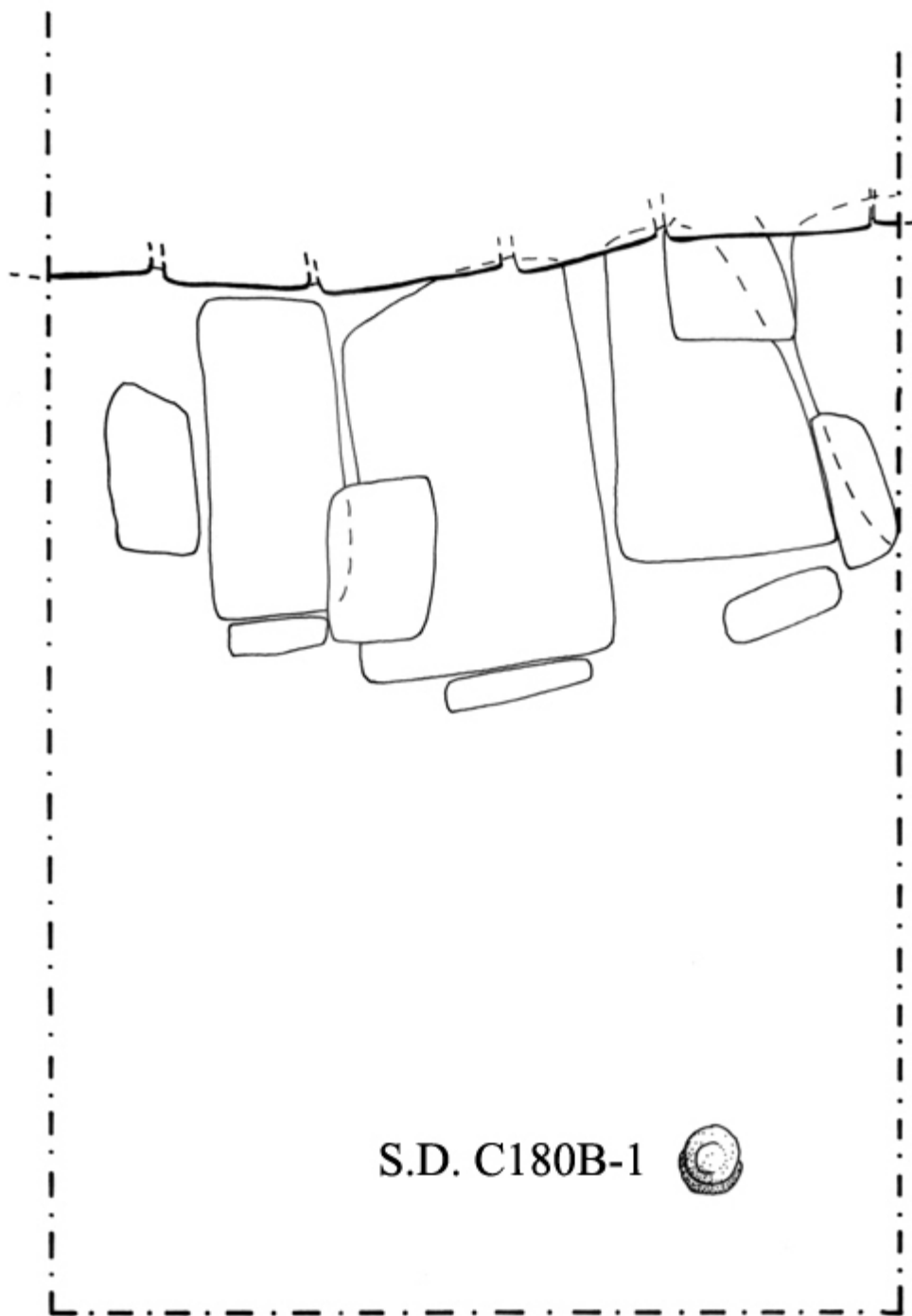




# CARACOL Structure D29



excv. C180B



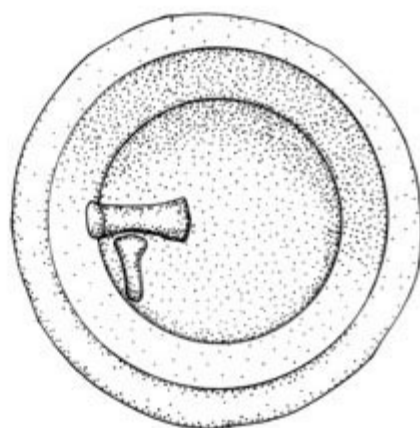
0 1 m



z  $\triangleleft$

S.D. C180B-1

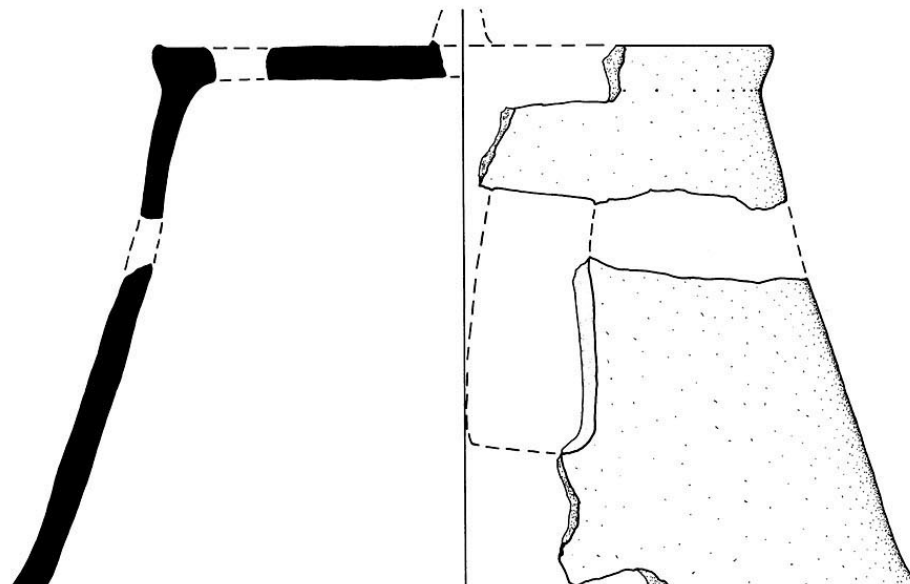
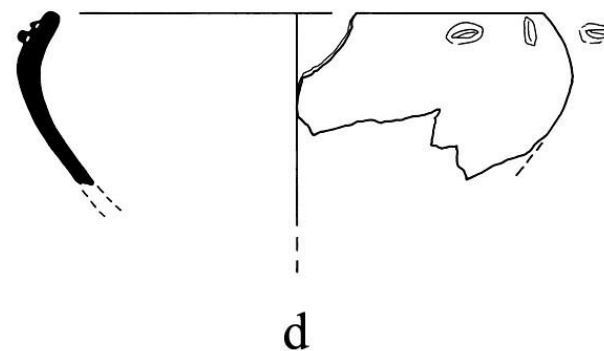
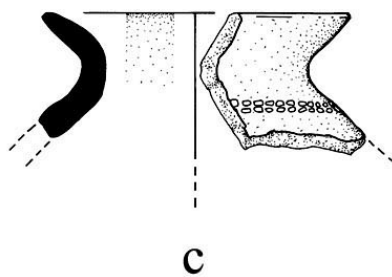
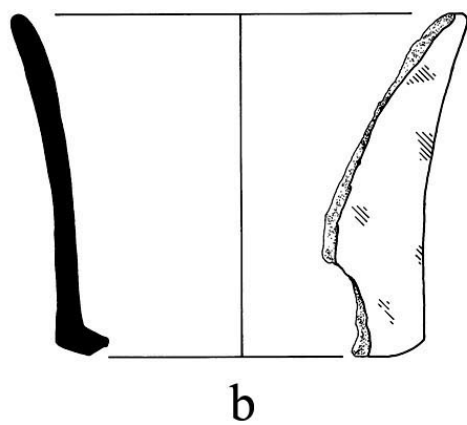
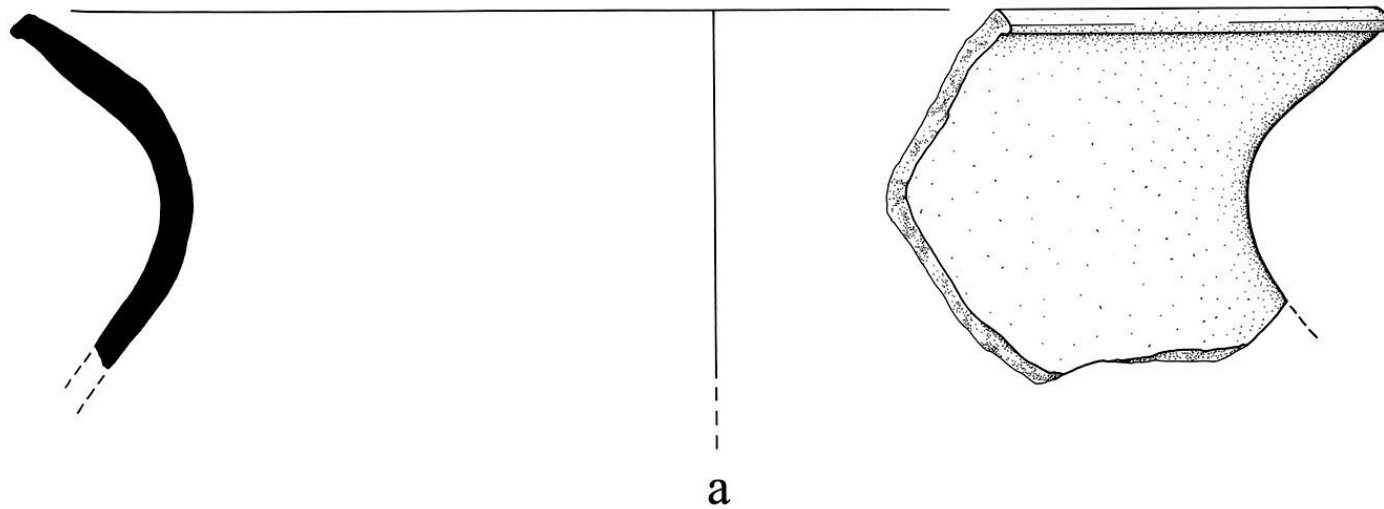
N  
mag



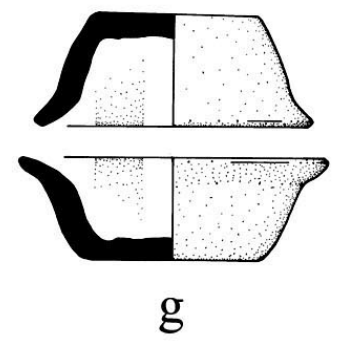
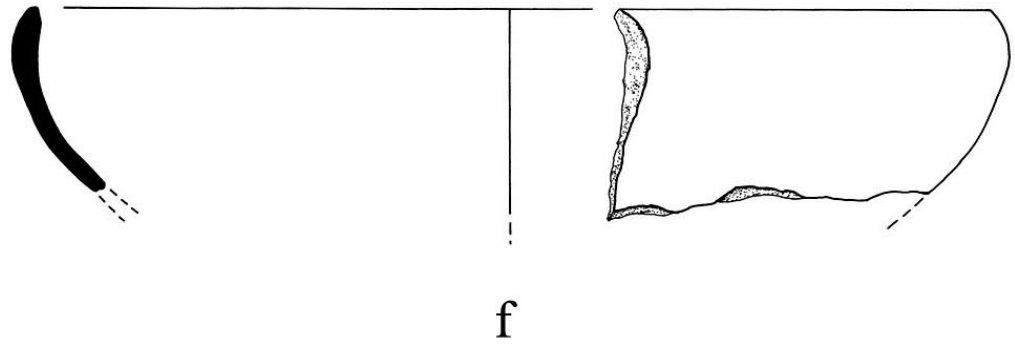
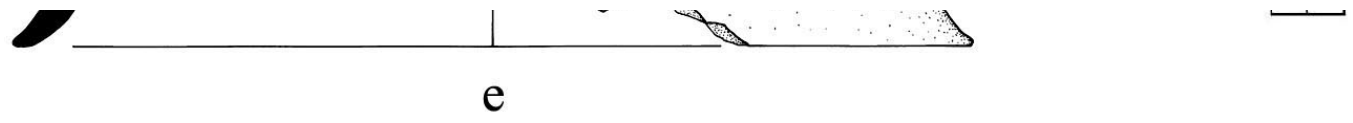
0 1 2 cm







0 1 2 cm  
| | |

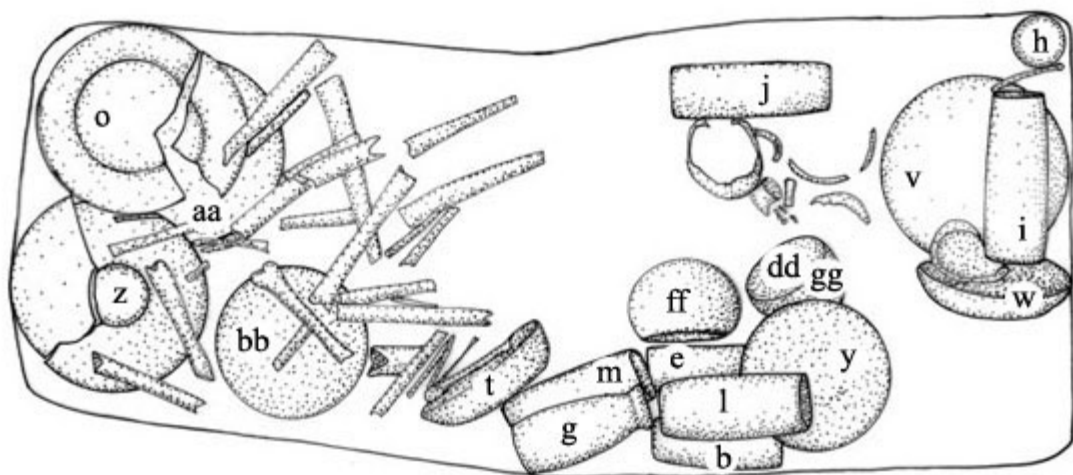




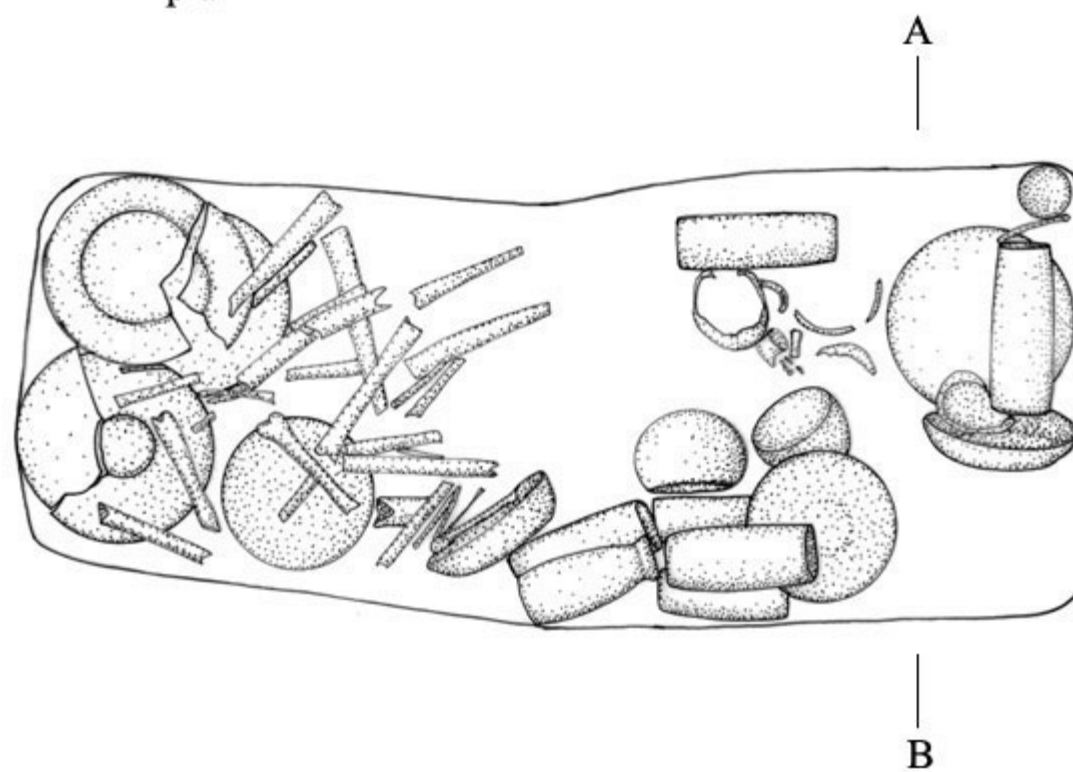






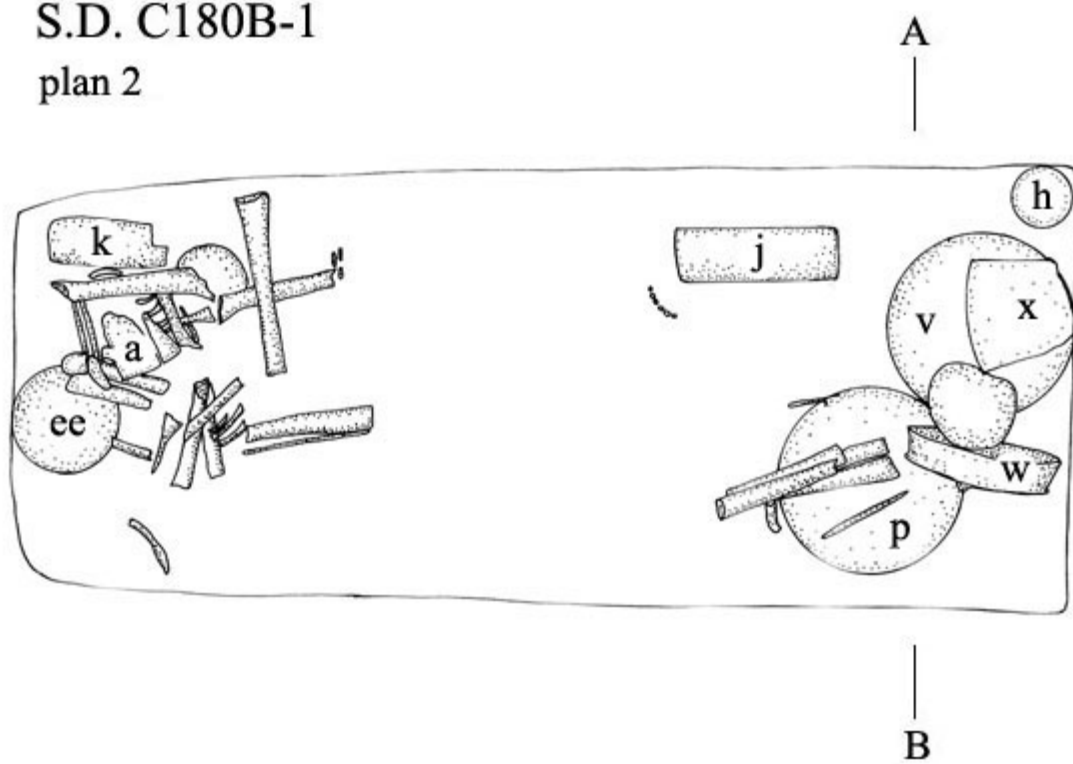


S.D. C180B-1  
plan 1

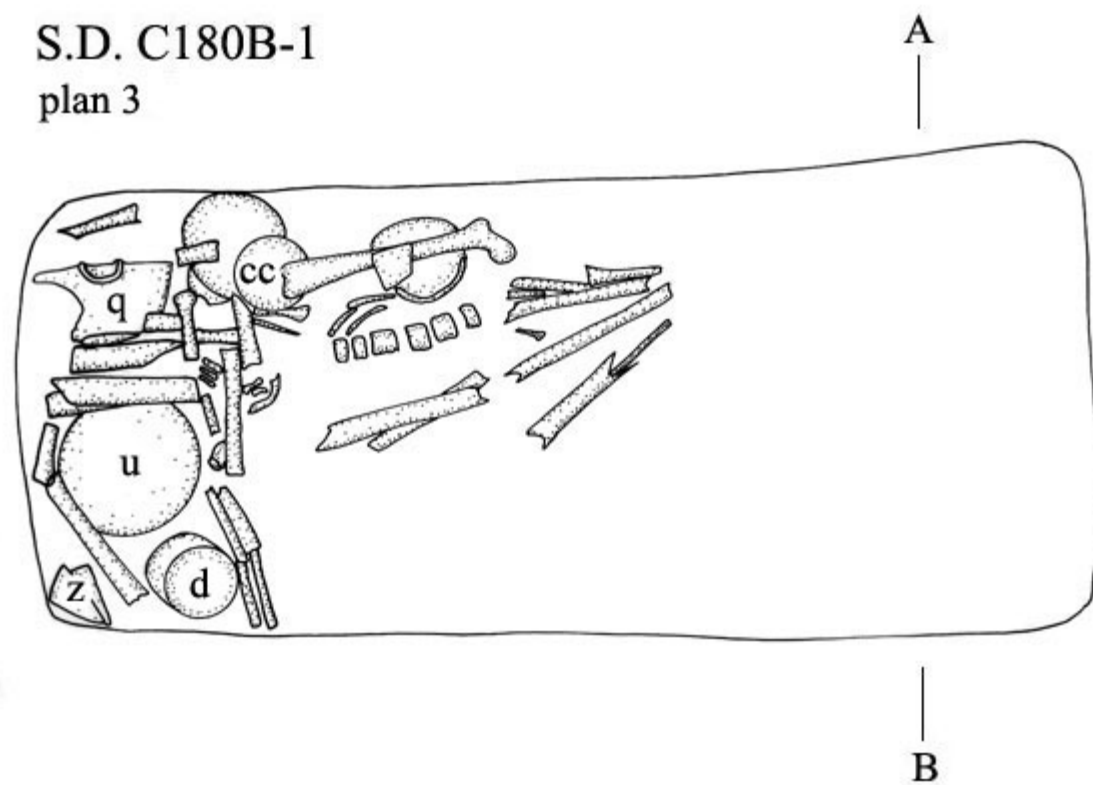




S.D. C180B-1  
plan 2



S.D. C180B-1  
plan 3

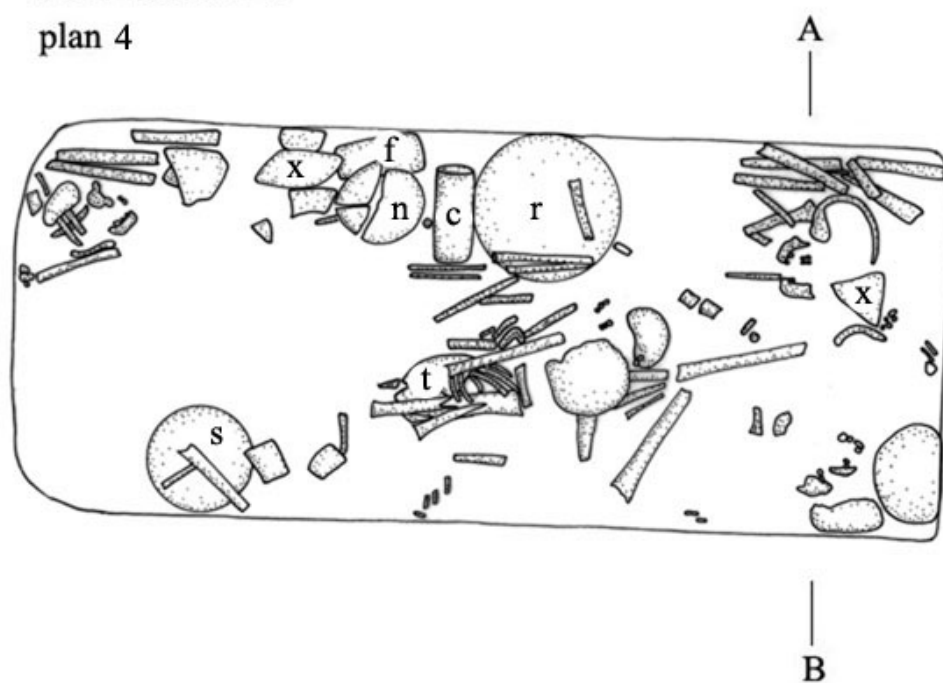






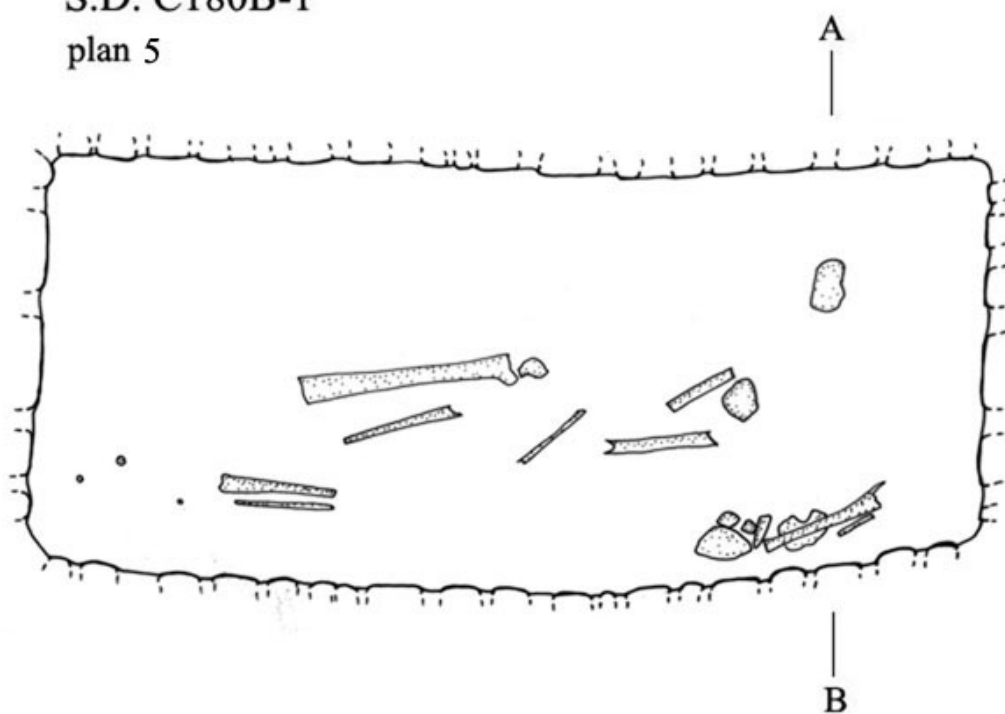
S.D. C180B-1

plan 4



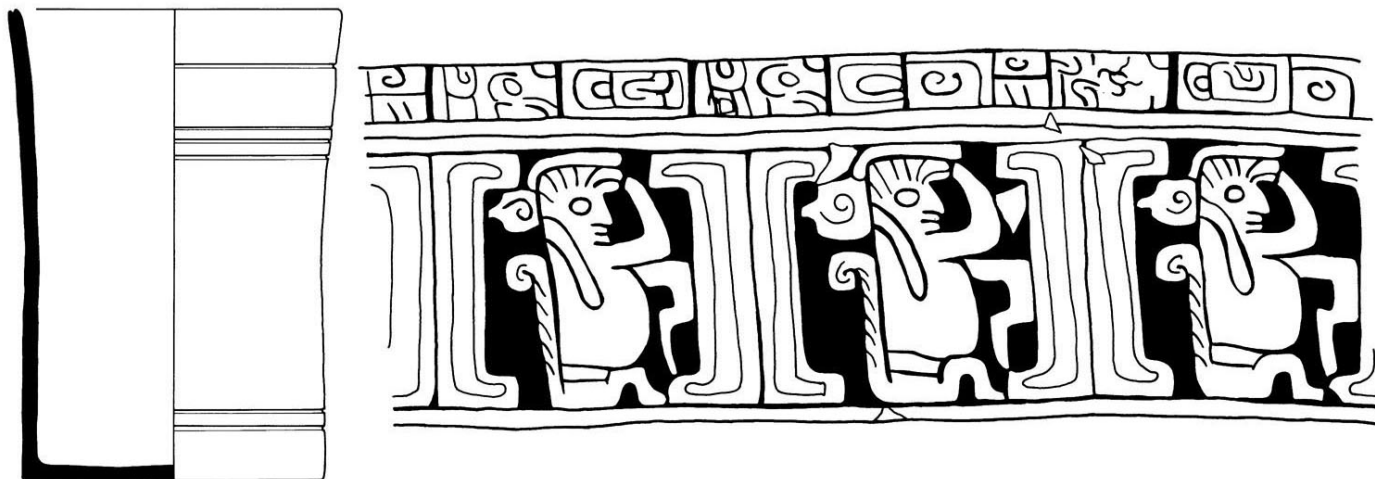
S.D. C180B-1

plan 5



z

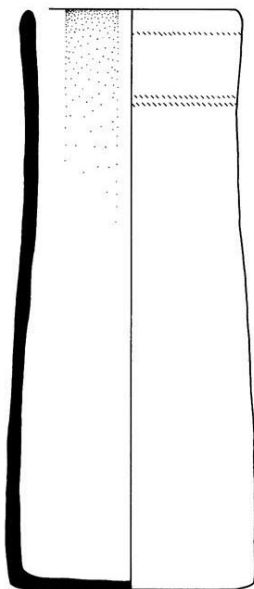




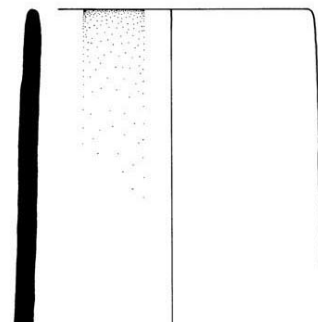
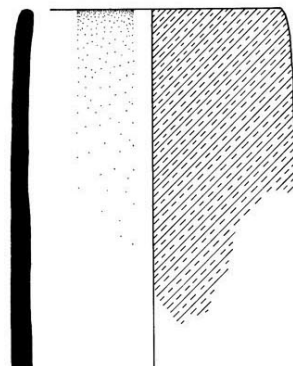
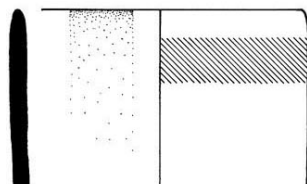
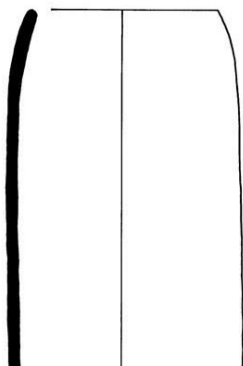
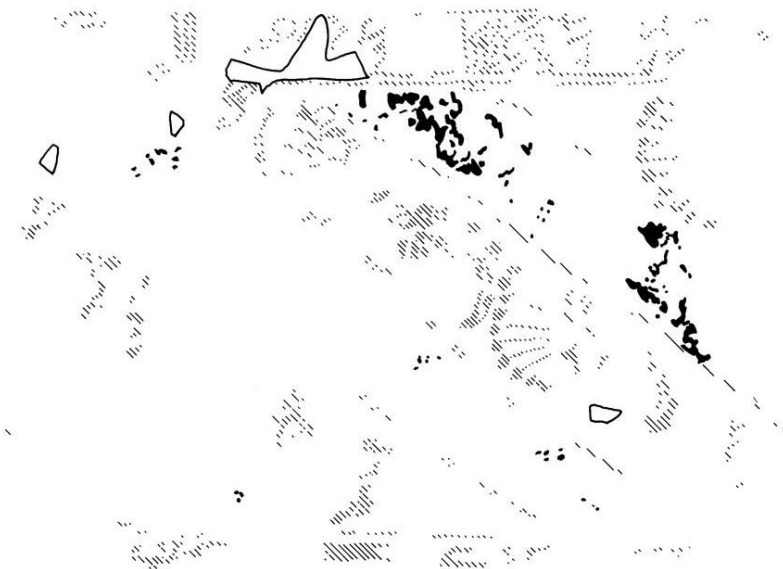
a

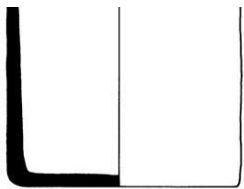
0 1 2 cm

A scale bar consisting of a horizontal line with vertical tick marks at the 0, 1, and 2 cm positions.

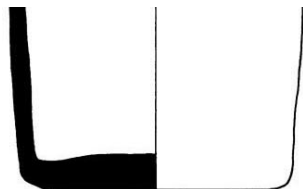


b

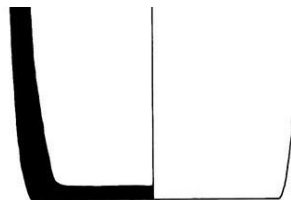




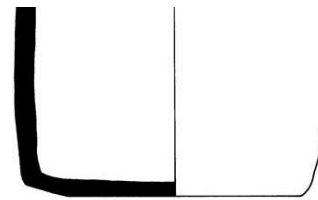
c



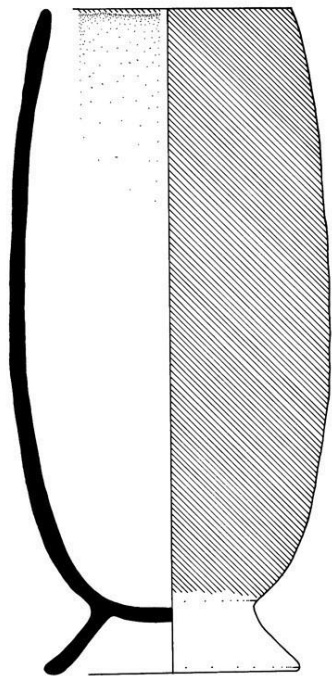
d



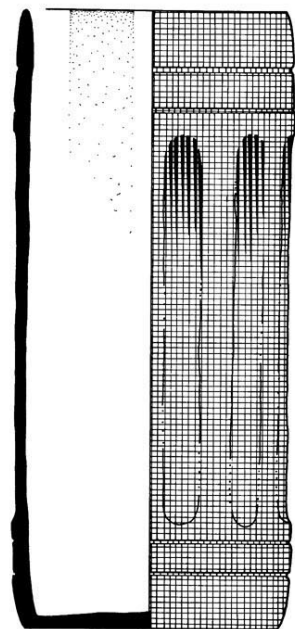
e



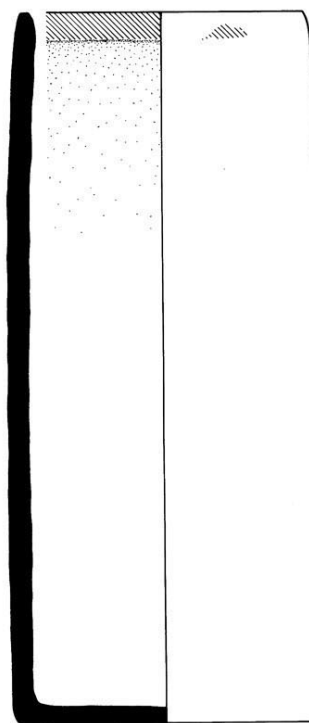
f



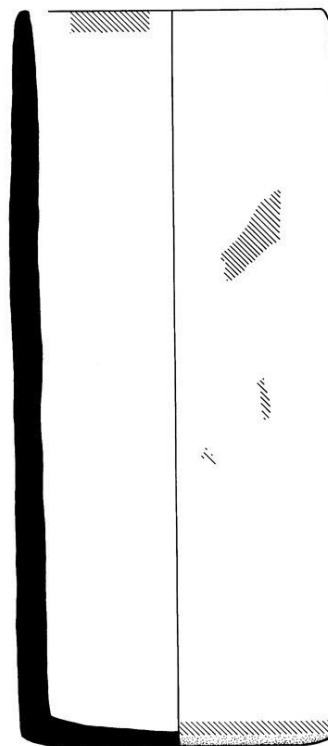
g



h

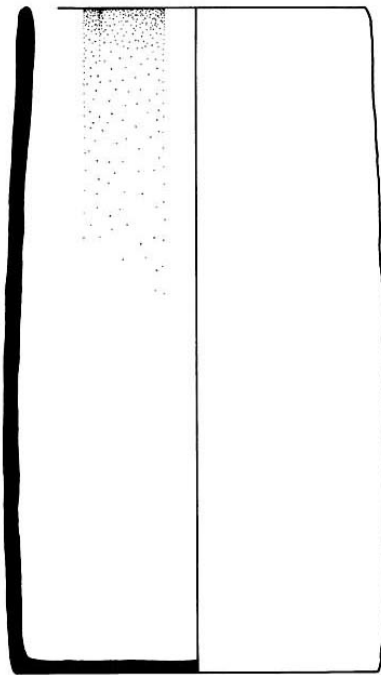


i

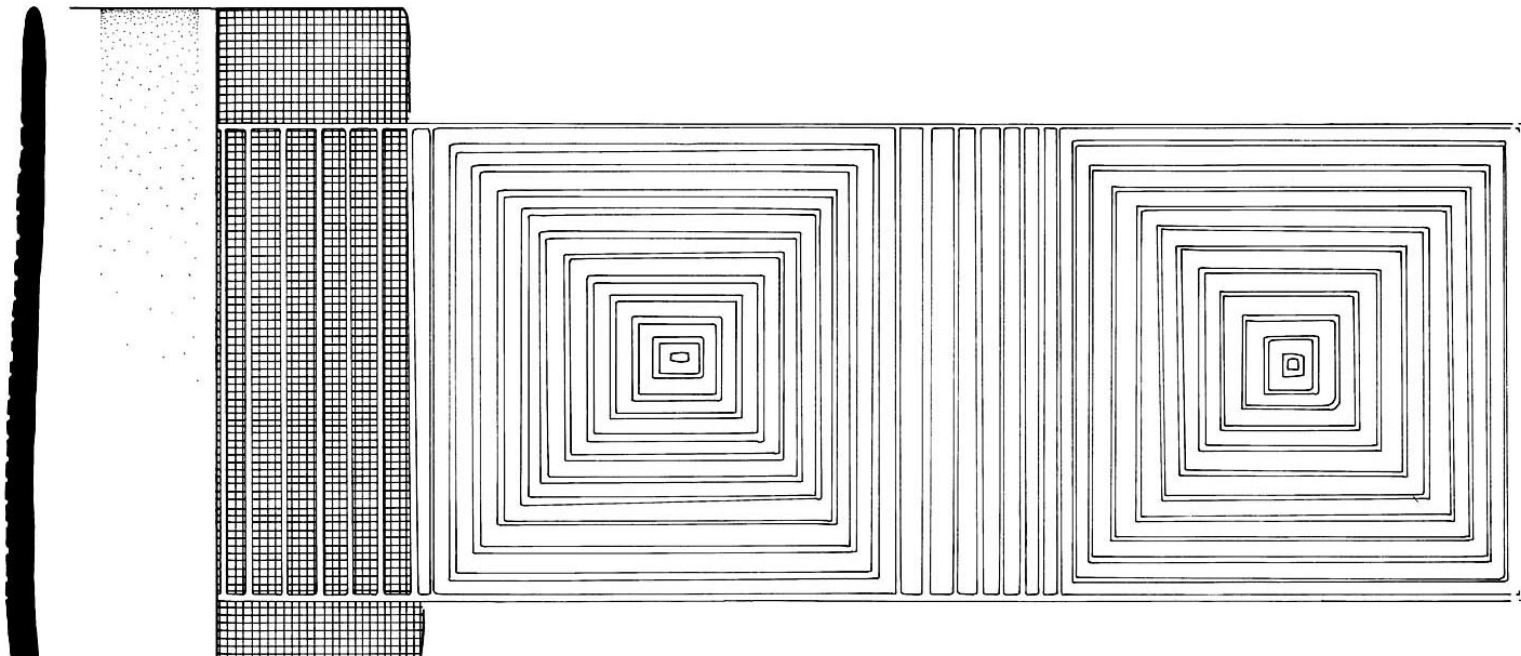


j





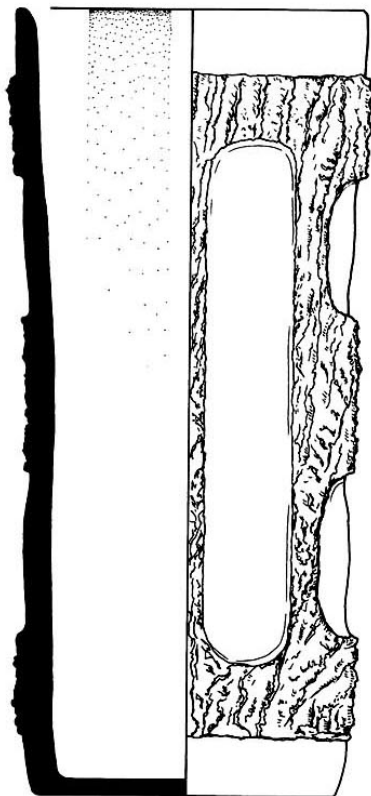
k



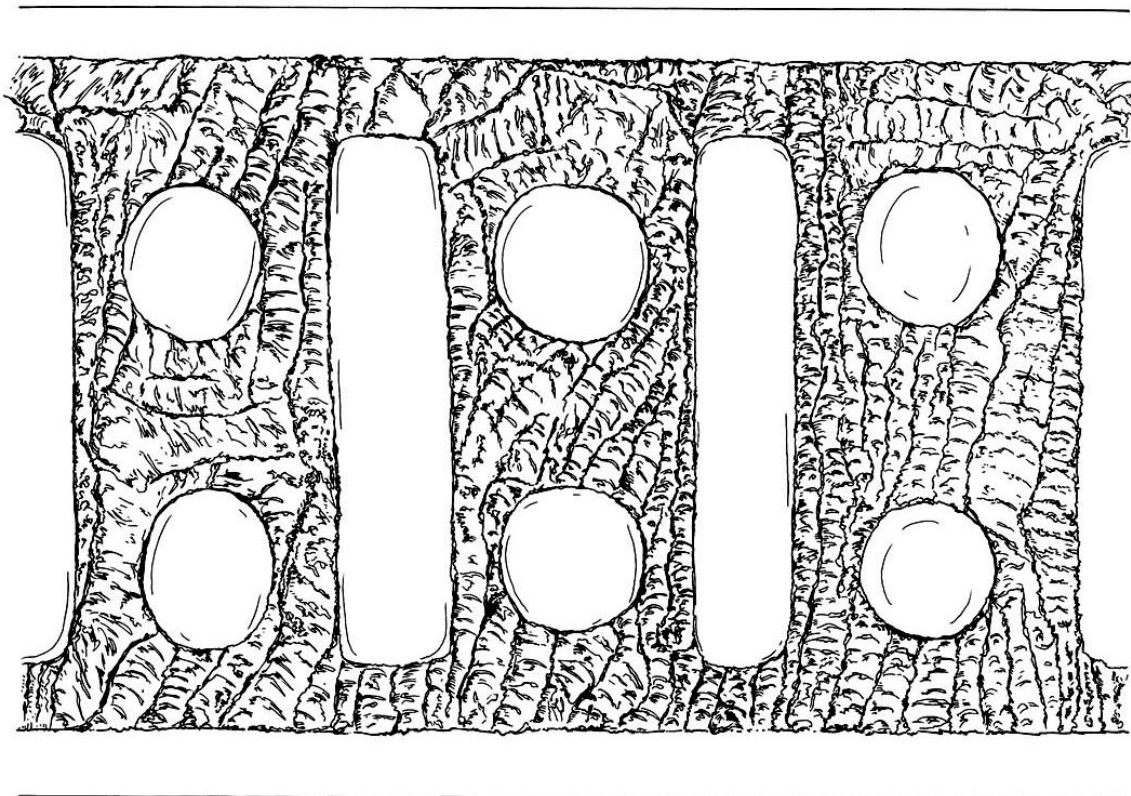


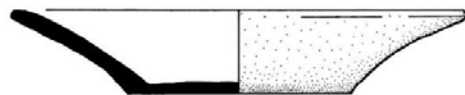
1

0 1 2 cm

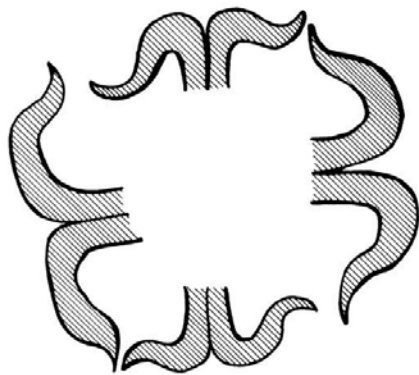


m

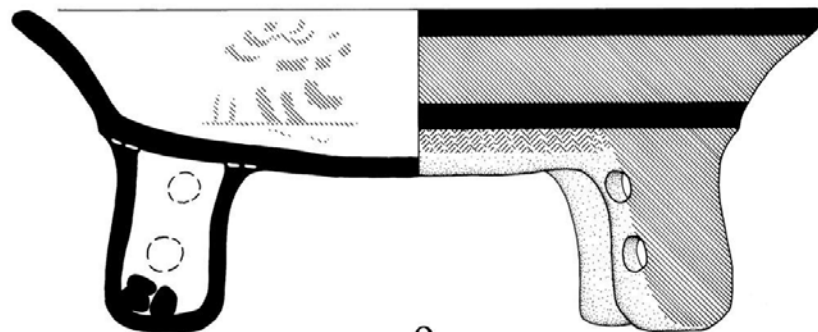




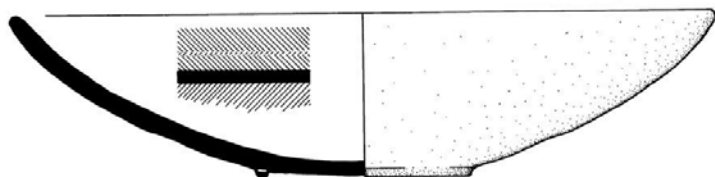
n



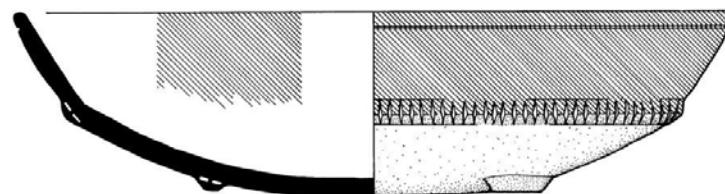
0 1 2 cm



o



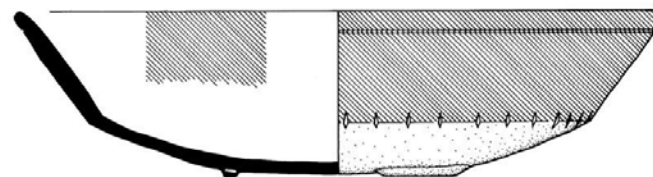
q



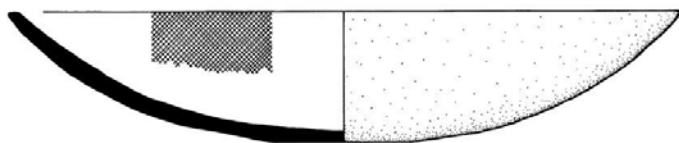
p



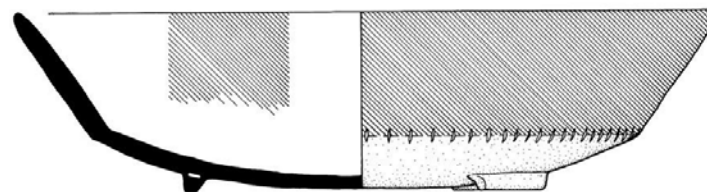
s



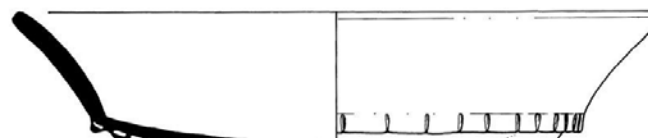
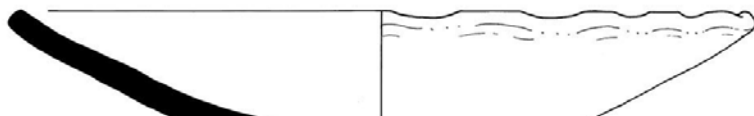
r



u



t

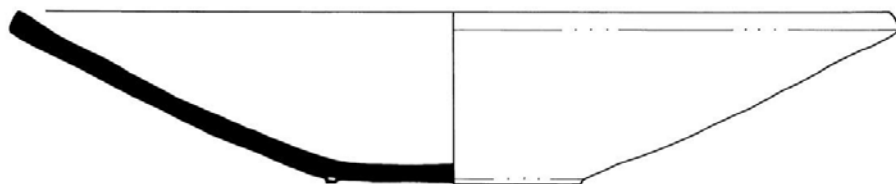




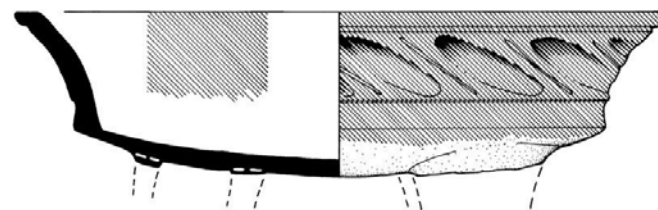
V



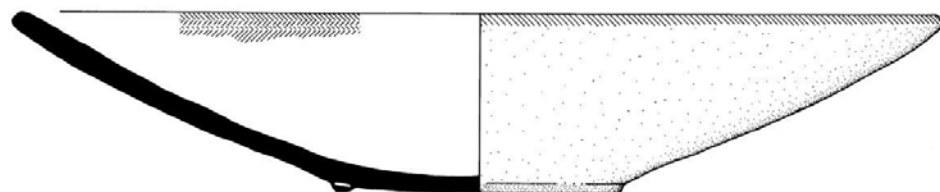
W



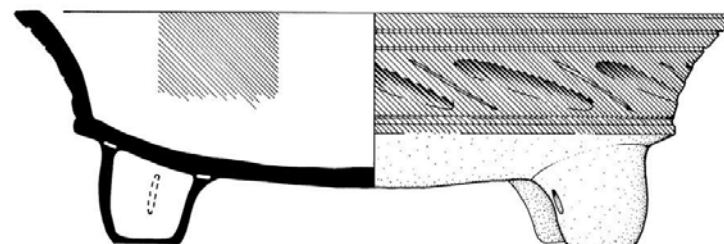
X



y

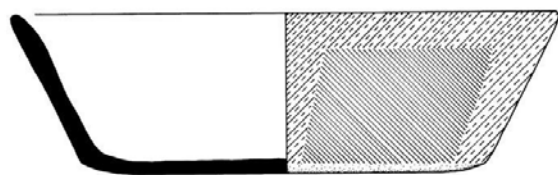


Z

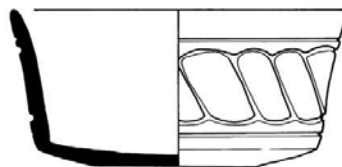


aa

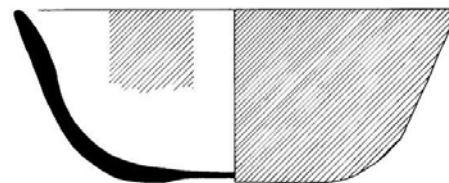
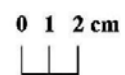




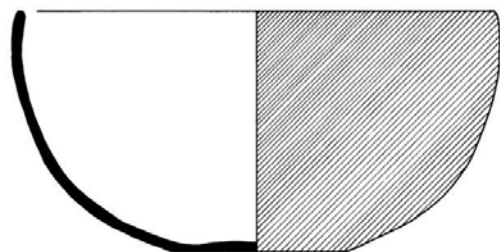
bb



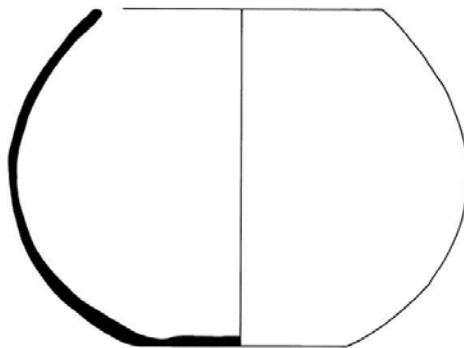
cc



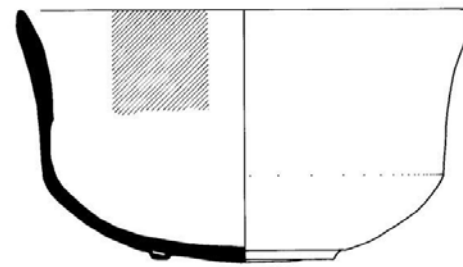
dd



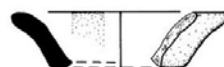
ee



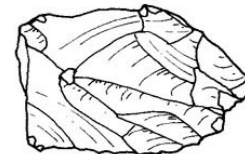
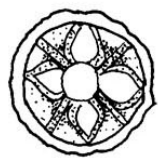
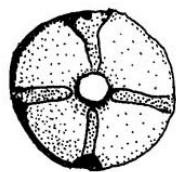
ff



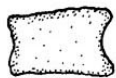
gg



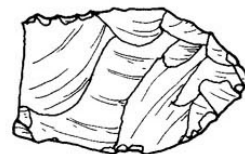
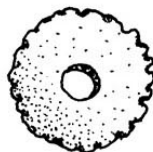
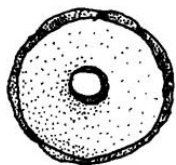
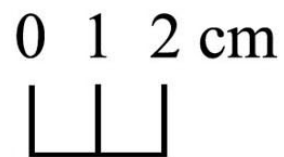
hh



d



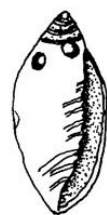
c



e

a

b



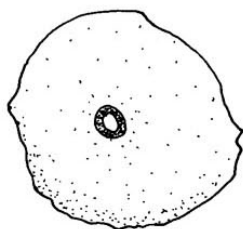
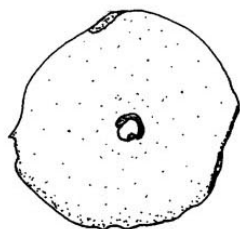
f

g

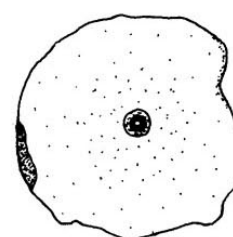
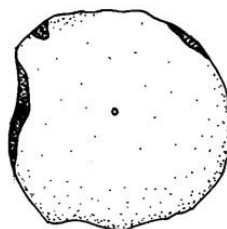
h

i

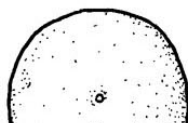
j

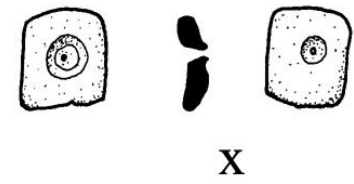
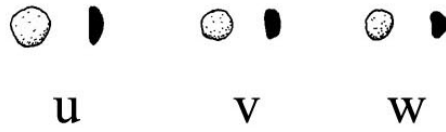
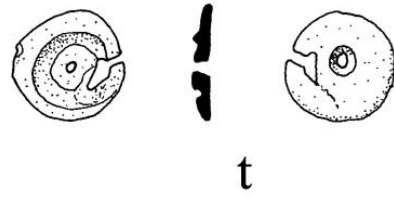
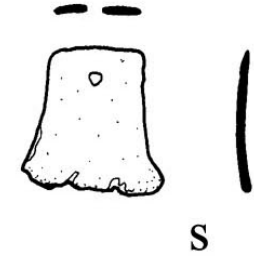
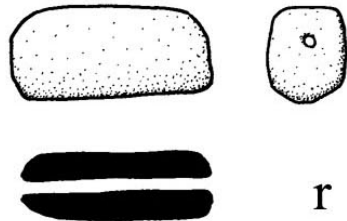
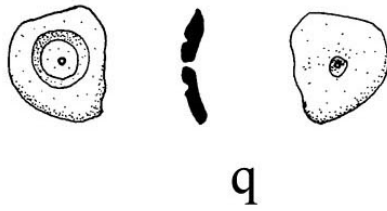
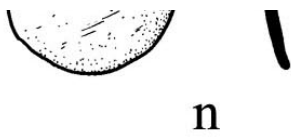
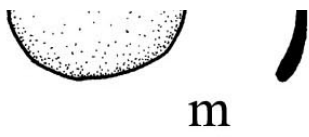


k

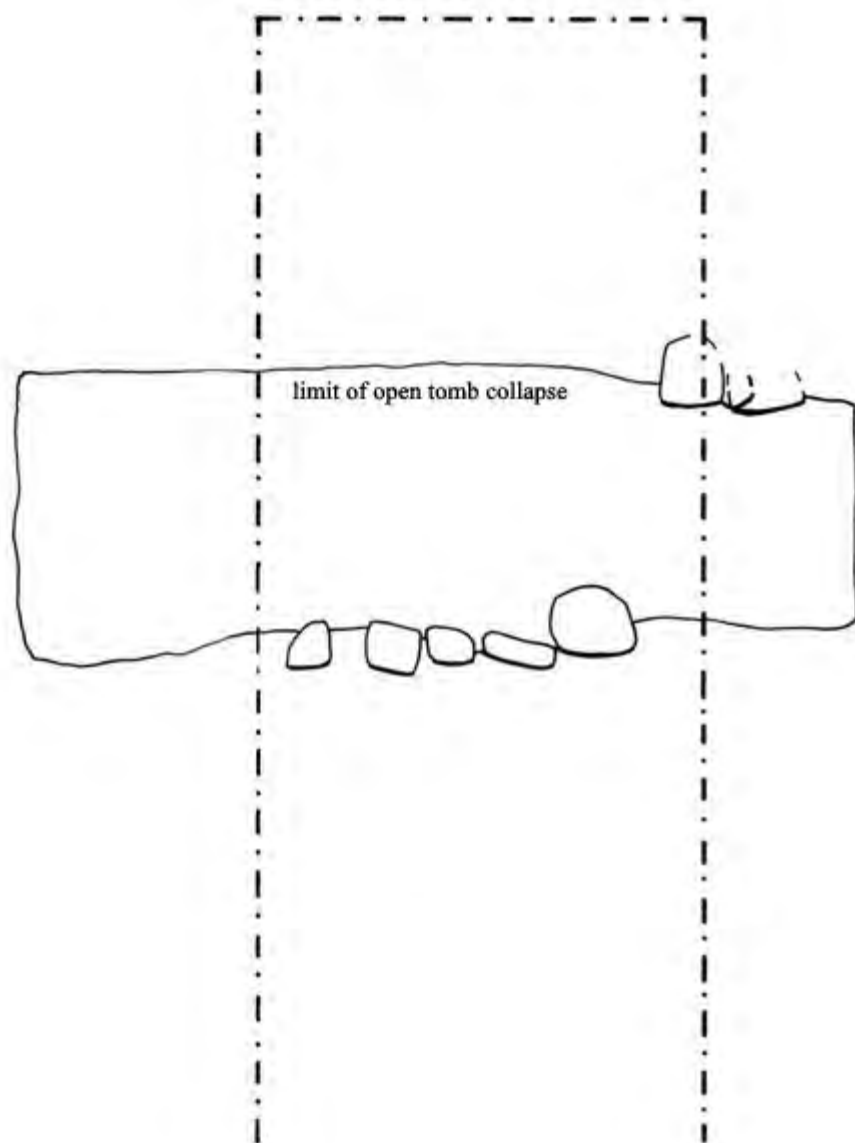


l



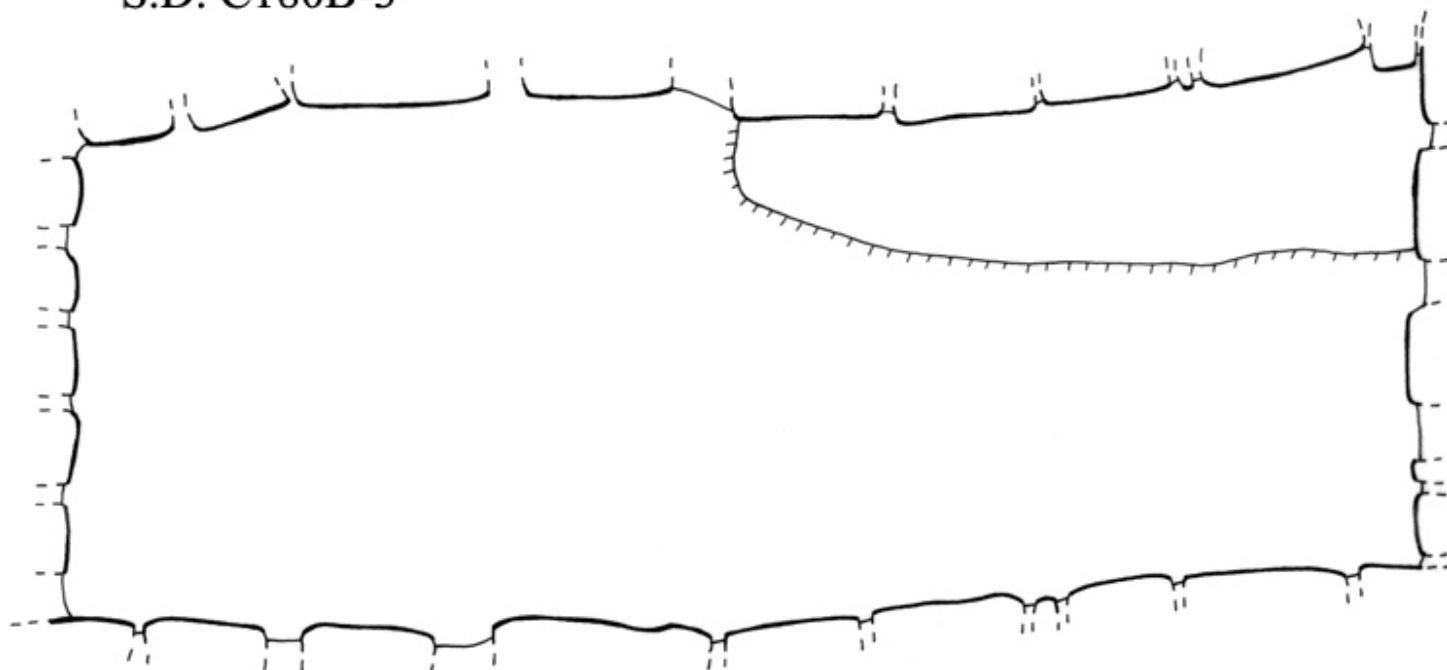


excv. C180B

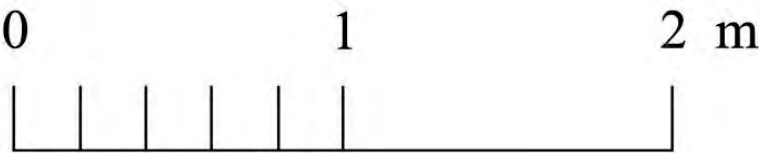
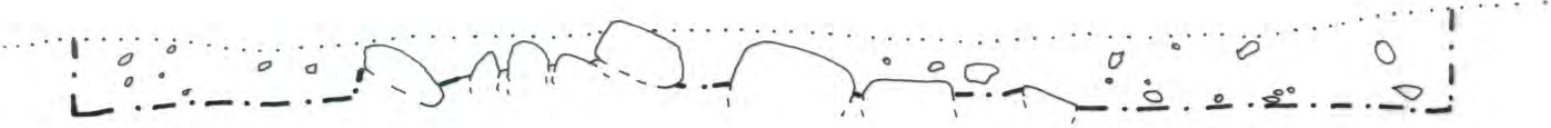


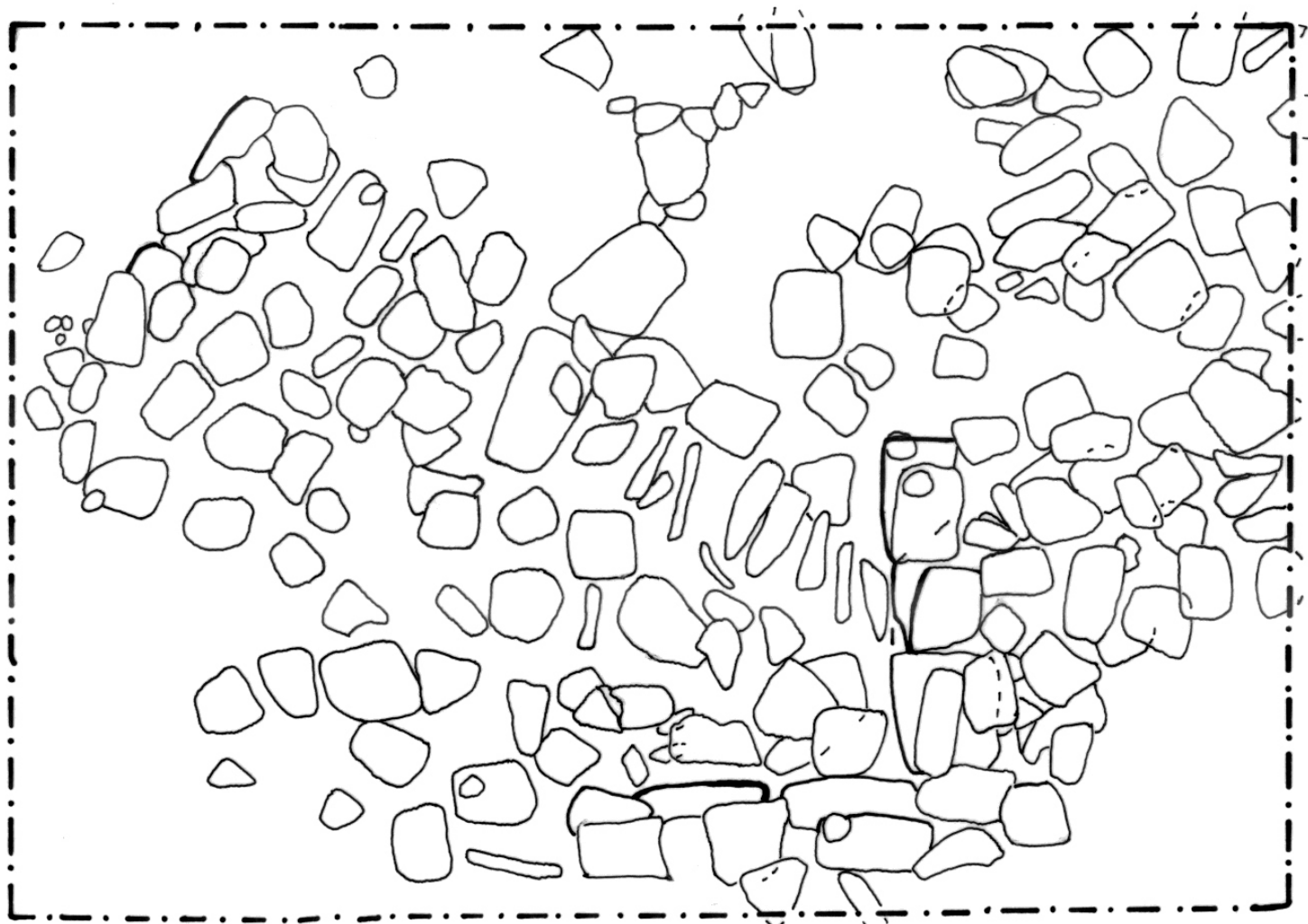


S.D. C180B-3

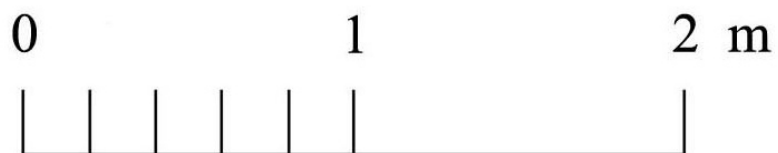


excv. C180C





excv. C180C



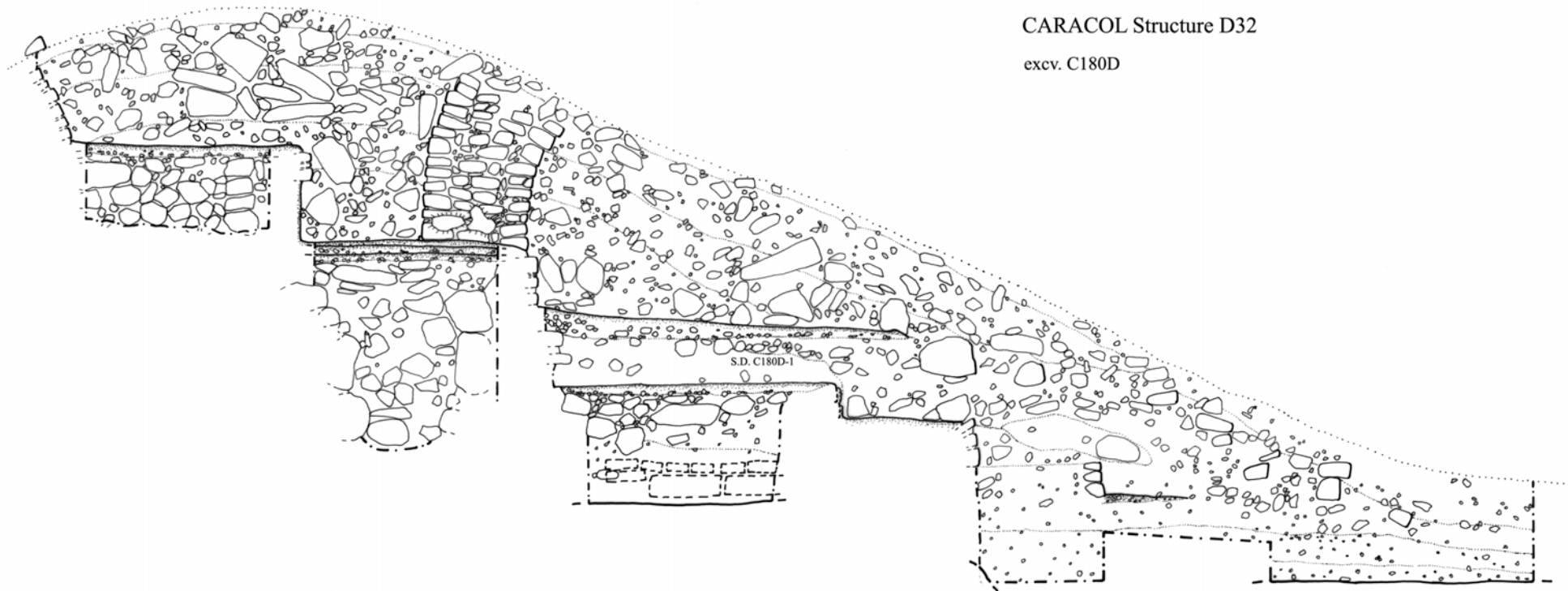






CARACOL Structure D32

excv. C180D



0 1 2 m

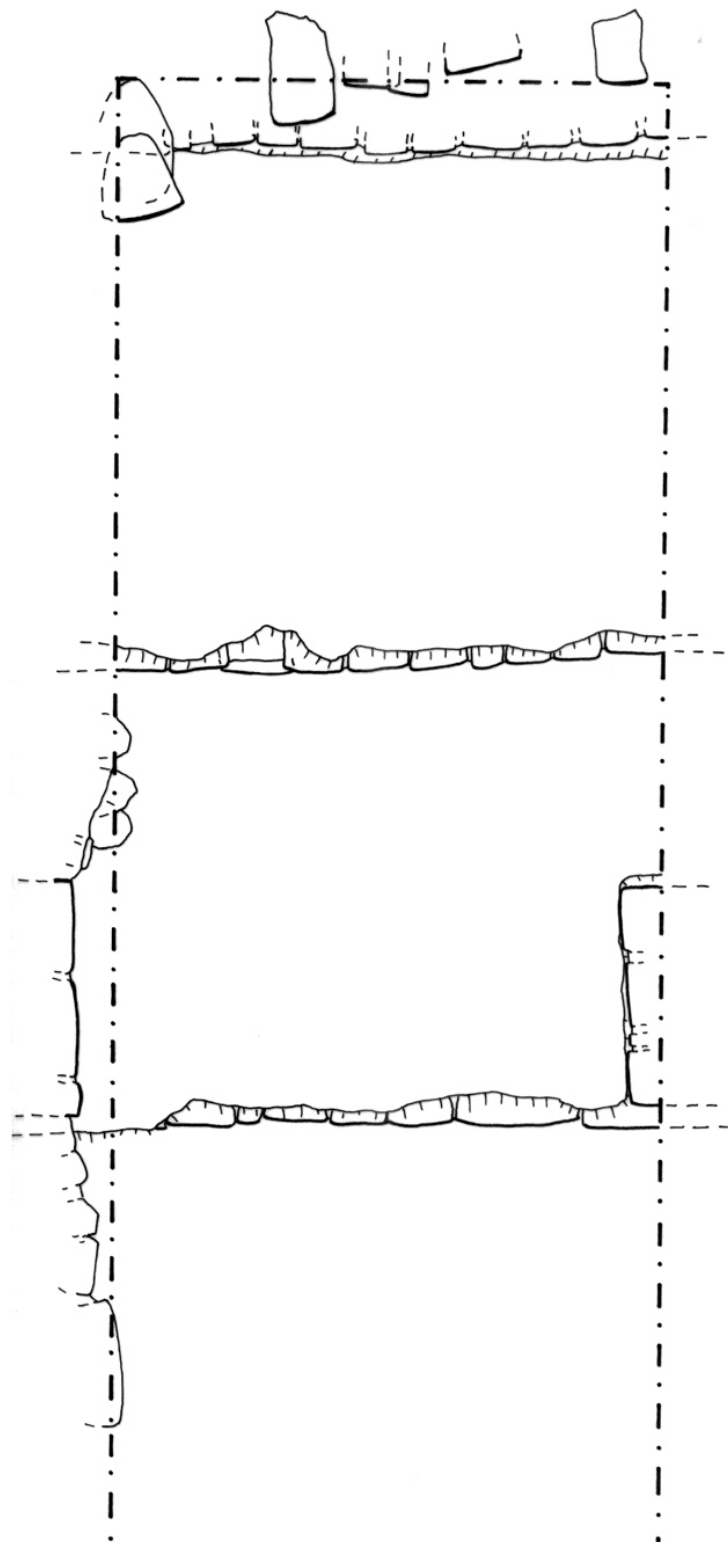
W











# CARACOL Structure D32

excav. C180D

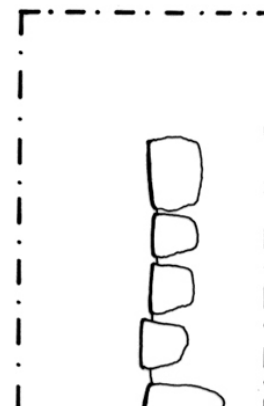
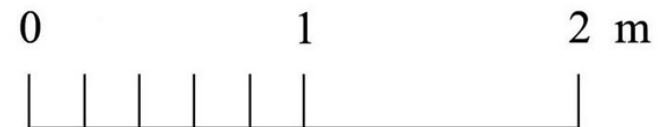
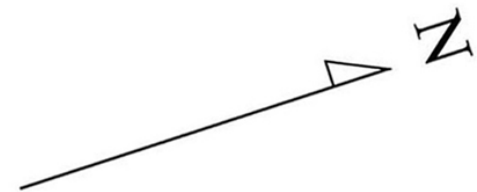
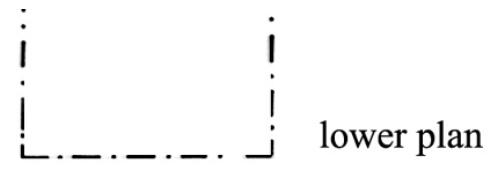


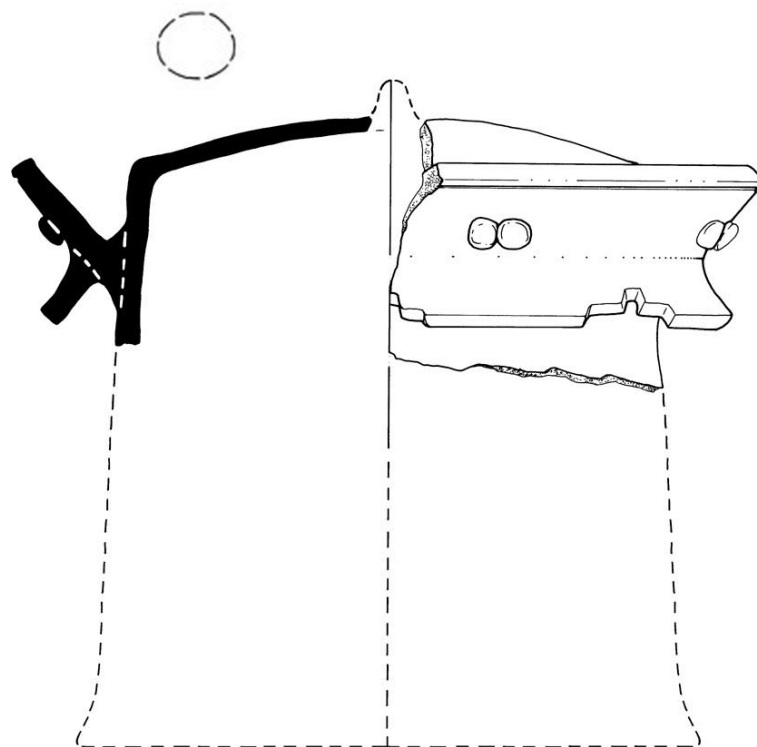




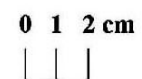
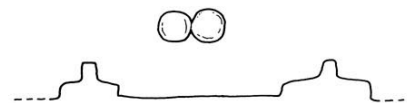


Figure 1.1





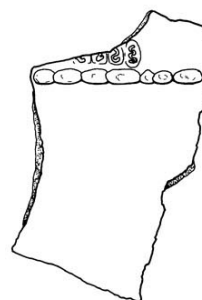
a



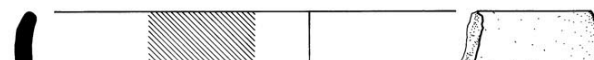
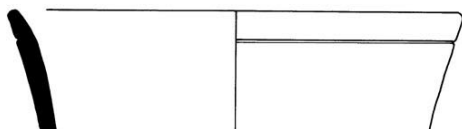
b

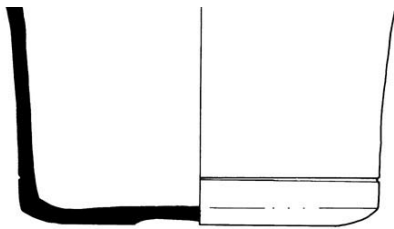


c

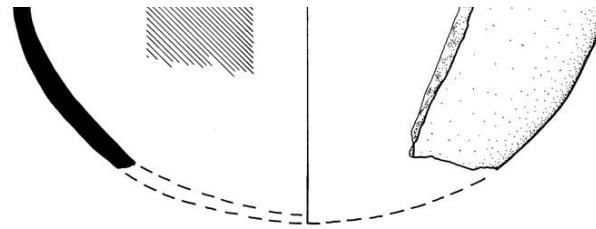


d

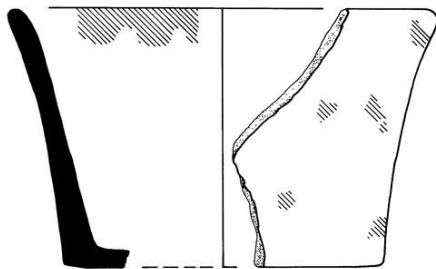




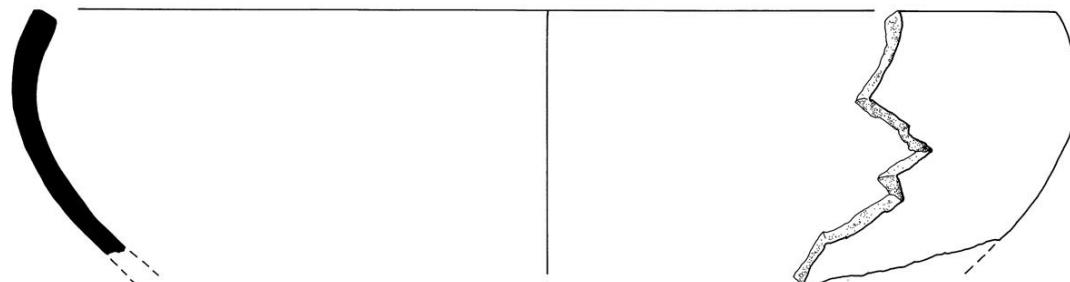
e



f

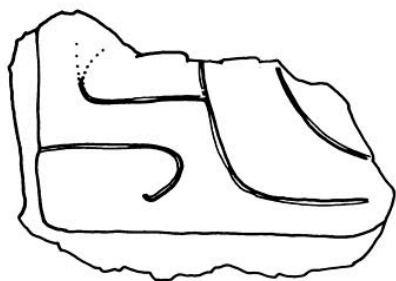


g

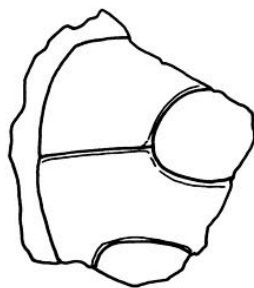


h

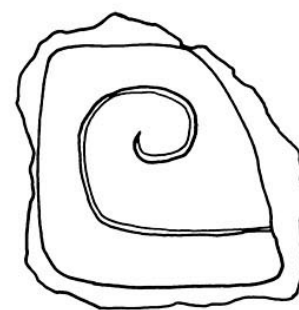




a



b



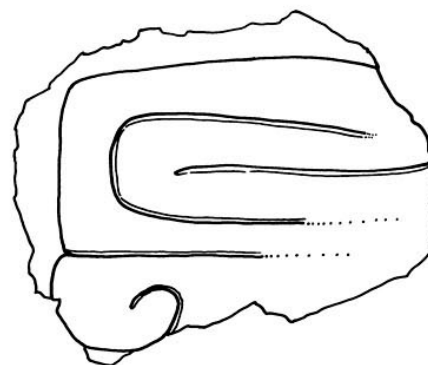
c



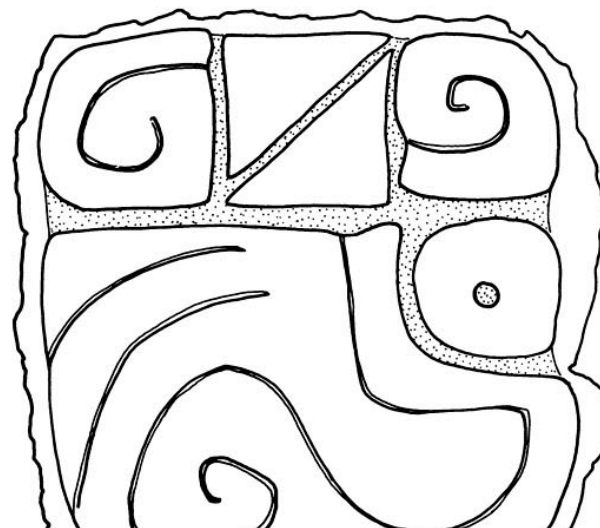
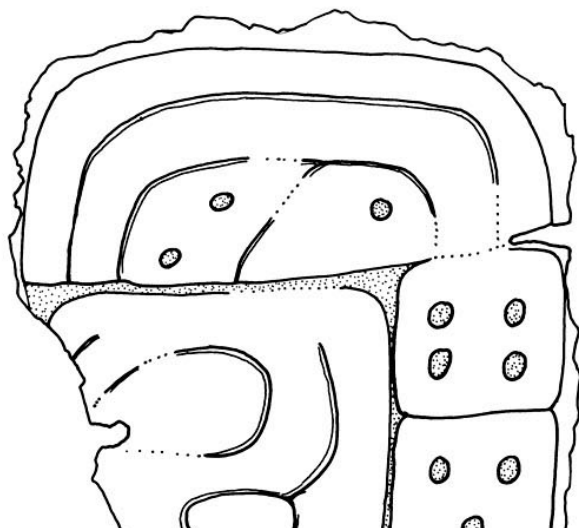
d



0 1 2 cm



e





f

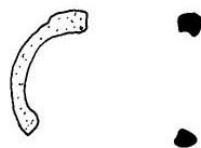


g





a



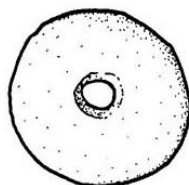
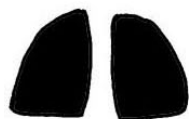
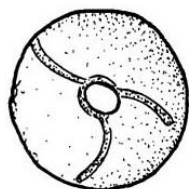
b



c



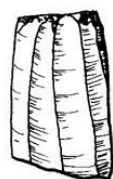
d



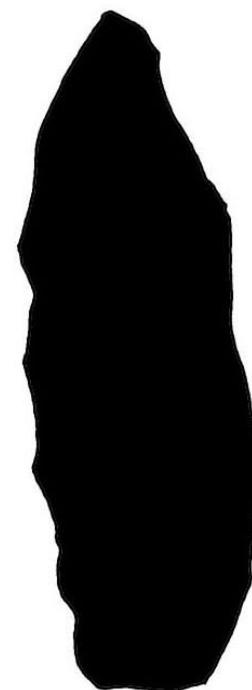
e



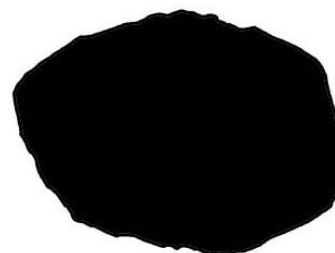
f

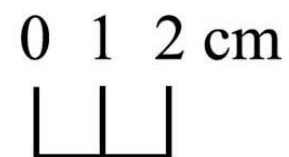
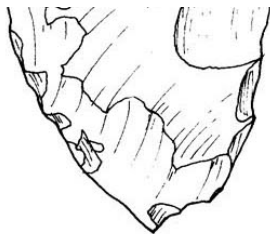
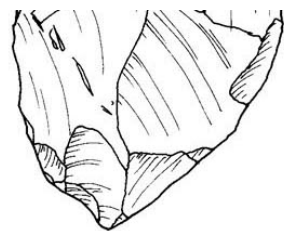


g

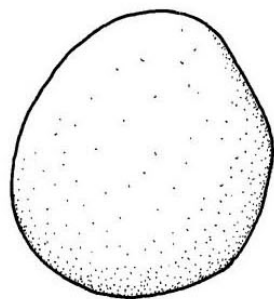


h

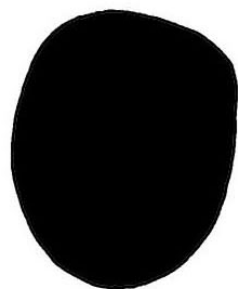




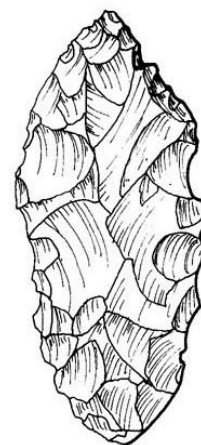
i



j



k

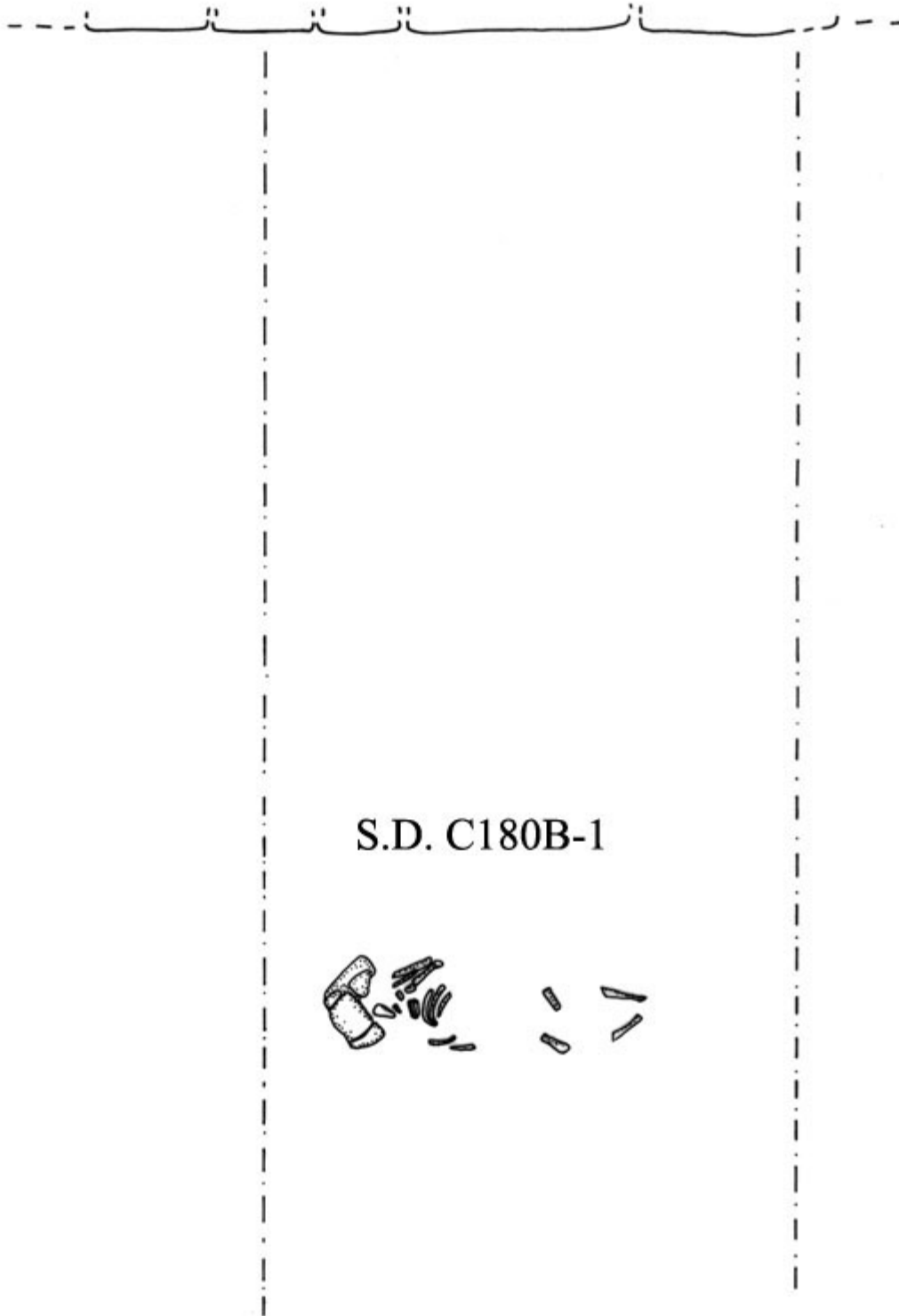


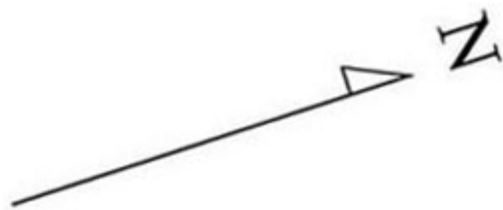
l



excv. C180D

deep penetration



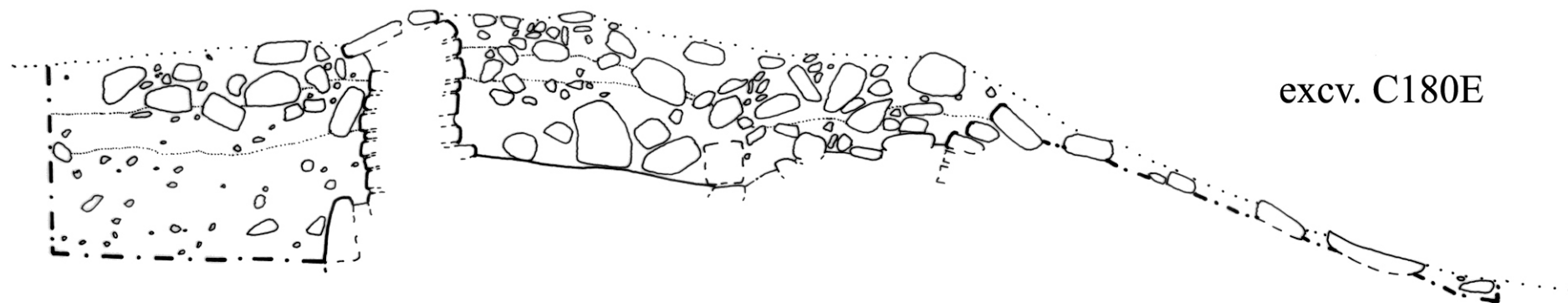








# CARACOL Structure D27



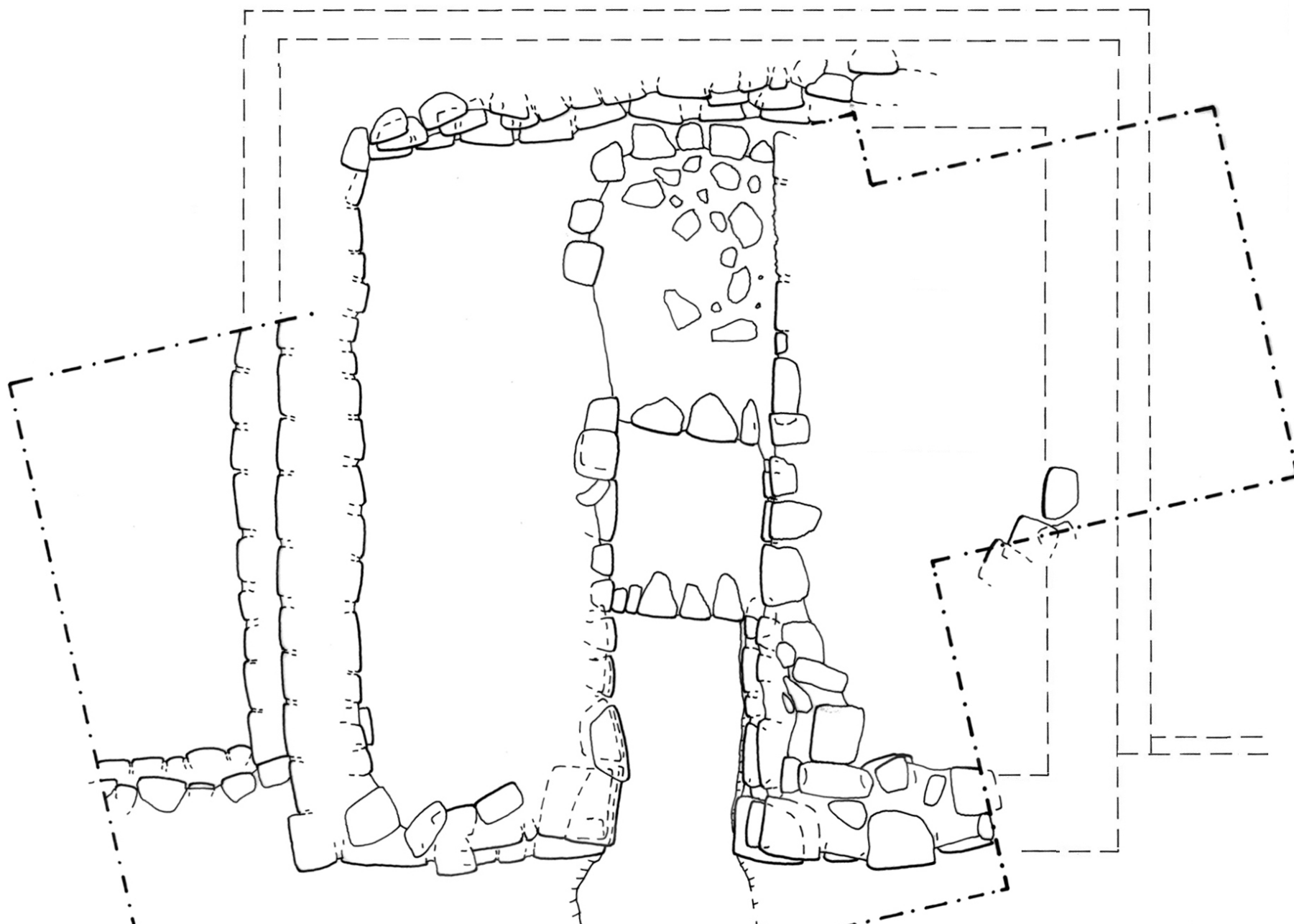
0 1 2 m

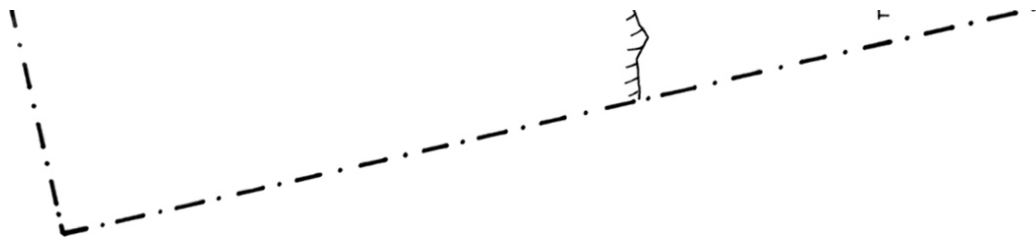


W 



# CARACOL Structure D27





excv. C180E

