

**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**

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

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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.

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### **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 stalagtite 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.

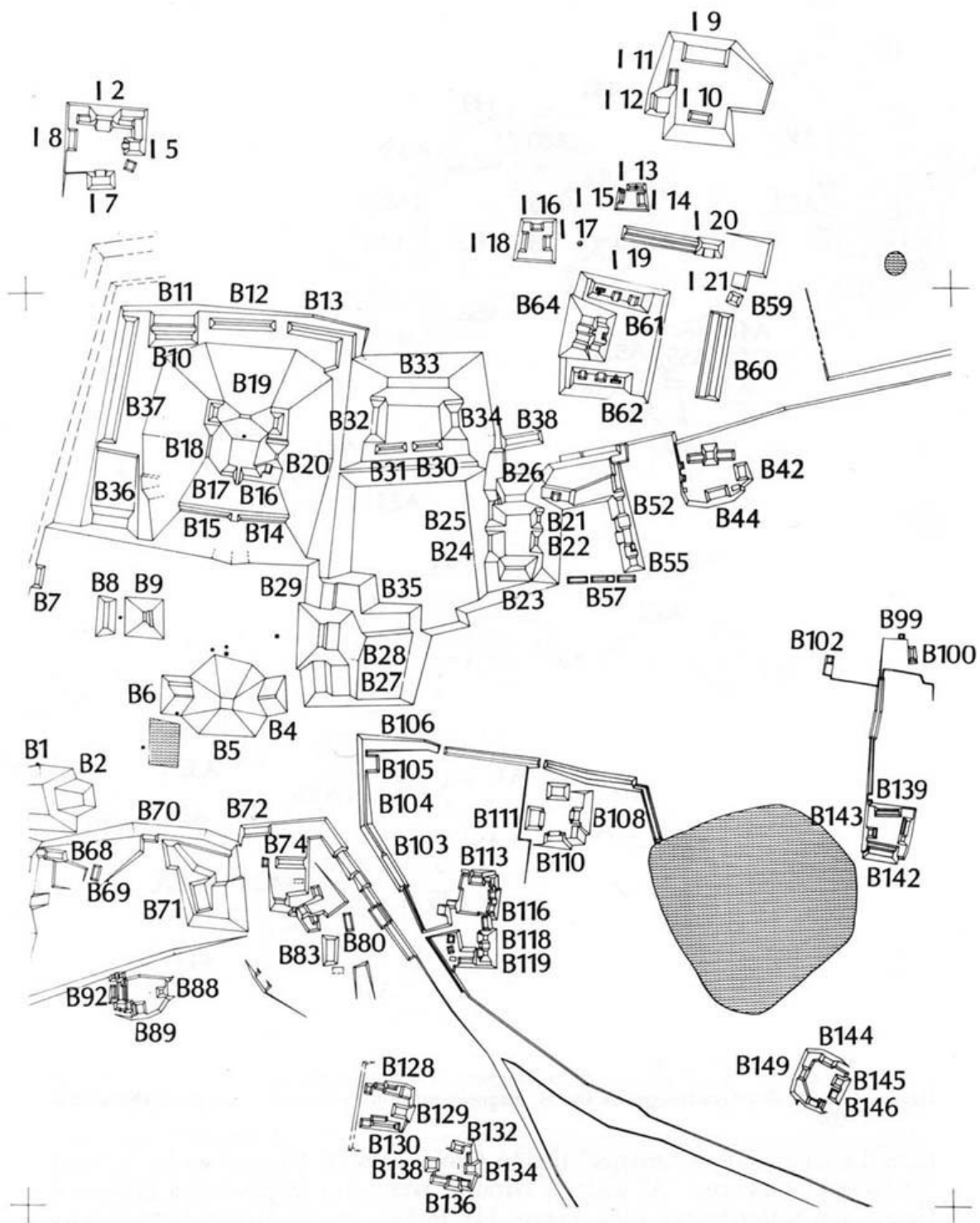
[Figure 52](#). Artifactual material associated with S.D. C172C-3:

(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.

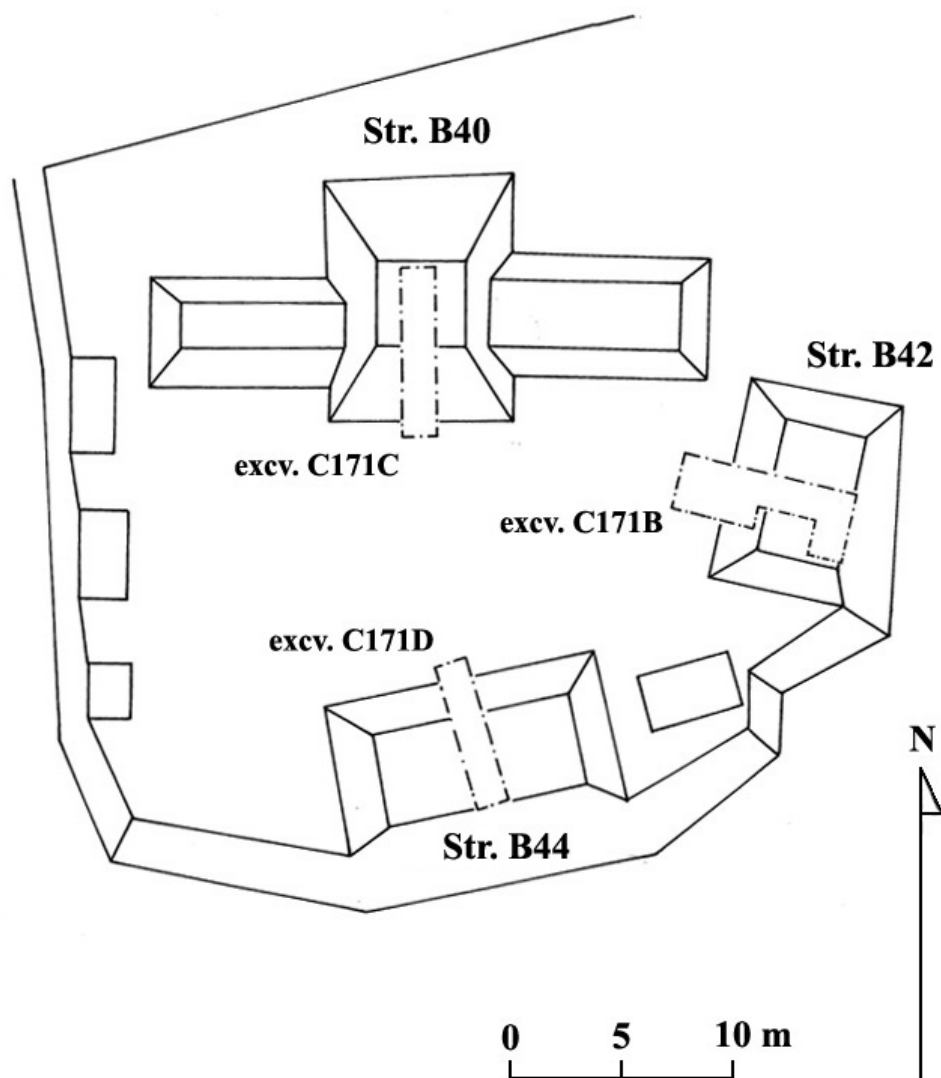
[Figure 53](#). Plan and section [east wall] of excavation C172D into Structure I20.

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

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



**Figure 1.** The B Quadrangle of the Caracol map, showing the location of Structures B40, B42, B44, B59, and I20 - all excavated during the 2005 field season.



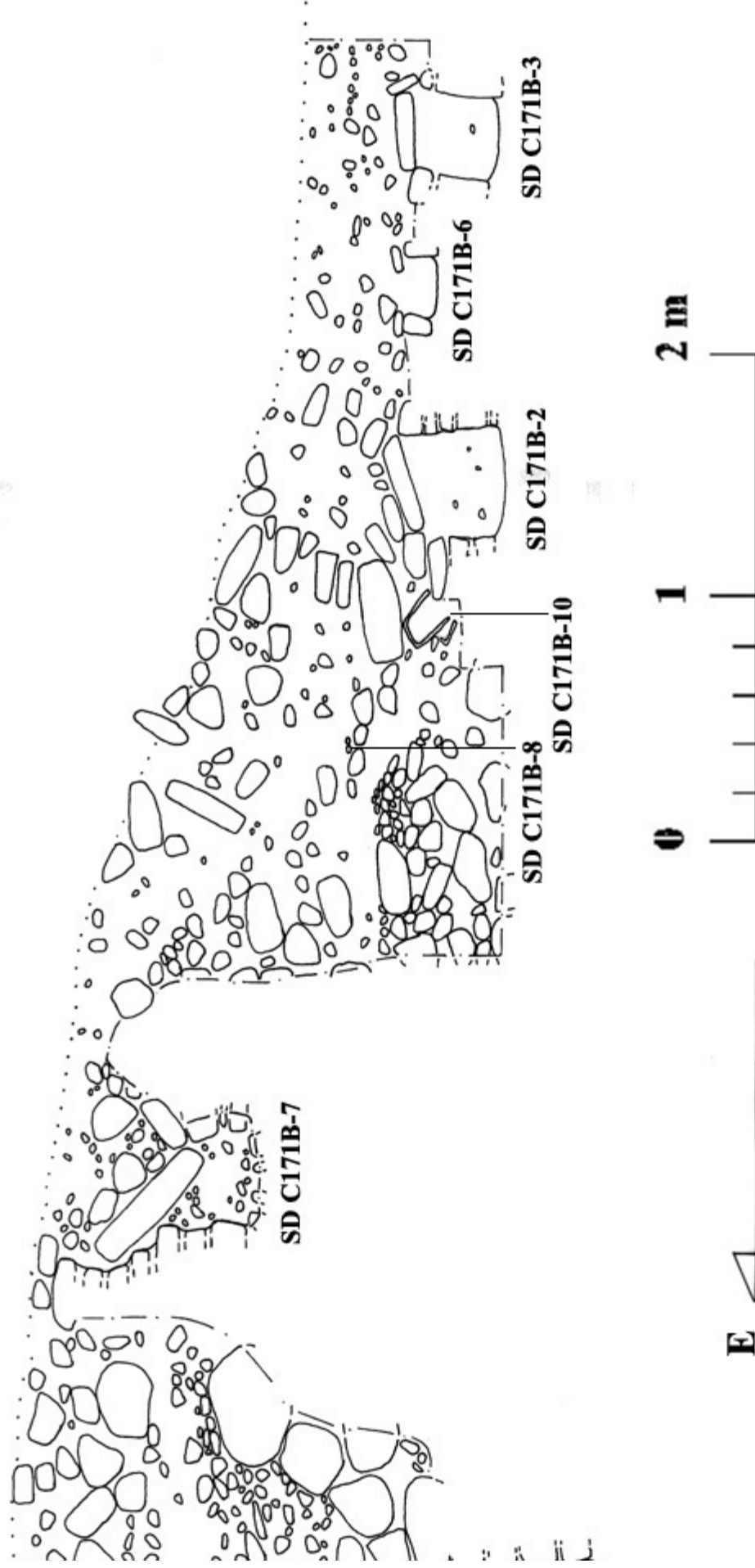
**Figure 2.** General plan of the Structure B42 Group showing the location of excavations relative to buildings.





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

# **Structure B42** **excav. C171B**

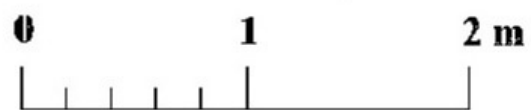
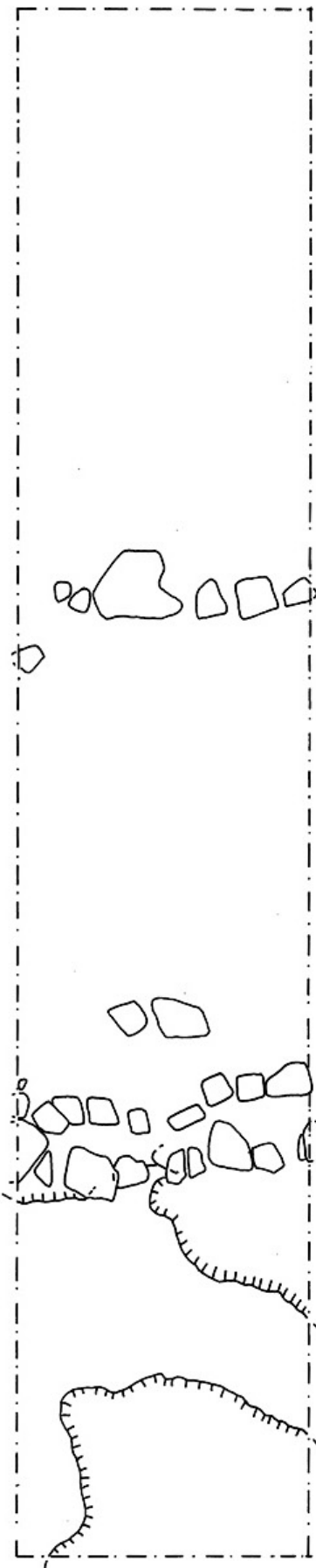


Section of excavation C171B (south wall) that penetrated Caracol Structure B42.

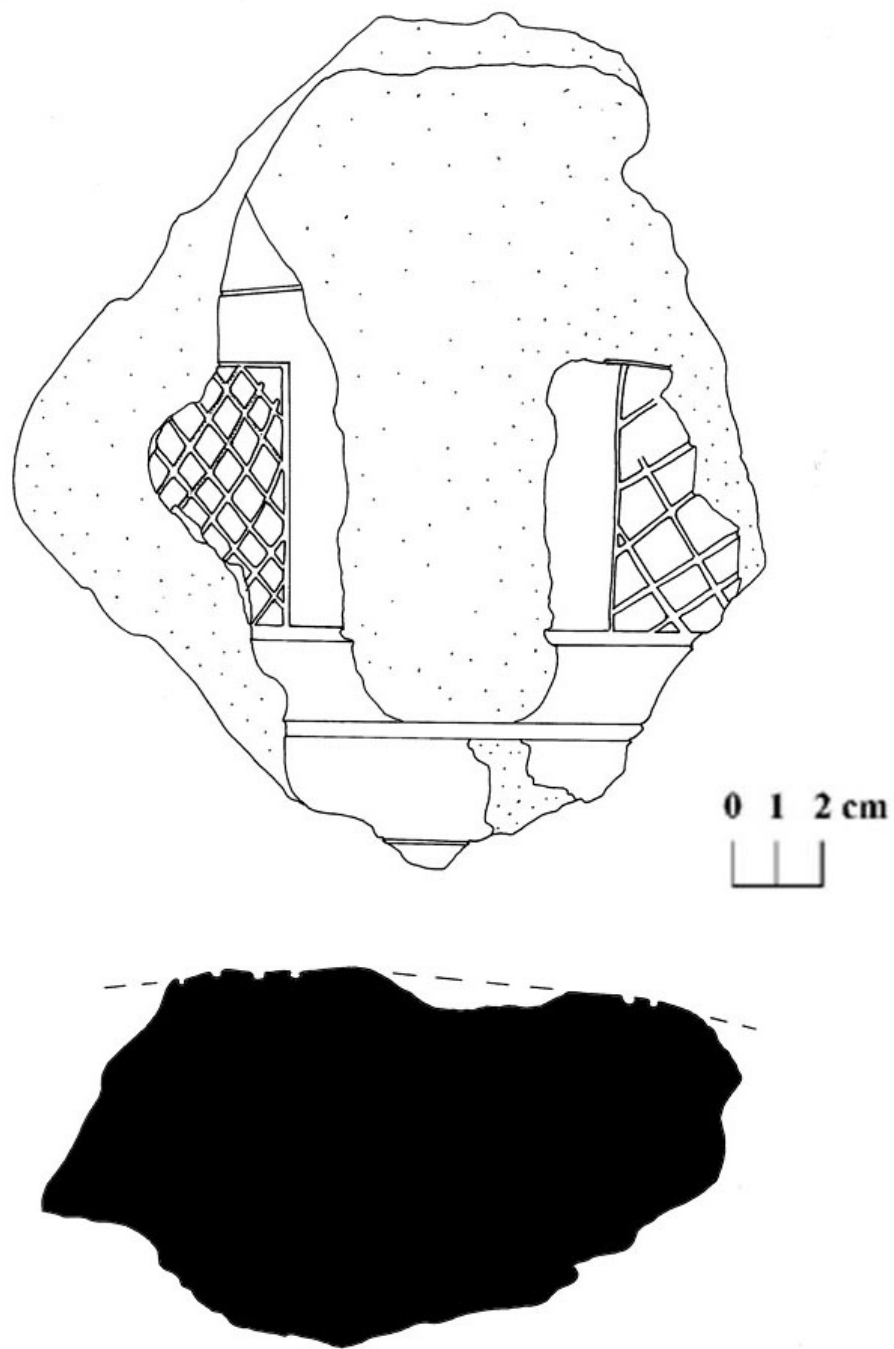


**Figure 4.**

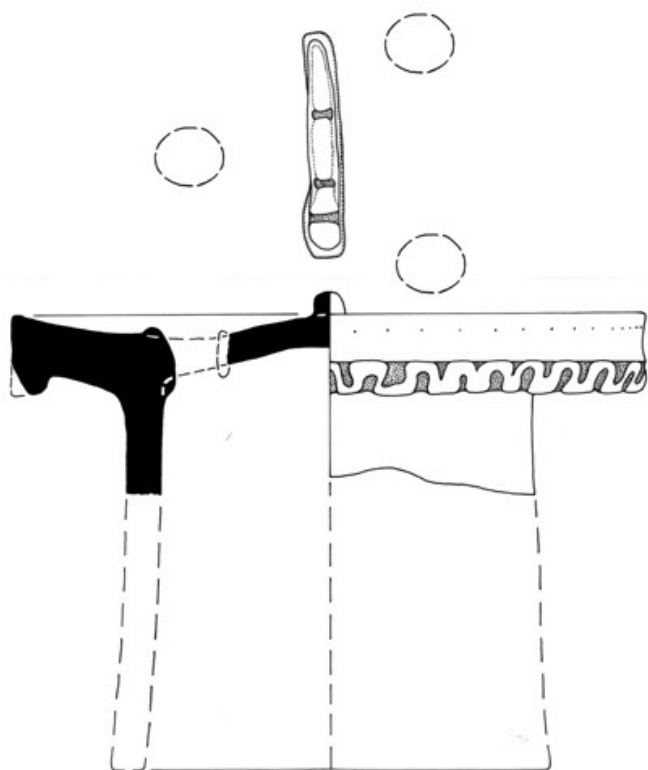
**excav. C171B**



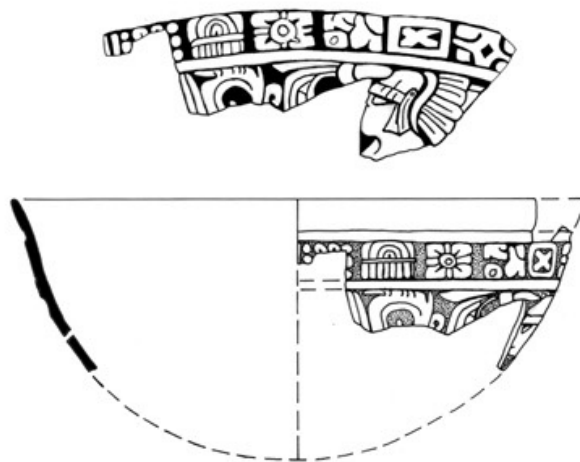
**Figure 5. Plan of excavation C171B after removal of the humus, showing building and plaza features.**



**Figure 6. Drawing of carved slate monument fragment recovered from the surface of Caracol Structure B42.**



**b**



**a**

0 1 2 cm

A scale bar with markings for 0, 1, and 2 cm.



**c**



**d**



**Figure 7. Terminal Classic ceramics recovered from within the humus and collapse overlaying the front stairway area of Structure B42: (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.

**excv. C171B**

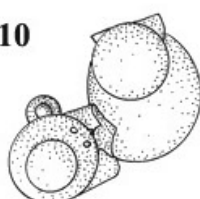
**SD C171B-4**



**SD C171B-8**



**SD C171B-10**



**SD C171B-2**



**SD C171B-1**



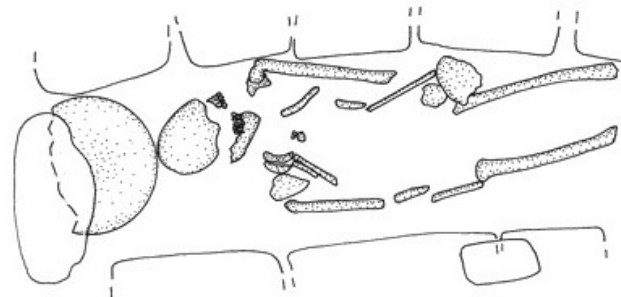
**SD C171B-5**



**SD C171B-6**



**SD C171B-3**



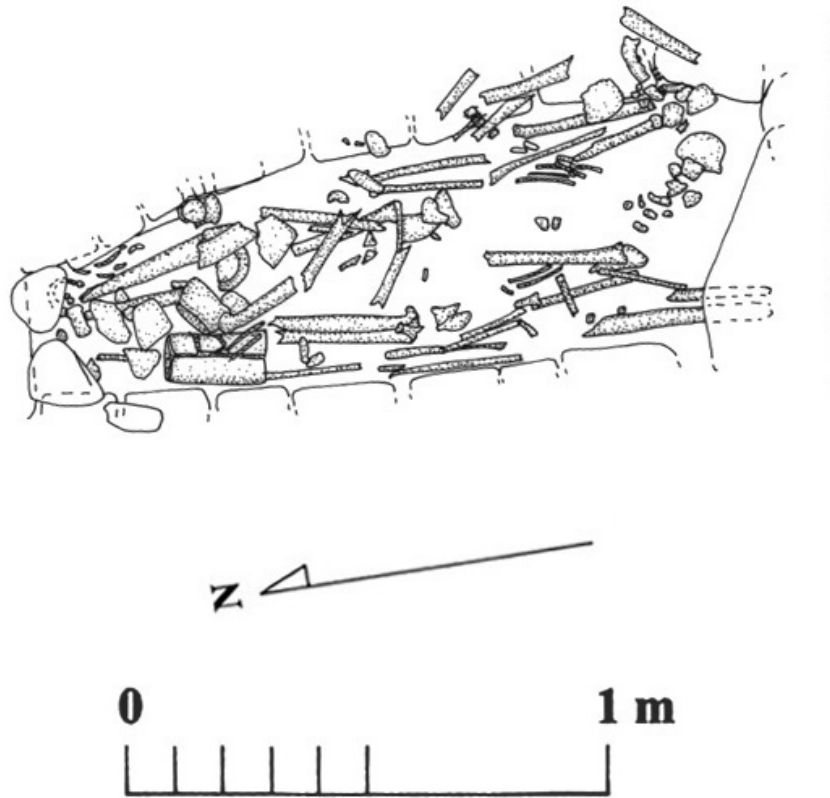
**0**

**1 m**

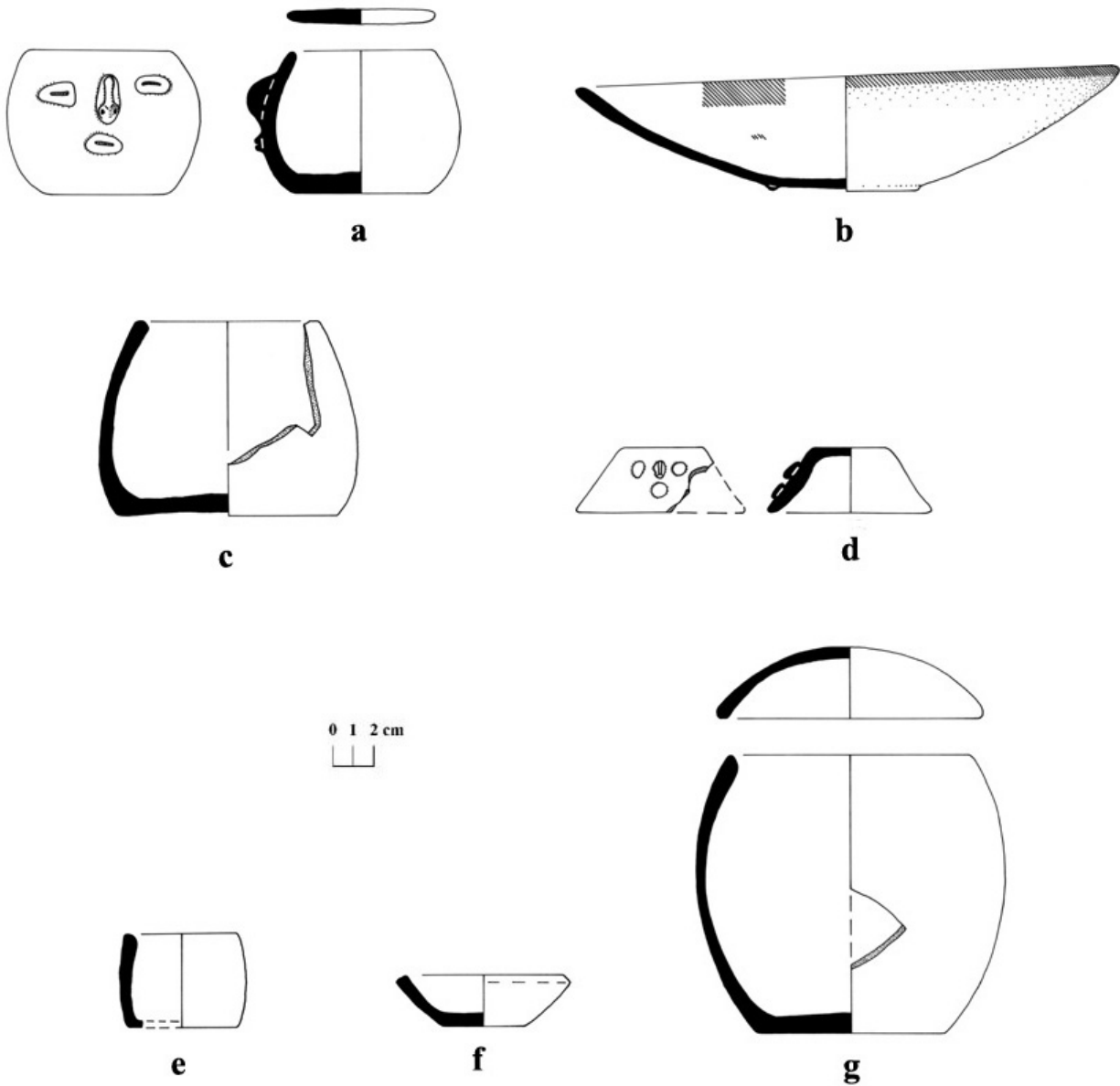


**Figure 9. Detailed plan of the western end of excavation C171B showing the location of Special Deposits C171B-1, -2, -3, -4, -5, -6, -8, and -10.**

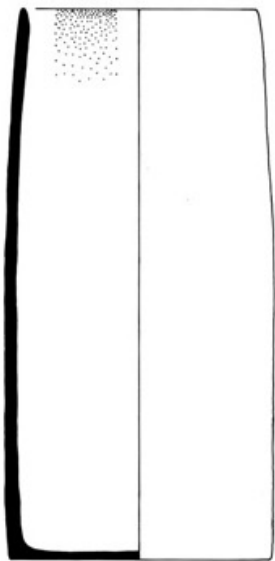
**SD C171B-2**  
**lower plan**



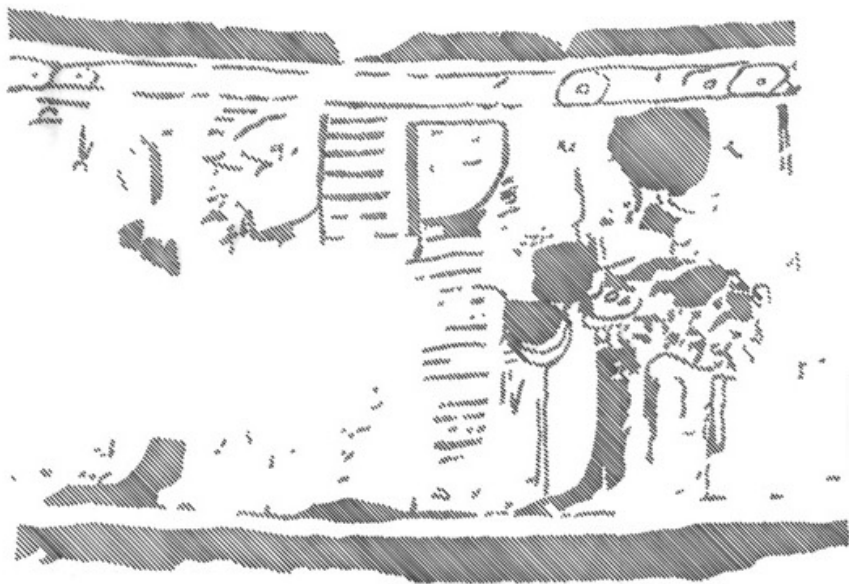
**Figure 10. Lower plan of Special Deposit C171B-2, showing human bones and associated pottery vessels stuffed into the crypt.**



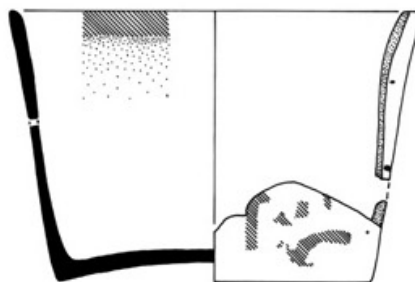
**Figure 13. Vessels recovered in association with Special Deposits in excavation C171B:**  
**(a) Hebe Modeled [S.D. C171B-1]; (b) Machete Orange Polychrome [S.D. C171B-3];**  
**(c) Ceiba Unslipped [S.D. C171B-4]; (d) Hebe Modeled [S.D. C171B-4]; (e), (f), and**  
**(g) Ceiba Unslipped [S.D. C171B-5].**



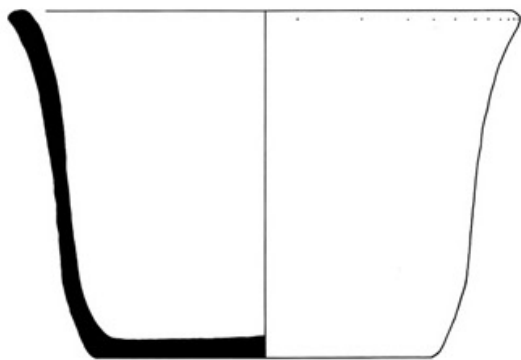
**a**



0 1 2 cm



**b**



**c**

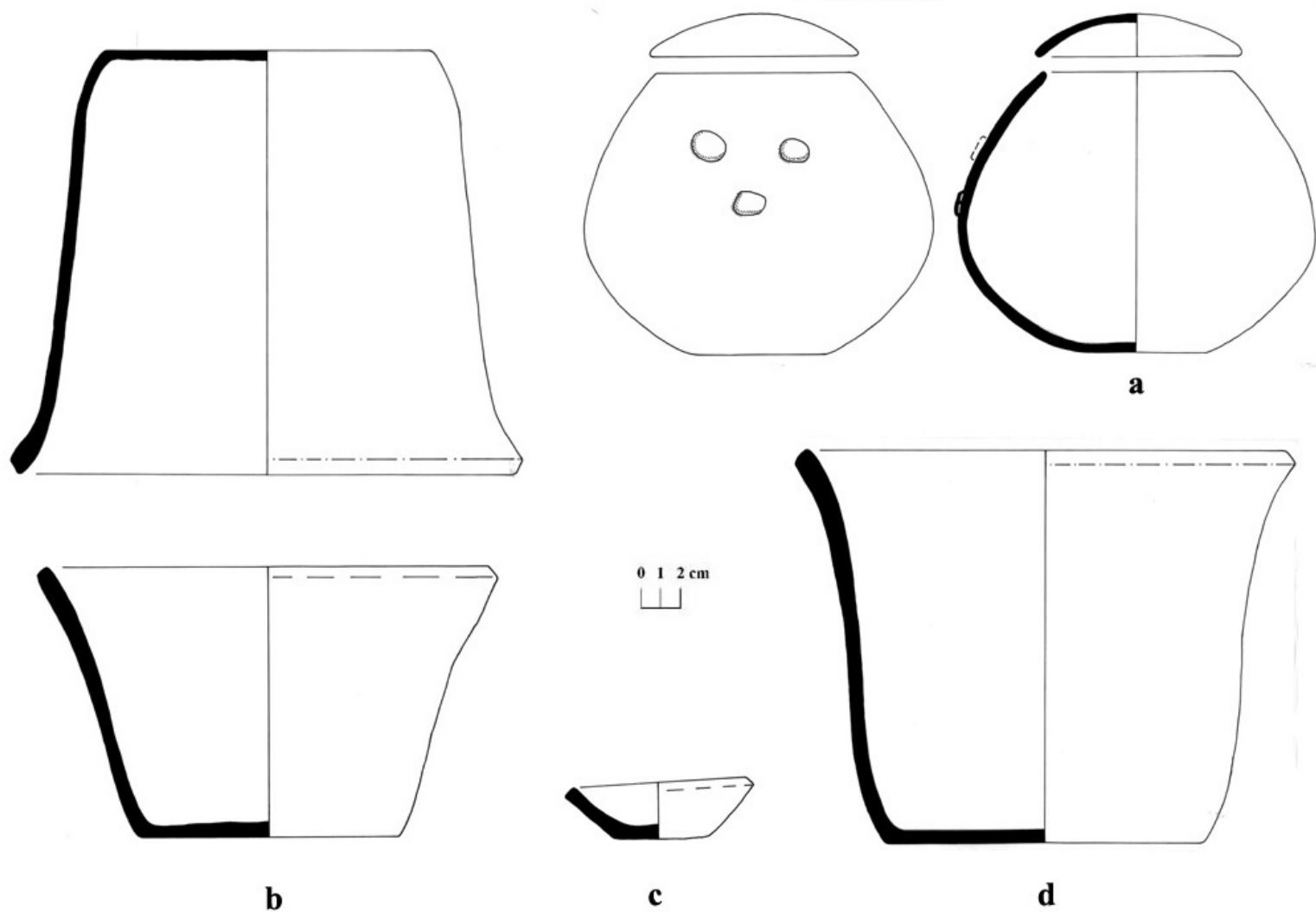


**d**



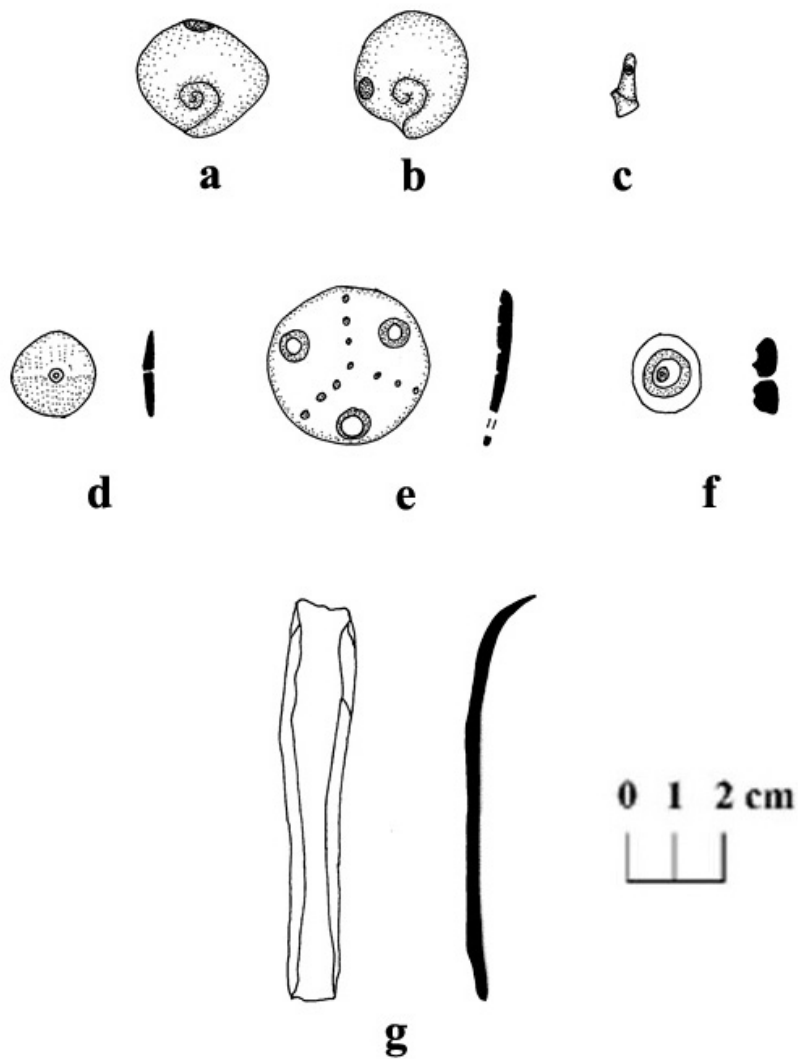
**e**

**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.**



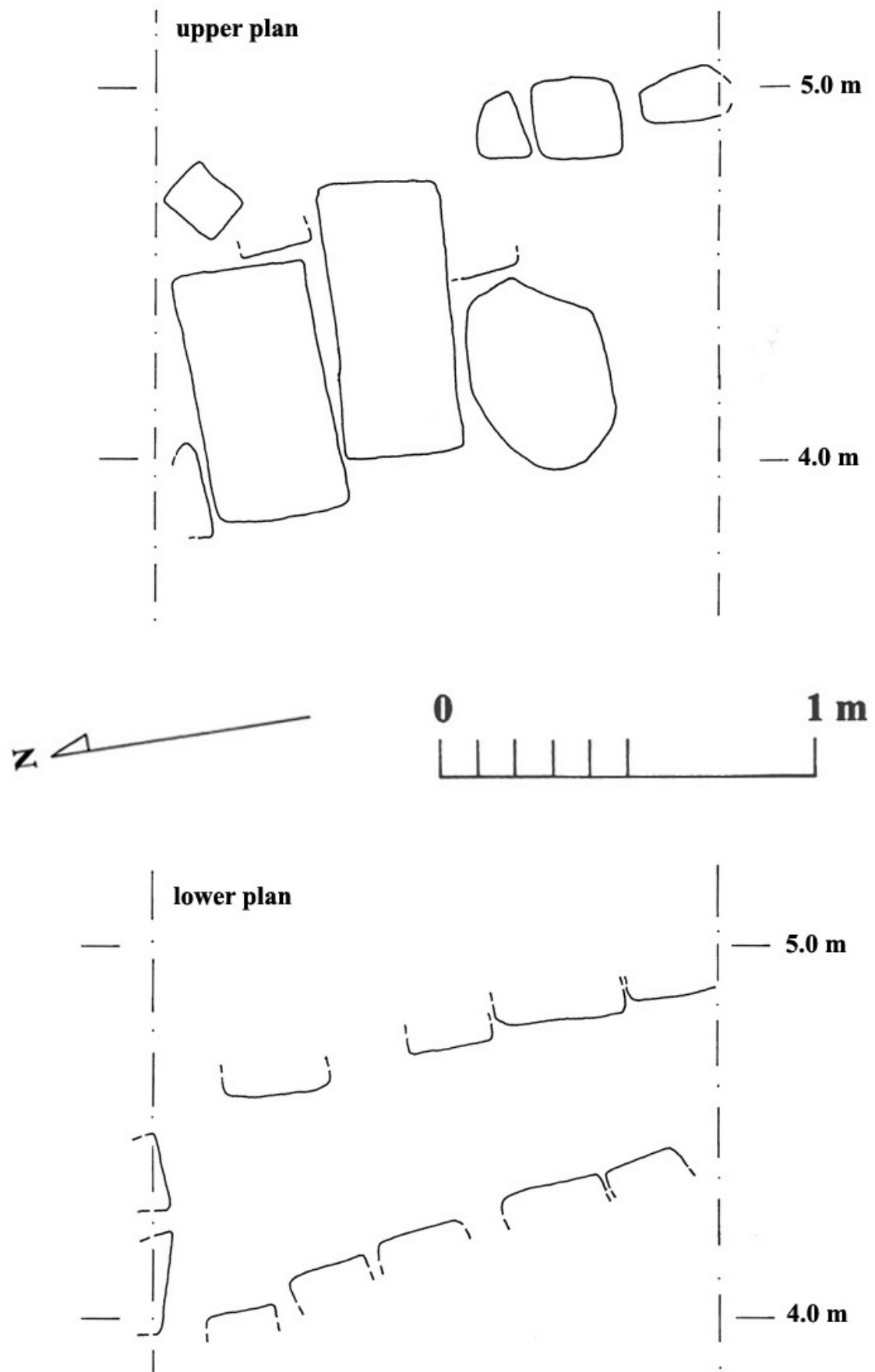
**Figure 22. Vessels from S.D. C171B-10: (a) Hebe Modeled; (b) Valentin Unslipped [pieces of upper vessel also recovered in S.D. C171B-2]; (c) Ceiba Unslipped; (d) Valentin Unslipped [companion vessel in S.D. C171B-2].**





**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.

# SD C171B-7



**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.

# SD C171B-9

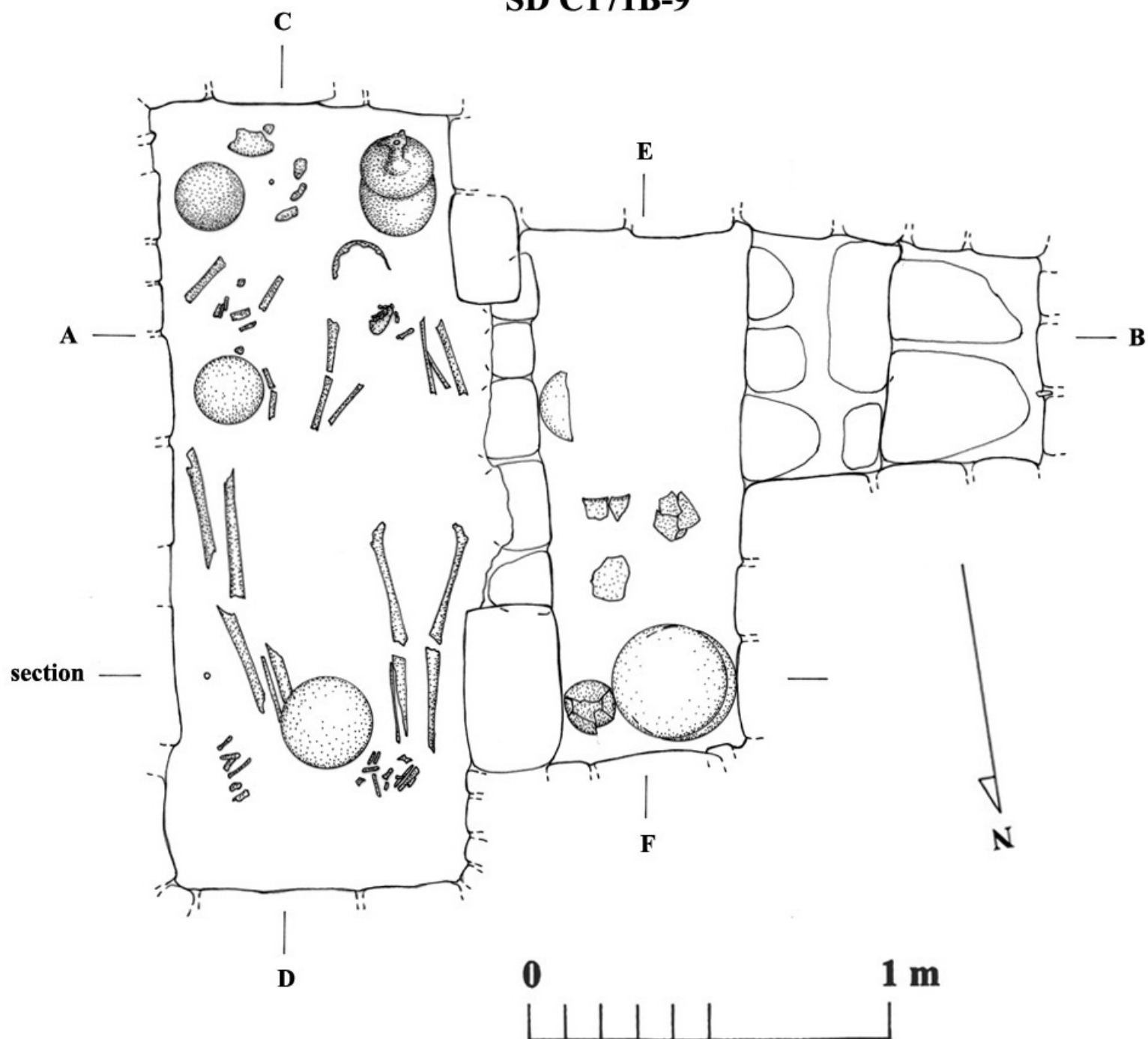
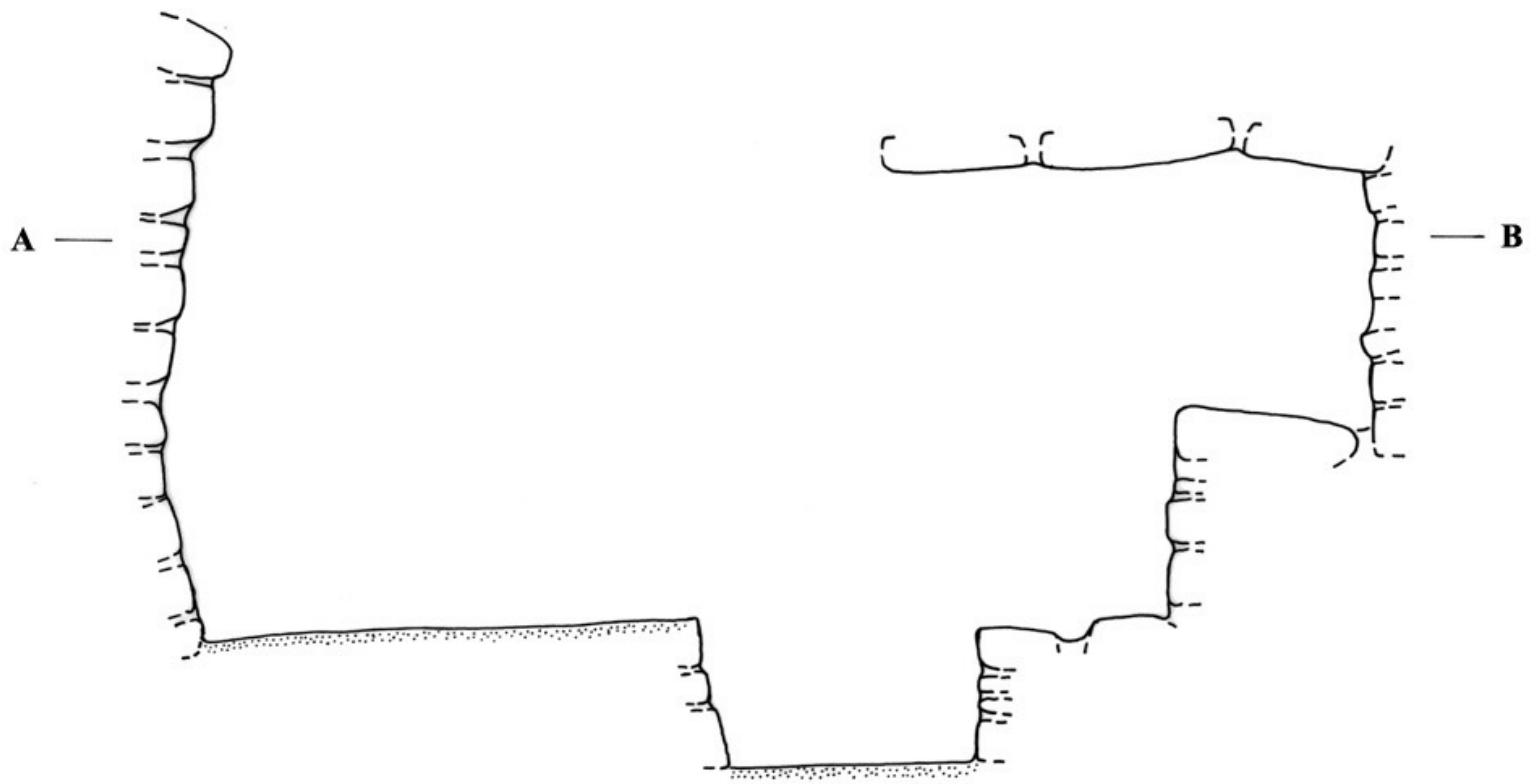
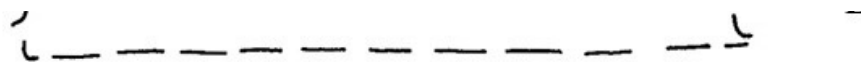


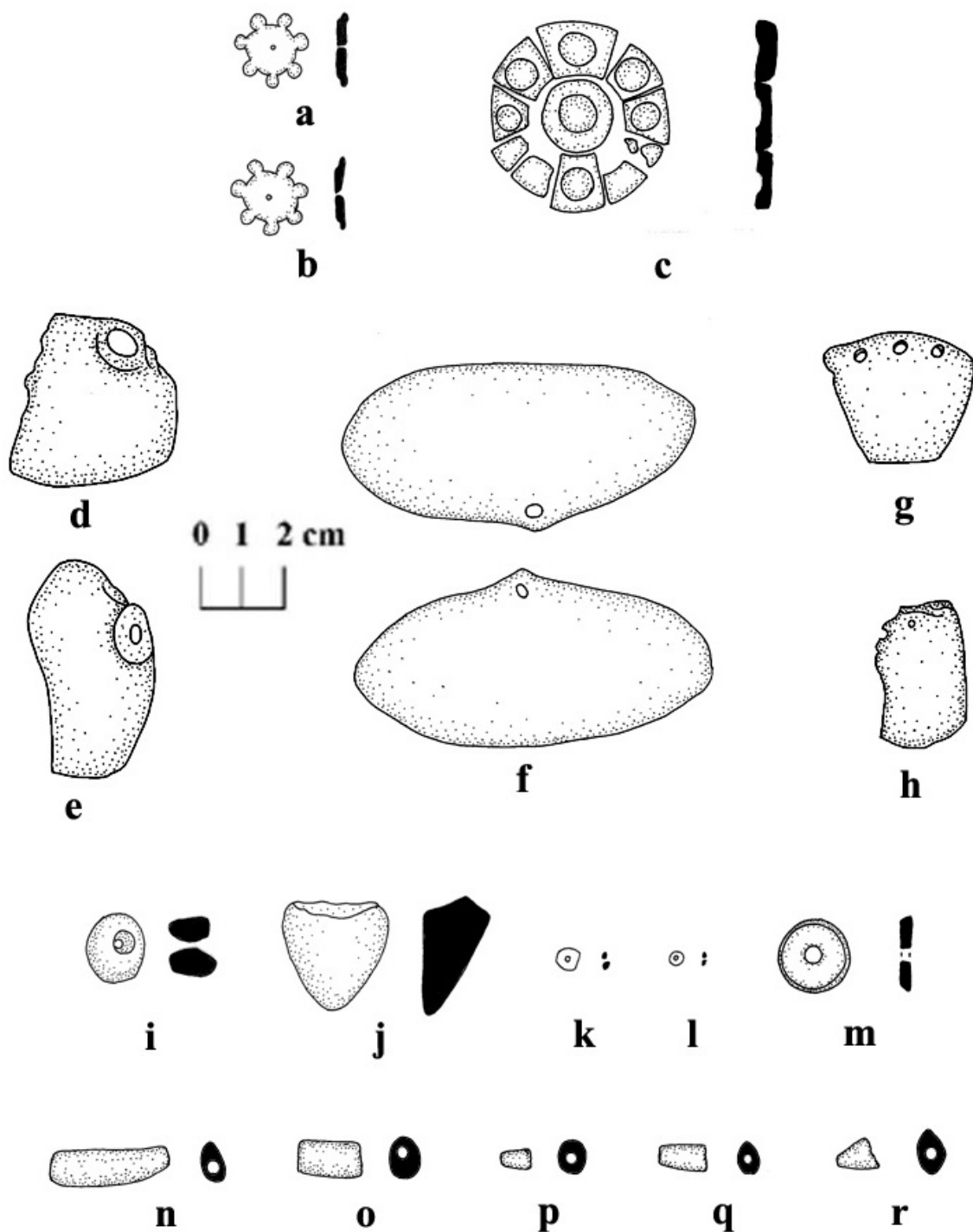
Figure 16. Plan of S.D. C171B-9, recovered in excavation C171B.

# SD C171B-9



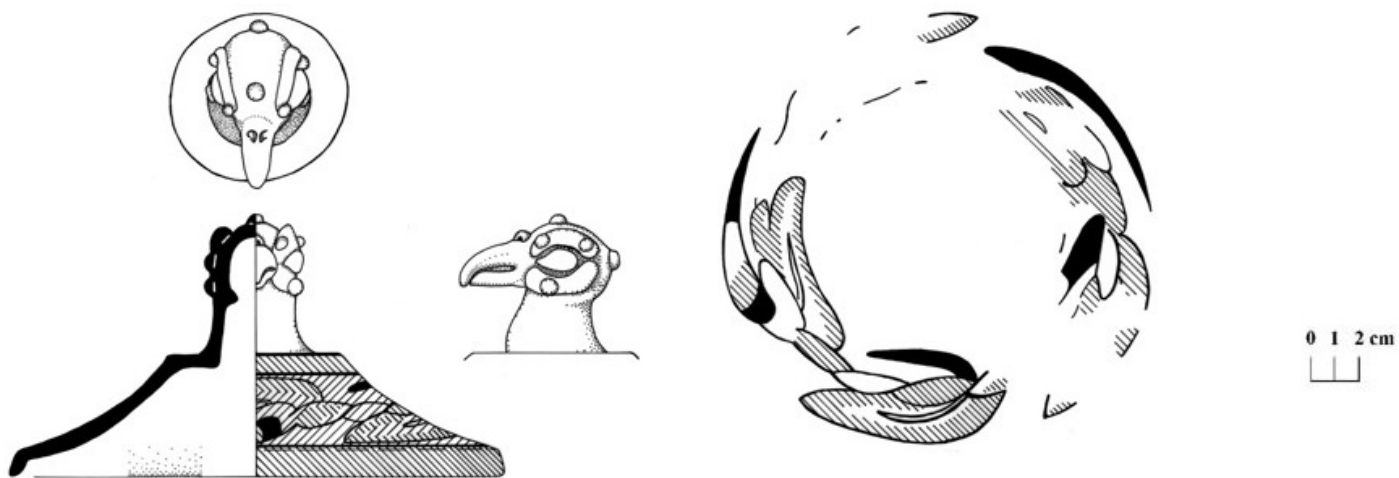


**Figure 17. Cross-sections of the double-chambered tomb for S.D. C171B-9.**

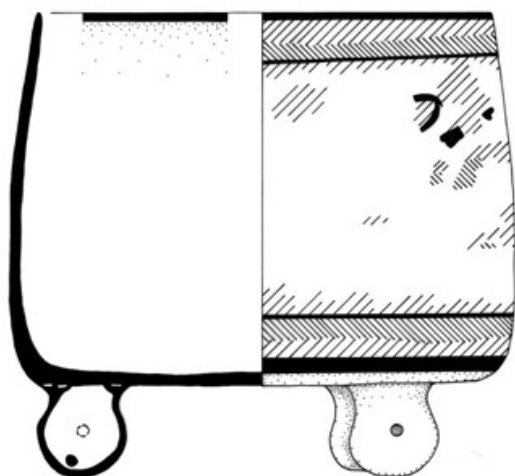


**Figure 20.** Artifactual material associated with S.D. C171B-9: (a) and (b) carved shell [possibly ear ornaments]; (c) carved pyrite, probably from an earflare [pieces of a second on chamber floor]; (d), (e), (f), (g), and (h) shells perforated for suspension; (i), (j), (k), and (l) jadeite beads;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

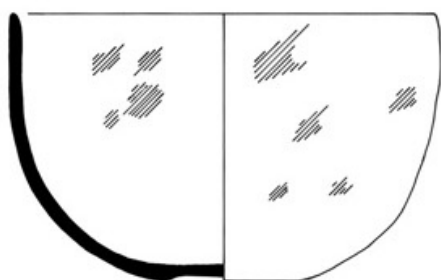




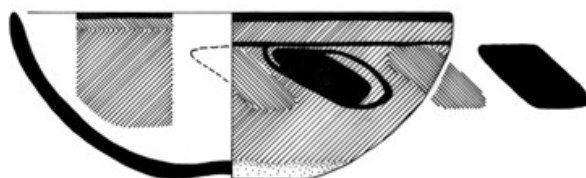
a



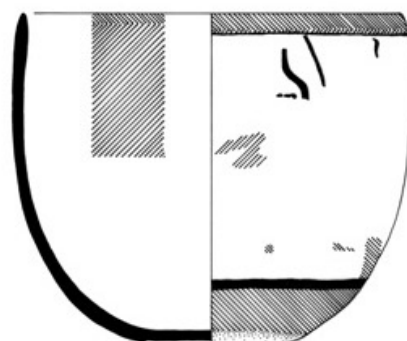
b



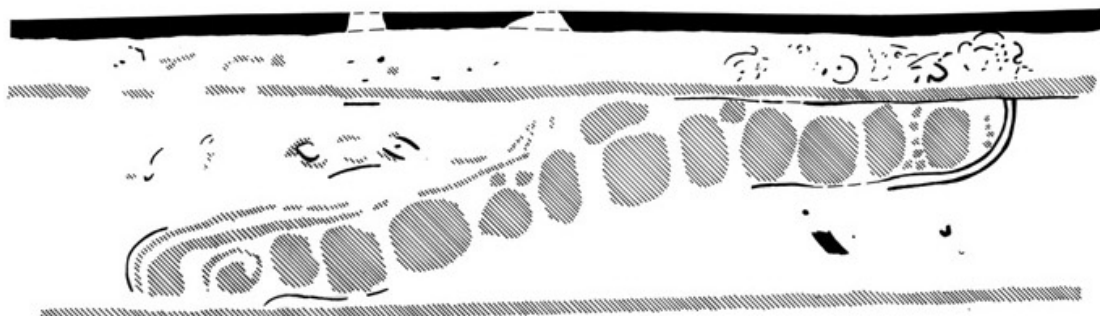
c



d



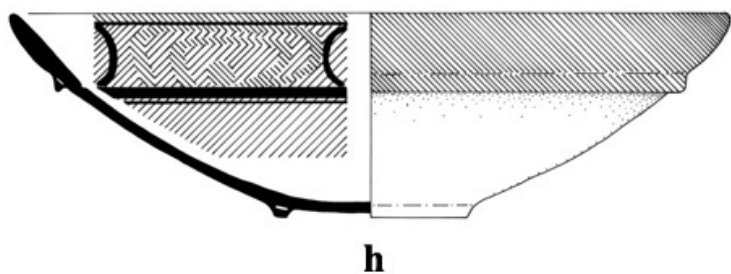
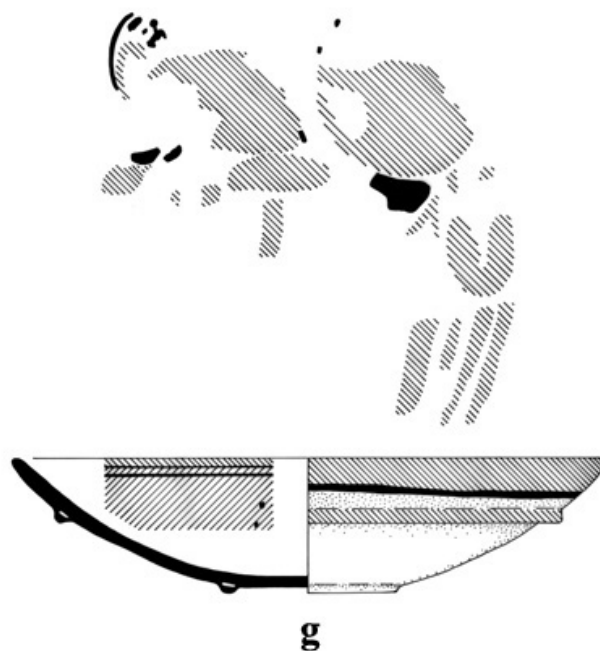
e



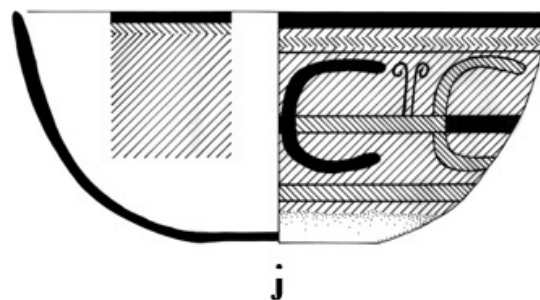
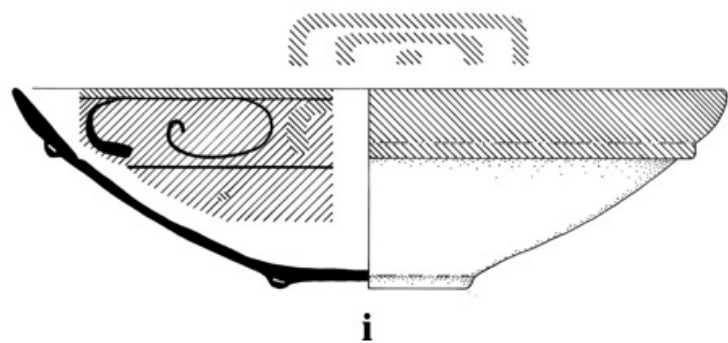
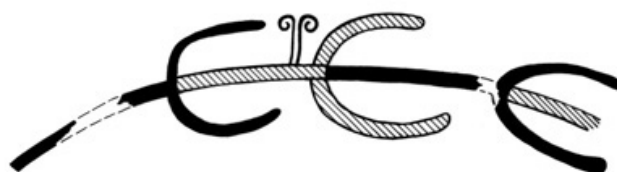


**f**

**Figure 18. Vessels associated with S.D. C171B-9: (a) and (b) Sache Orange Polychrome [lid found on top of vessel in Figure 18j]; (c) Veracal Orange; (d), (e), and (f) Saxche Orange Polychrome; (continued on next page)**



0 1 2 cm



**Figure 18.** Vessels associated with S.D. C171B-9 (continued): (g), (h), and (i) Pajarito Oragne Polychrome; (j) Saxche Orange Polychrome.



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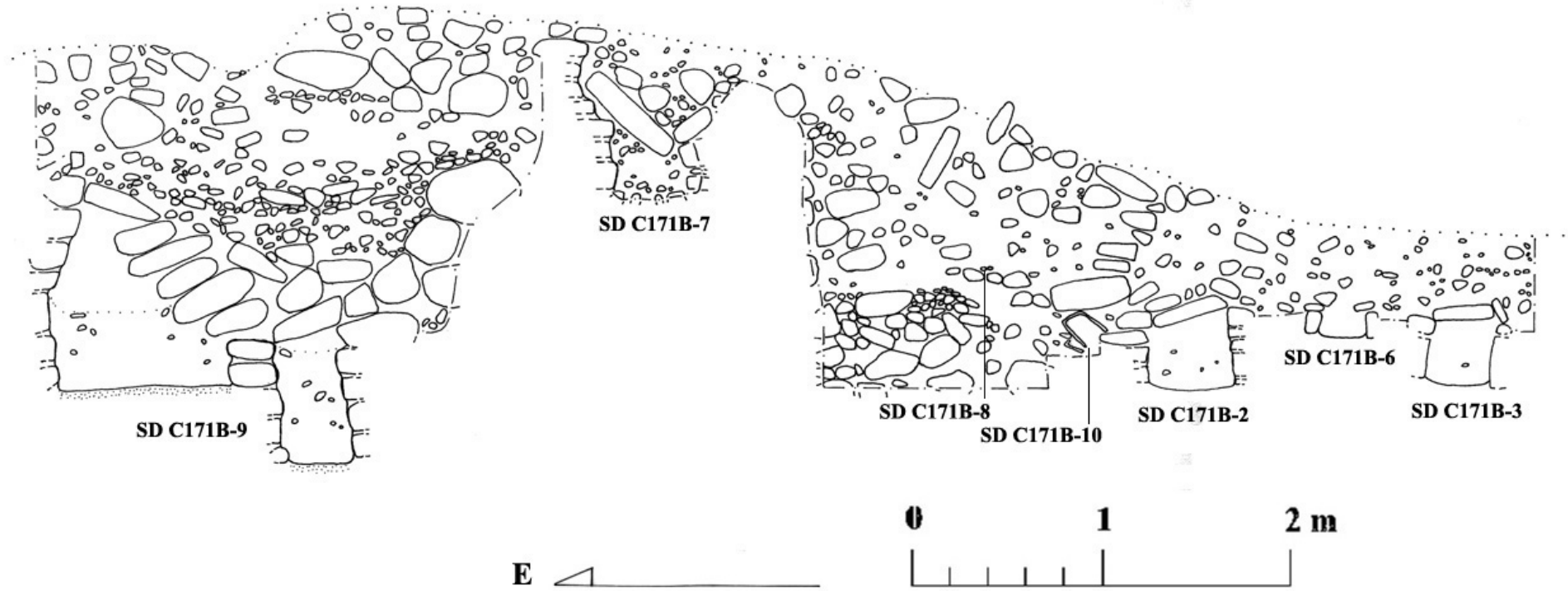
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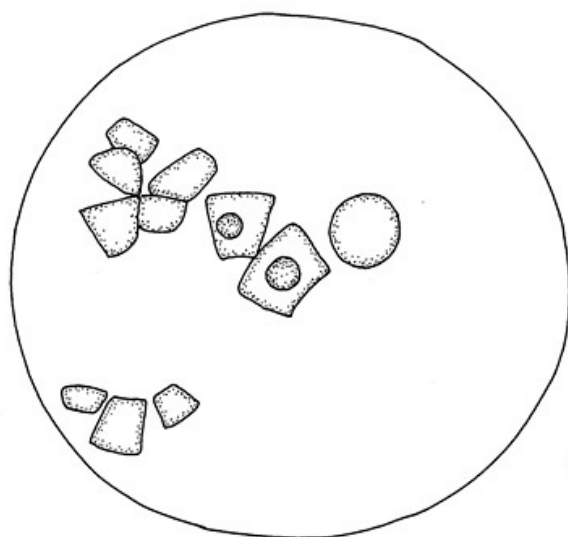
Undergraduate students Nelissa and Allison on top of Caana



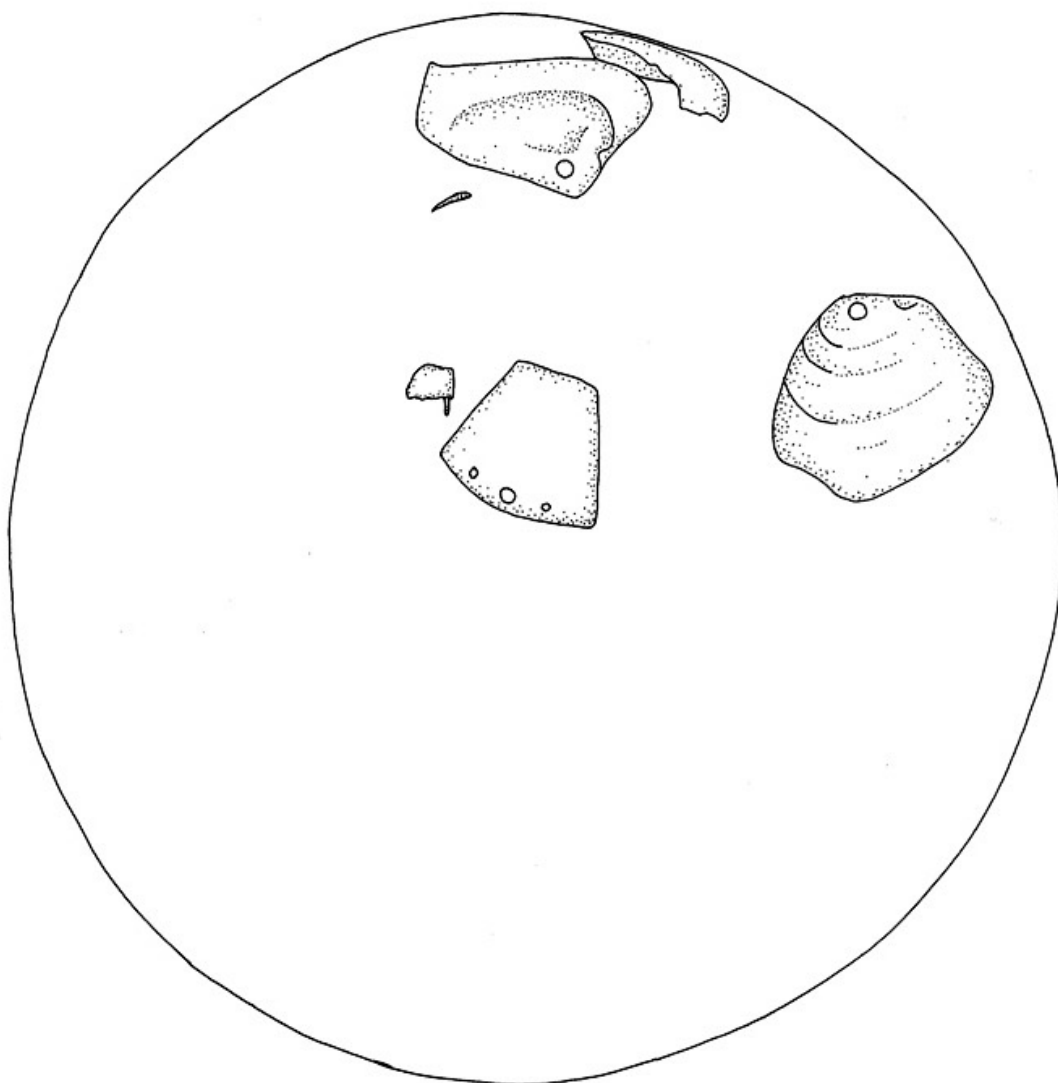
**Structure B42**  
**excv. C171B**



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



**a**



**b**

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



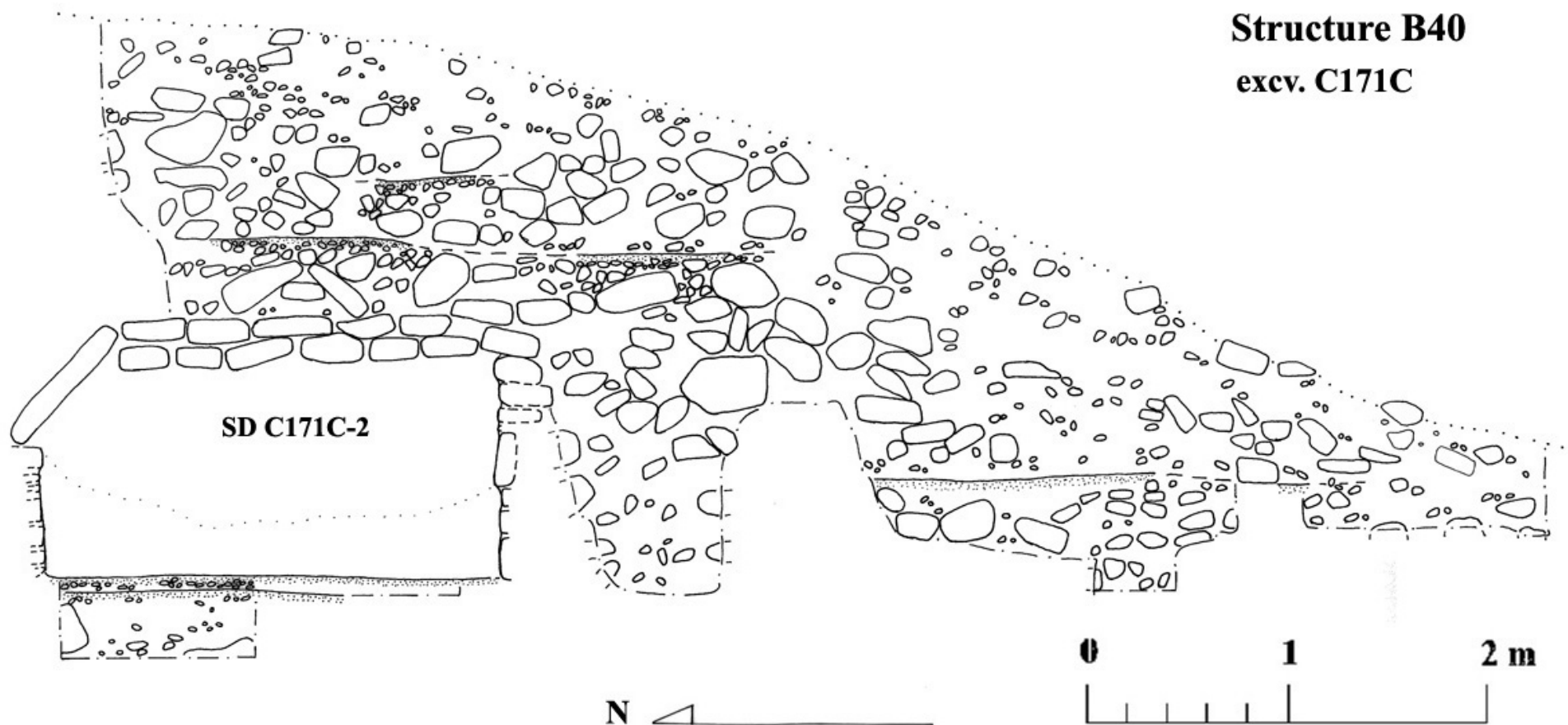


Figure 21. Photograph of vessels recovered as part of S.D. C171B-10, looking west.



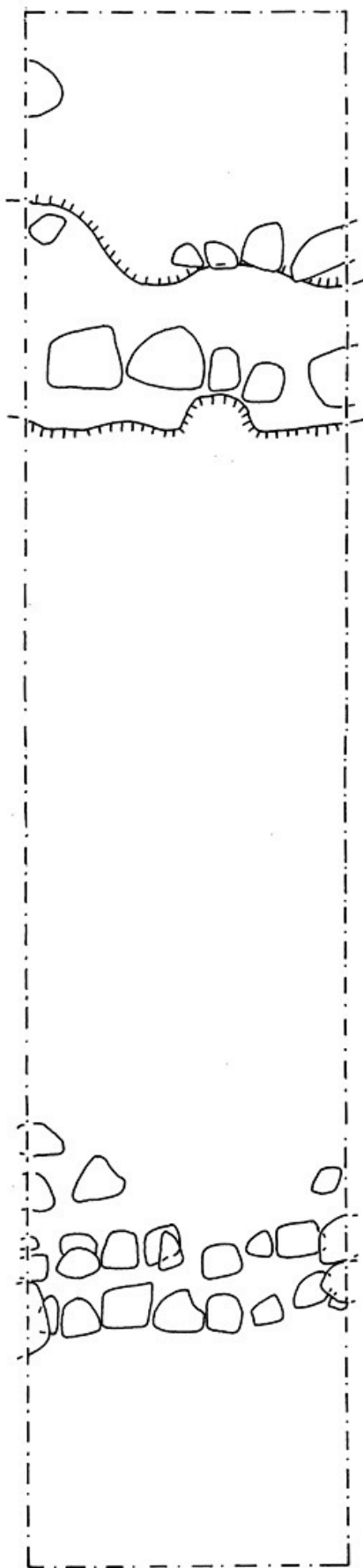


Figure 23. Photograph of Caracol Structure B40 and excavation C171C, looking north.



**Figure 24.** Section of excavation C171C [east wall].

**excav. C171C**



**N**



**0**

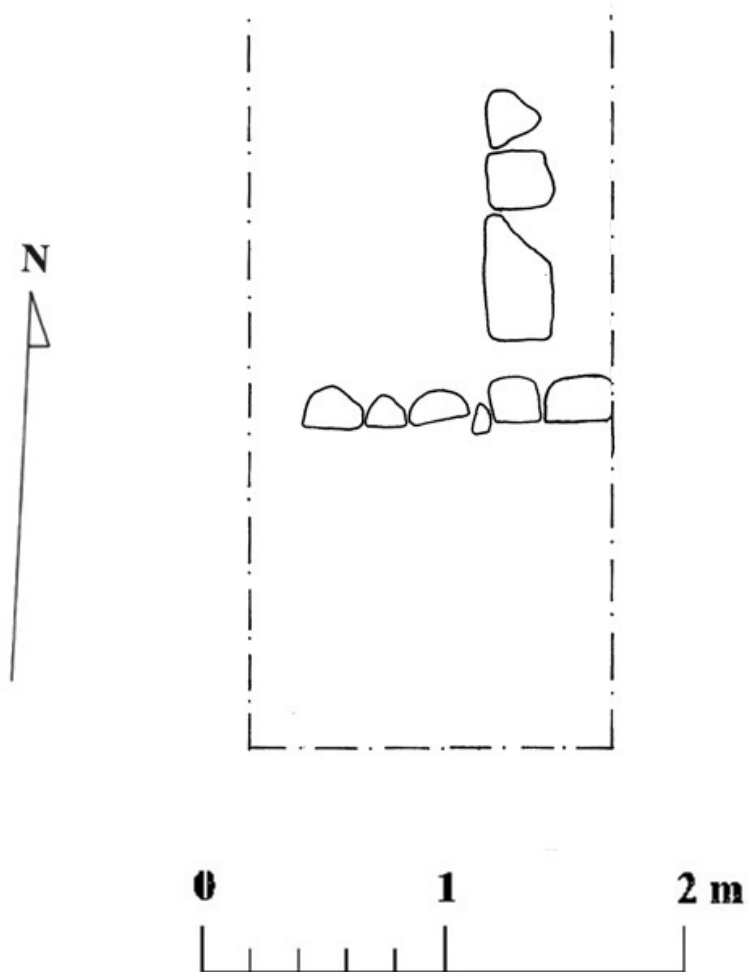
**1**

**2 m**

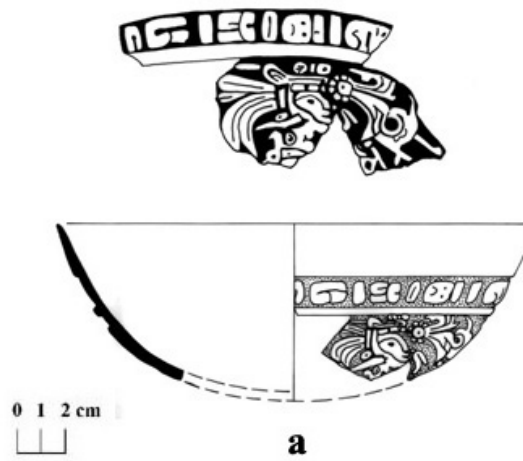


**Figure 25. Plan of excavation C171C after the removal of humus, showing features recovered.**

**excv. C171C**  
**lower south plan**



**Figure 26. Plan of lower step and cross wall in excavation C171C.**



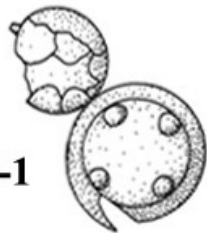
**Figure 27. Terminal Classic bowl [Sahcaba Modeled-Carved] recovered on the summit of Structure B40 in excavation C171C.**

**excv. C171C**



**SD C171B-2**

**SD C171B-1**



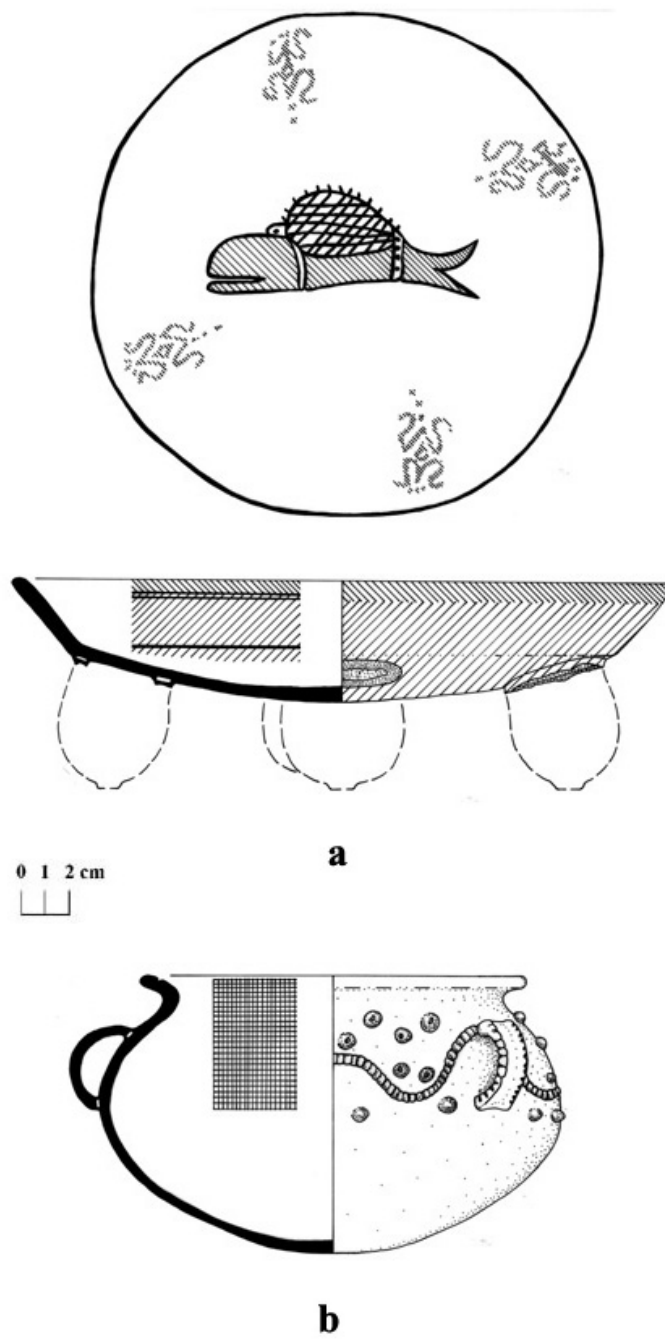
**0**

**1 m**



**Figure 28. Plan of Special Deposits C171C-1 and C171C-2 in excavation C171C.**



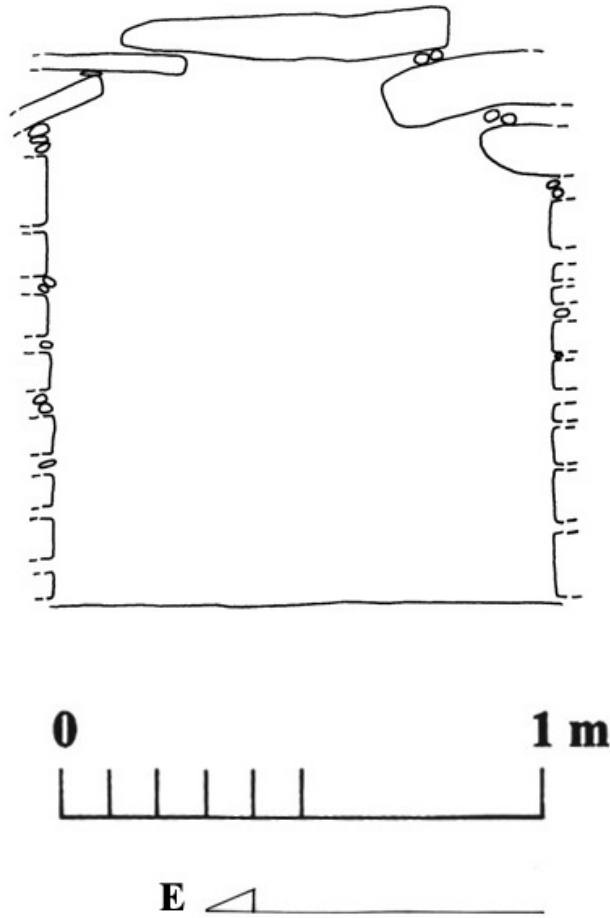


**Figure 29.** Vessels recovered from S.D. C171C-1: (a) Ixcanrio Orange Polychrome; (b) possibly Corriental Appliqued.



Figure 30. Photograph looking down at capstones and tomb designated S.D. C171C-2.

# SD C171C-2

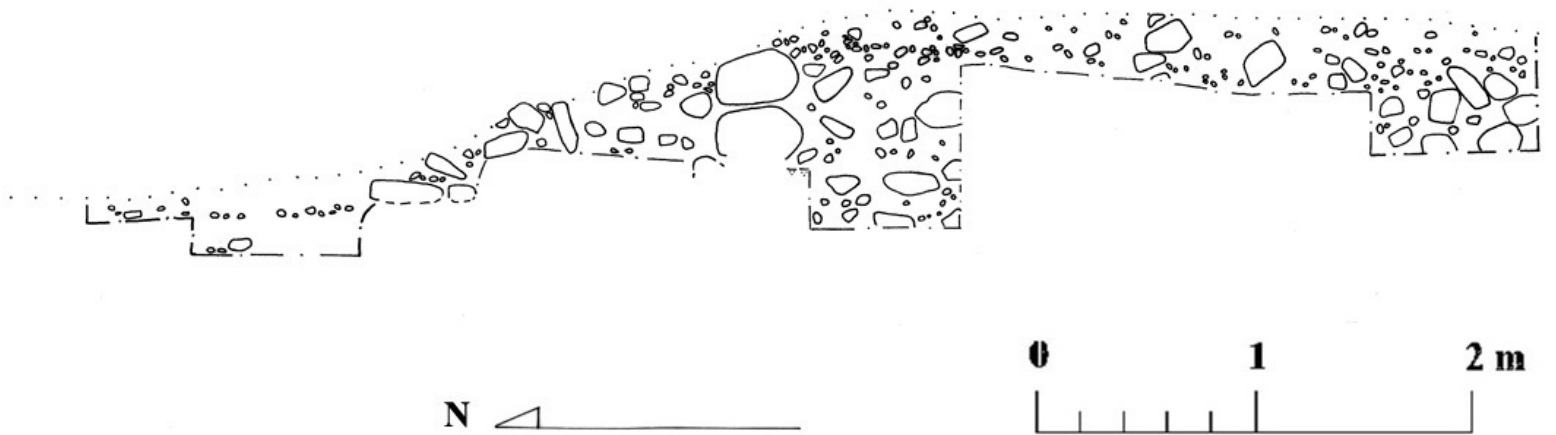


**Figure 31.** Cross-section of tomb designated S.D. C171B-2.

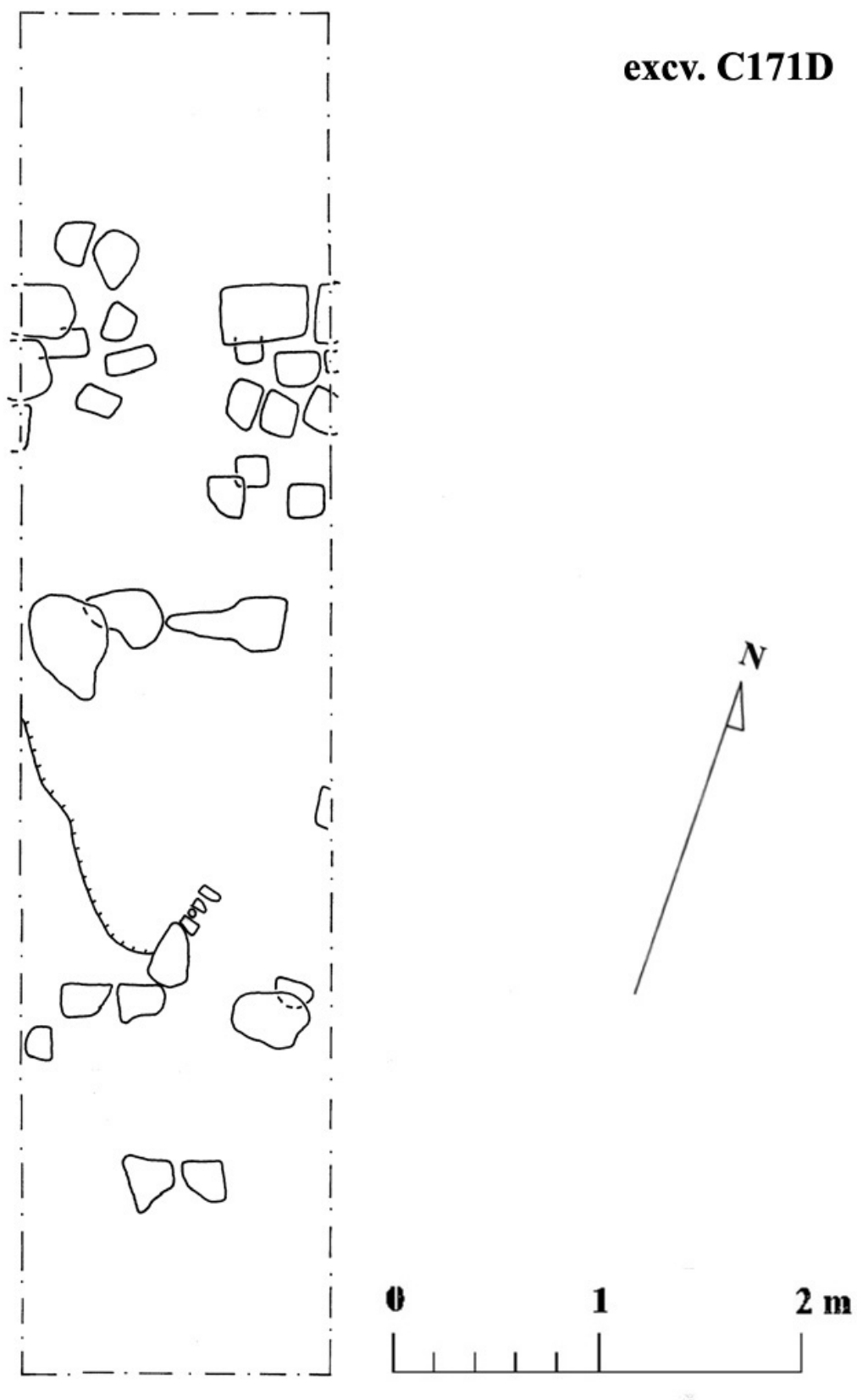


Figure 32. Photograph of excavation C171D into Caracol Structure B44, looking south.

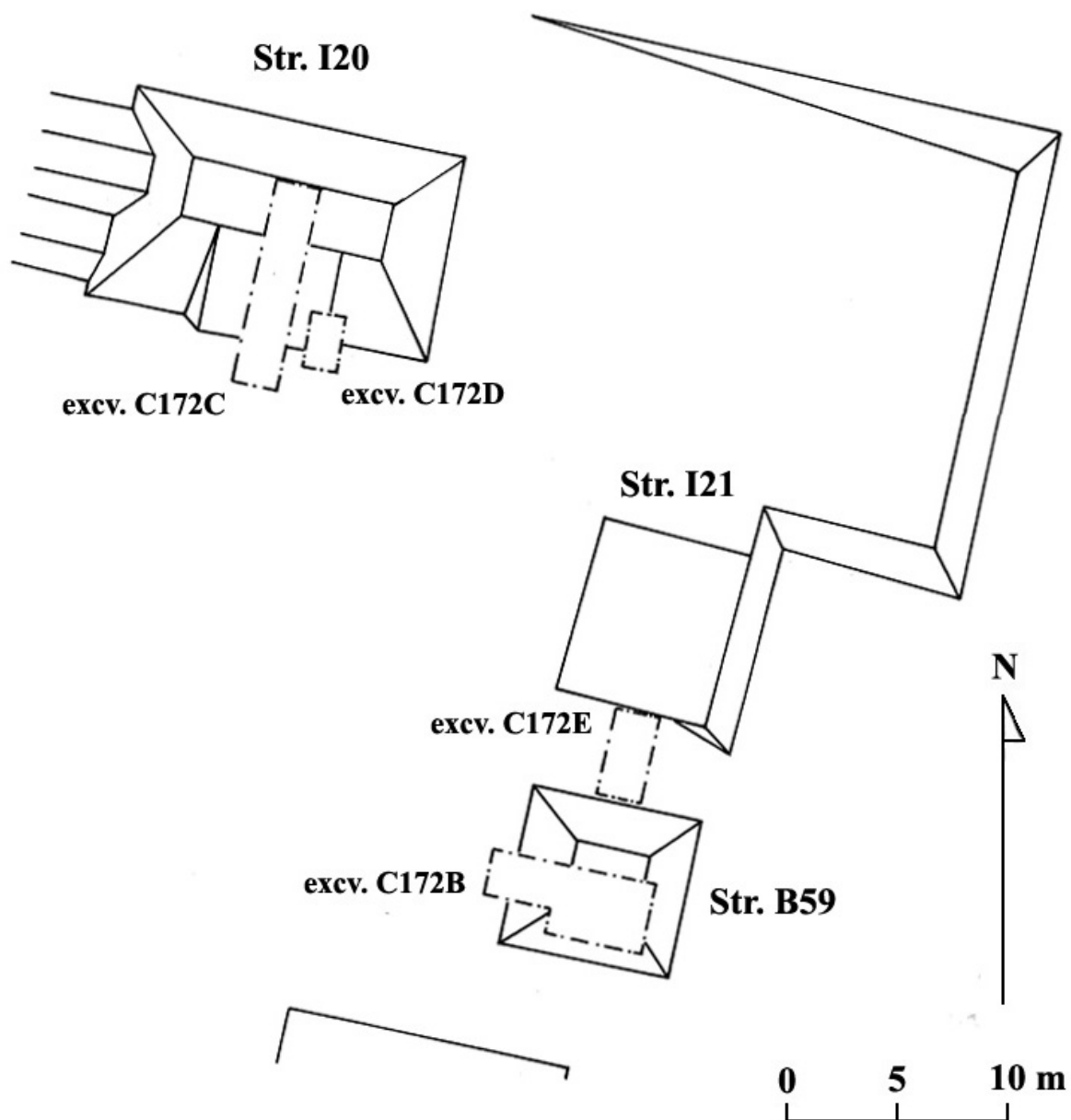
**Structure B44**  
**excv. C171D**



**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 59 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.

## Structure B59

excav. C172B

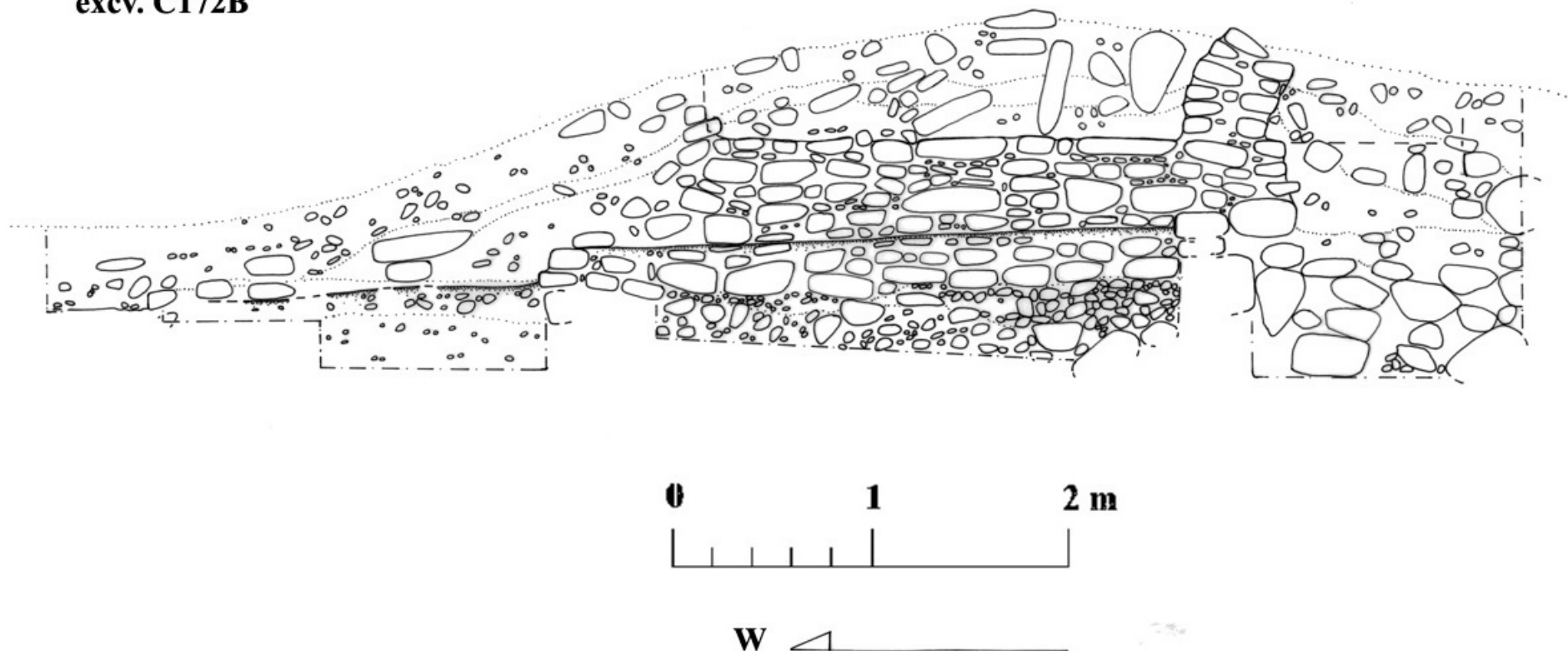
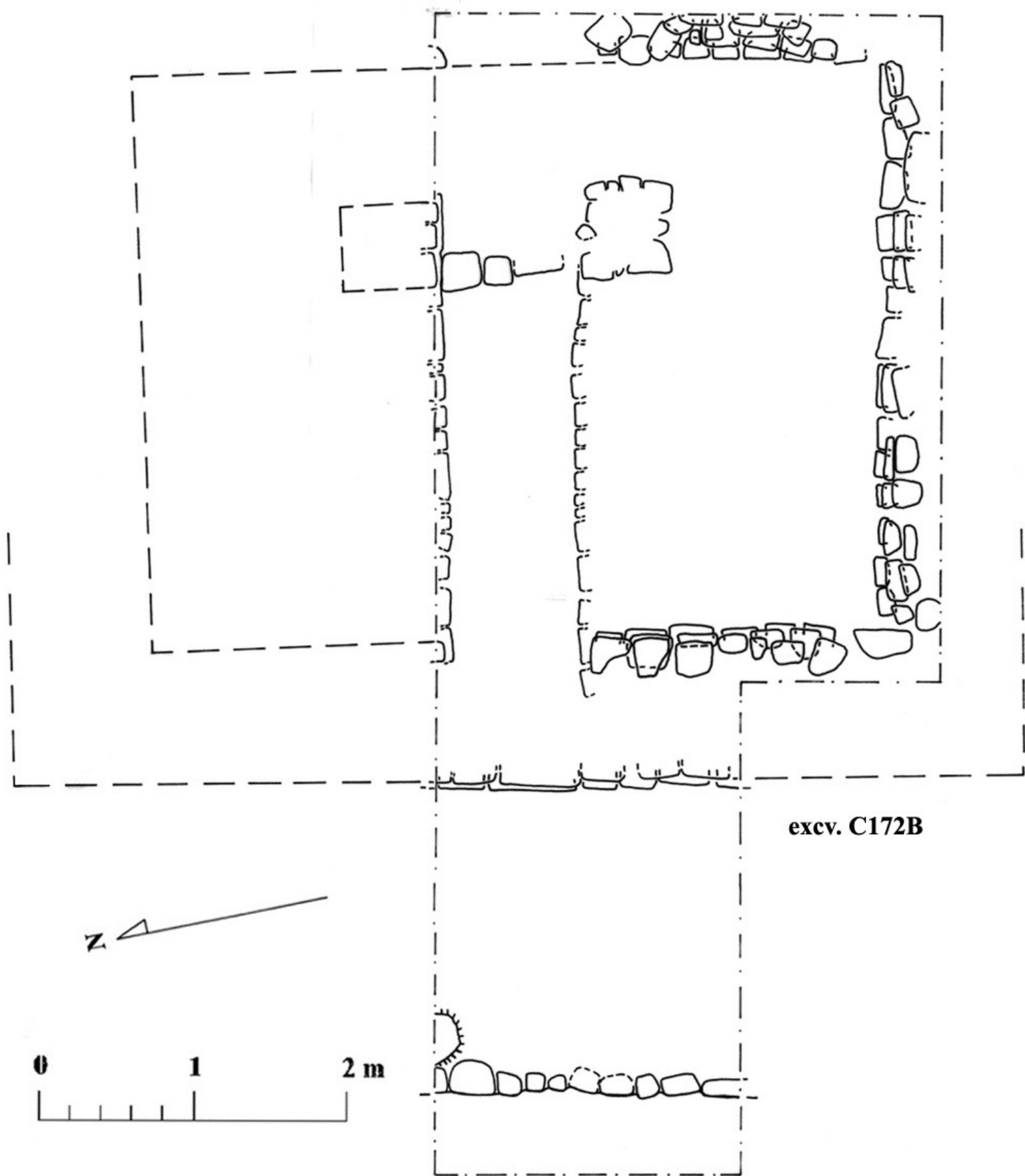


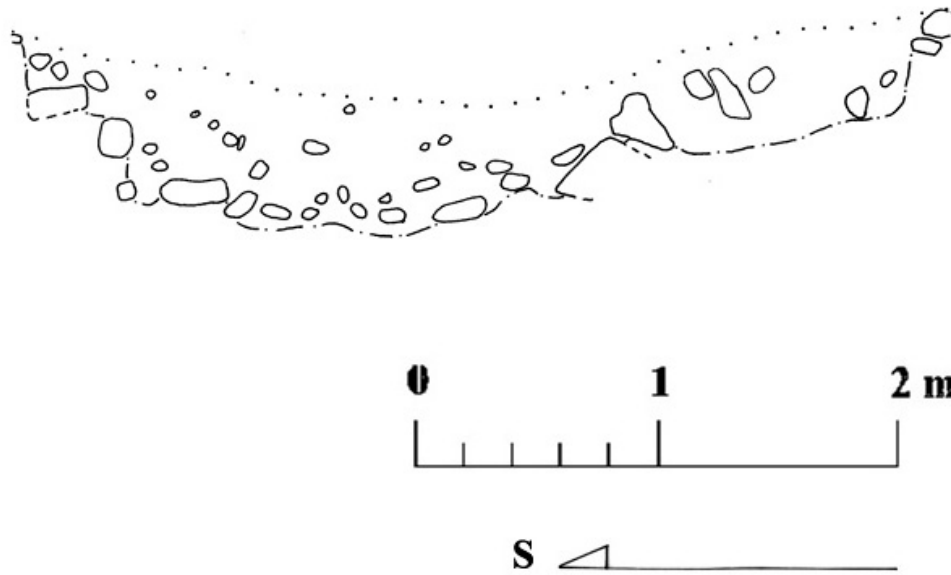
Figure 38. Section of excavation C172B [north wall] into Structure B59.

# Structure B59

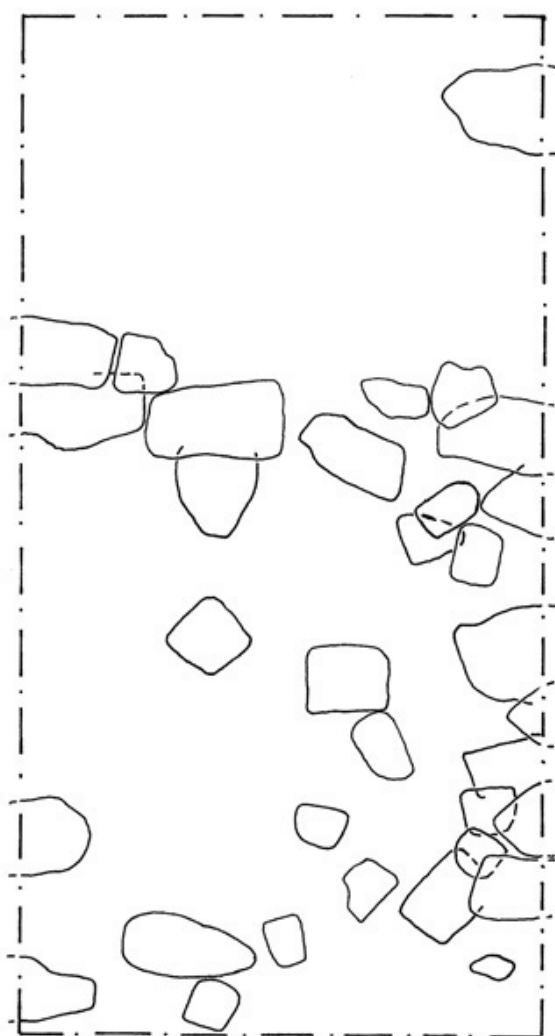


**Figure 39. Plan of excavation C172B, revealing more than half of Structure B59.**

**excv. C172E**



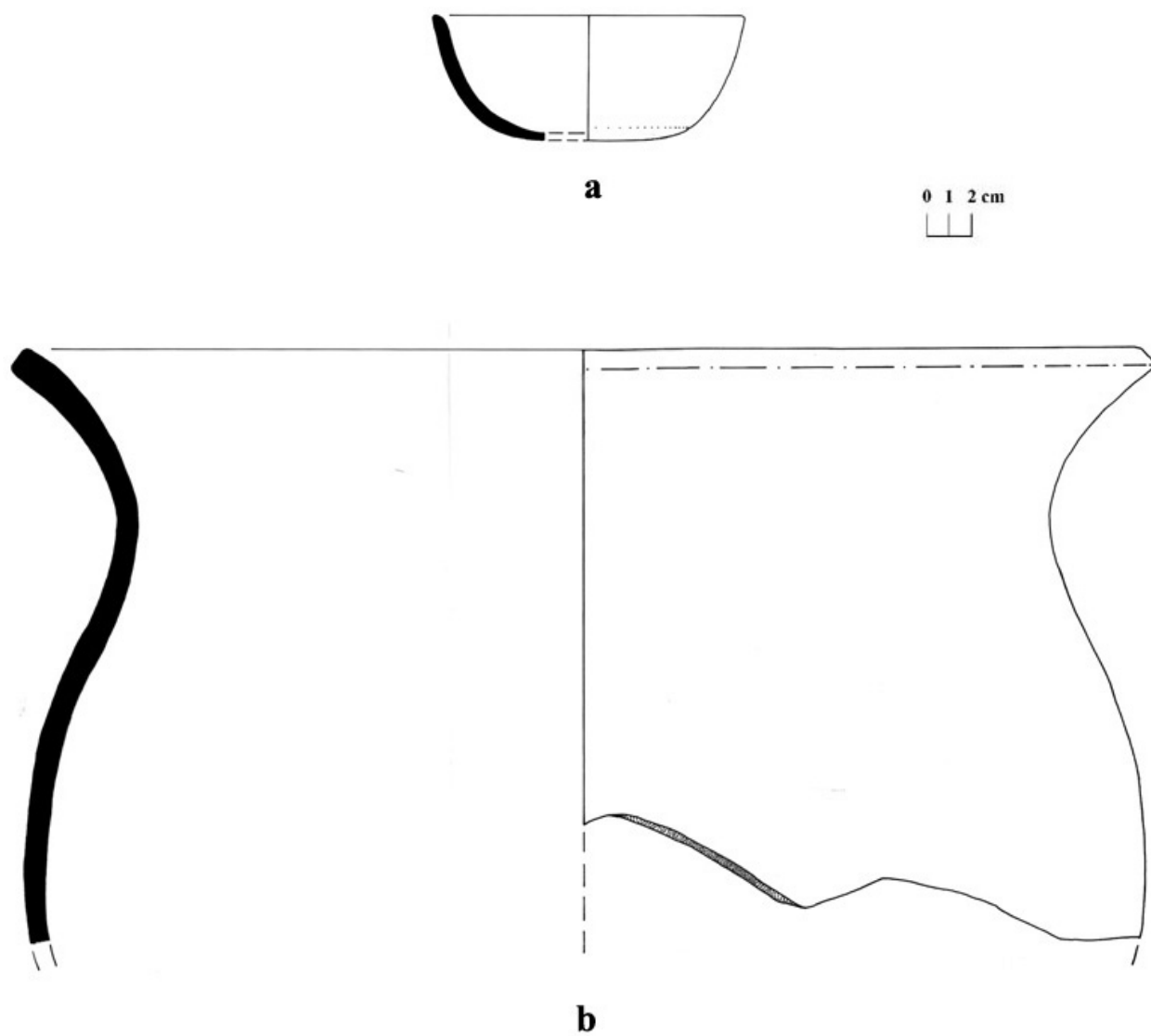
**Figure 40. Section of excavation C172E [west wall].**



**excv. C172E**



**Figure 41. Plan of excavation C172E.**



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



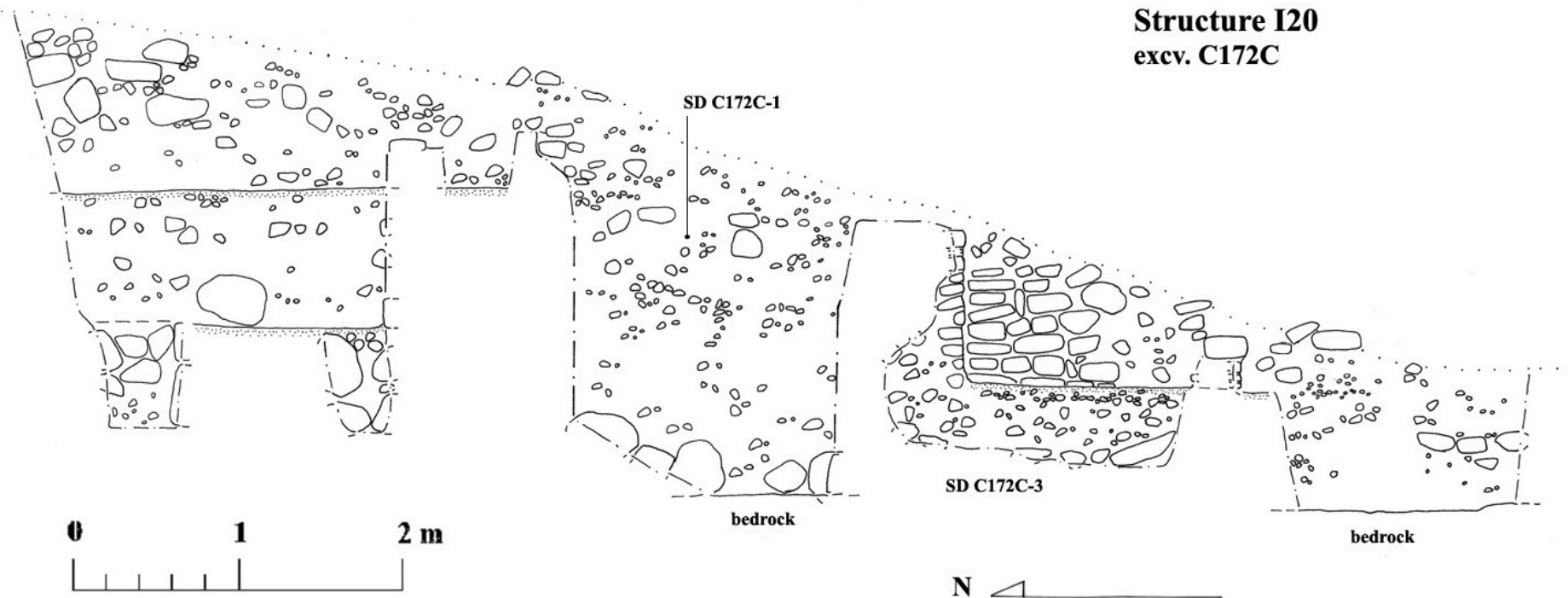
**Figure 43.** Photograph of collapsed terrace facade in excavation C172C, following removal of humus and collapse [S.D. C172C-3 was located beneath collapsed area].





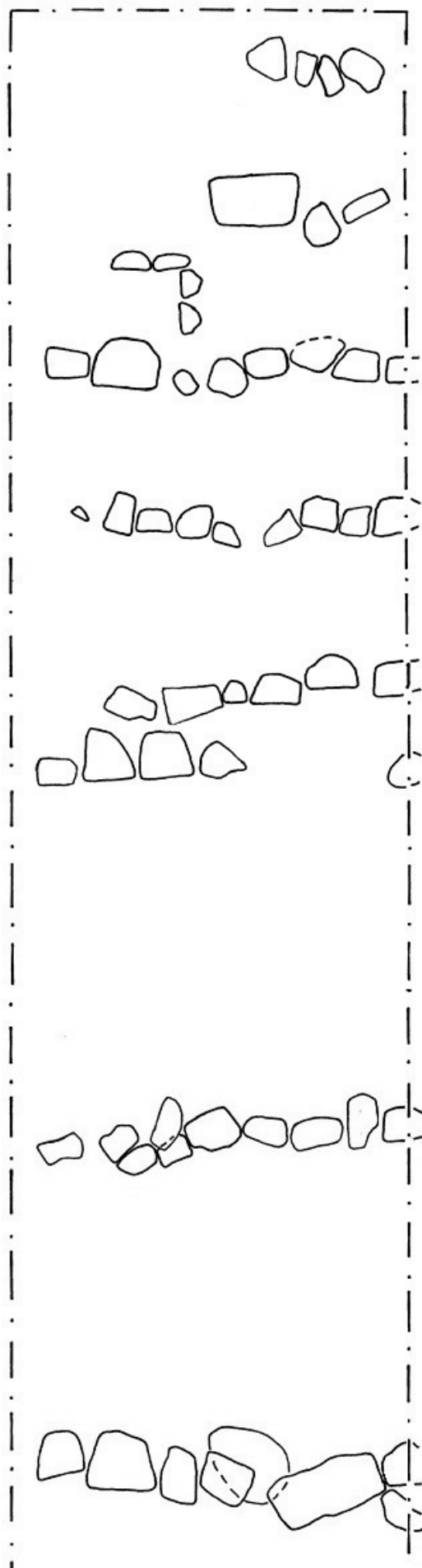
Figure 44. Photograph of excavation C172C into Caracol Structure I20, showing recovered features, looking north.

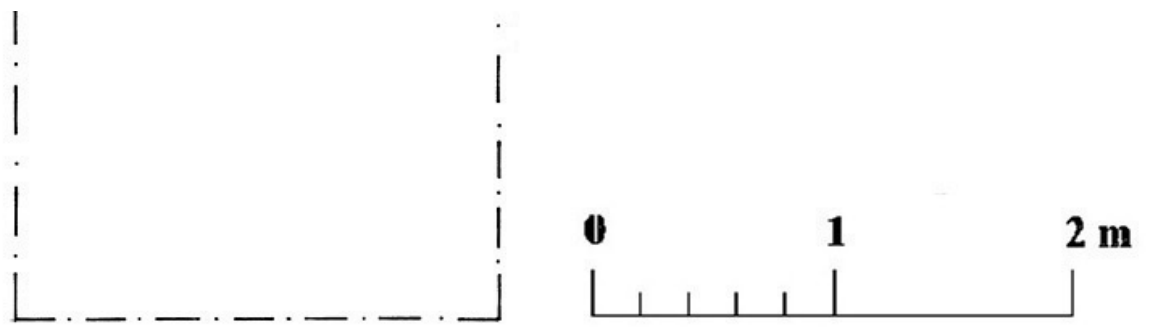
**Structure I20**  
**excv. C172C**



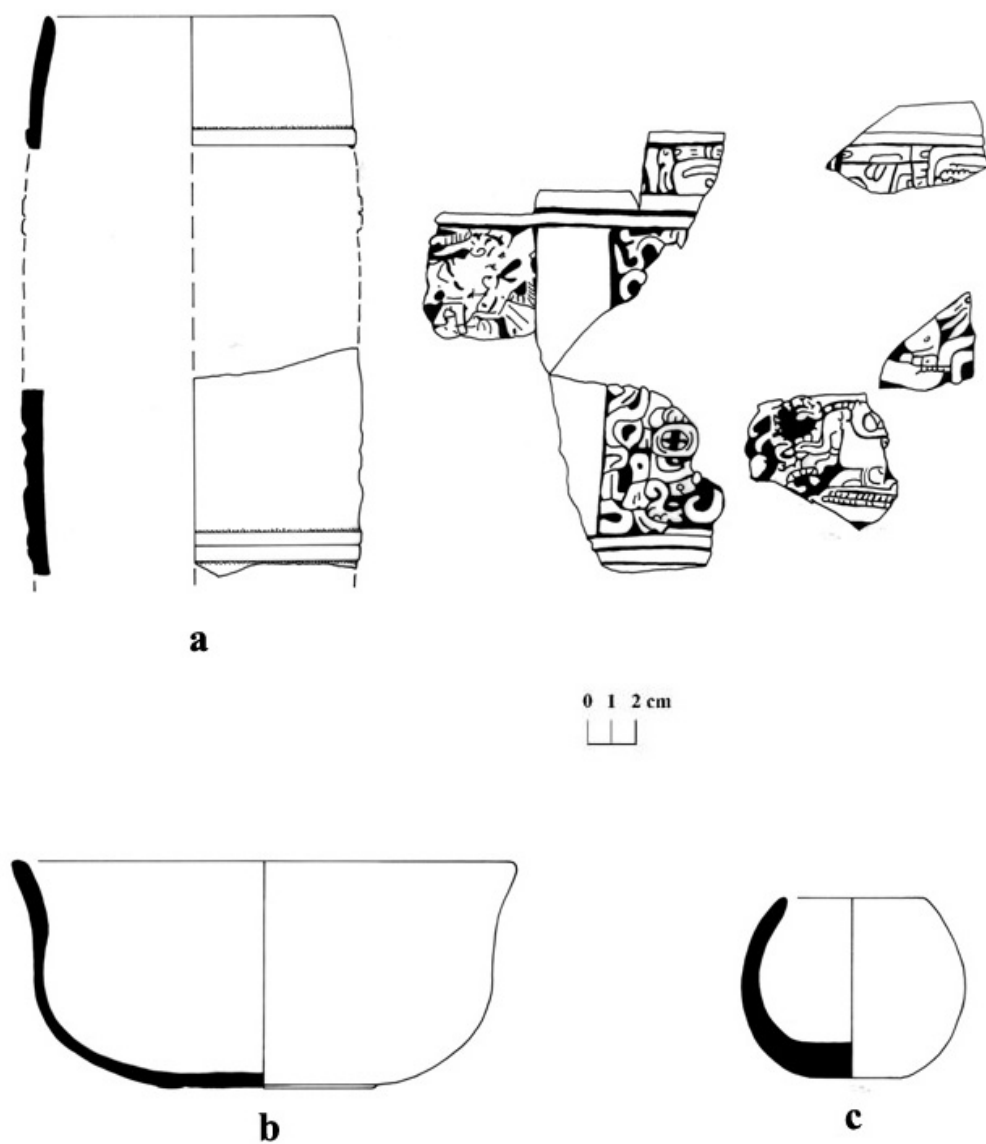
**Figure 45.** Section of excavation C172C [east wall] into Structure I20.

**excav. C172C**

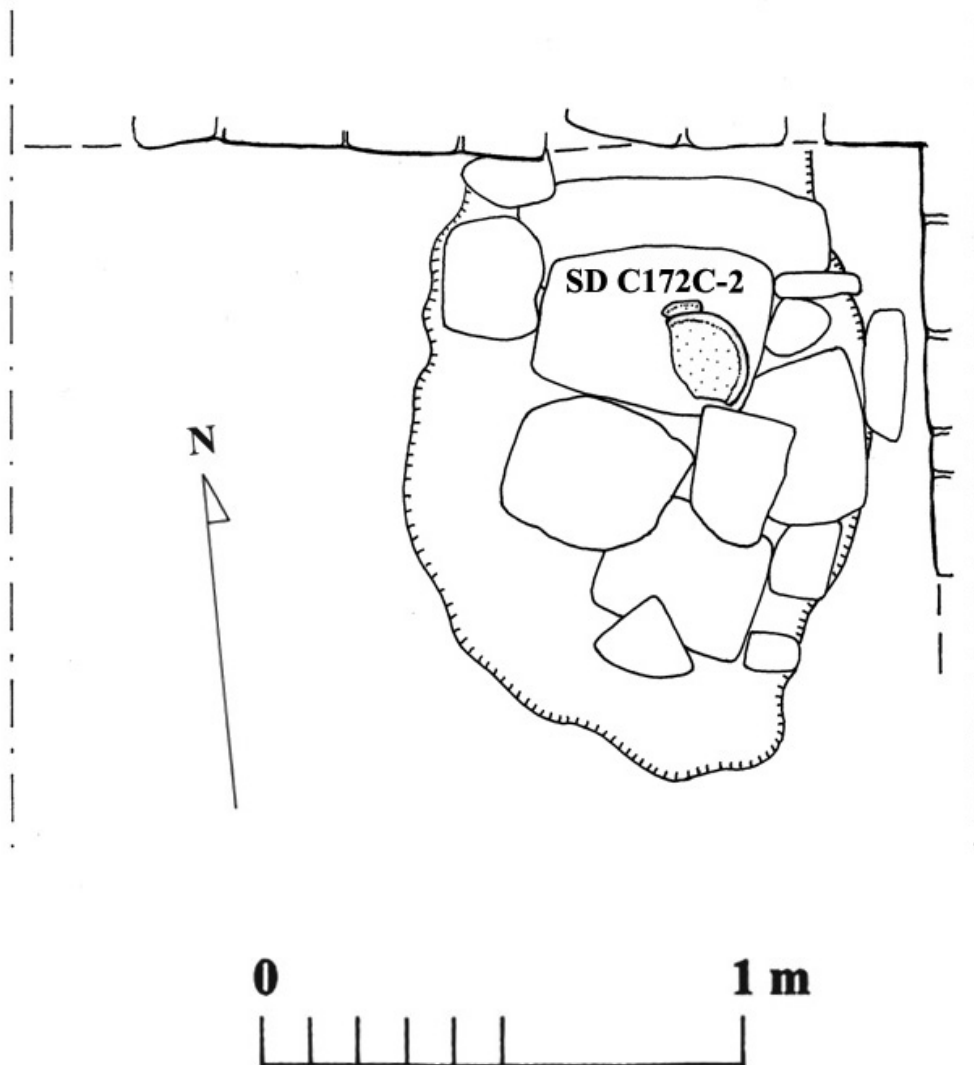




**Figure 46. Plan of excavation C172C, showing recovered architectural features.**



**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.**

# SD C172C-3

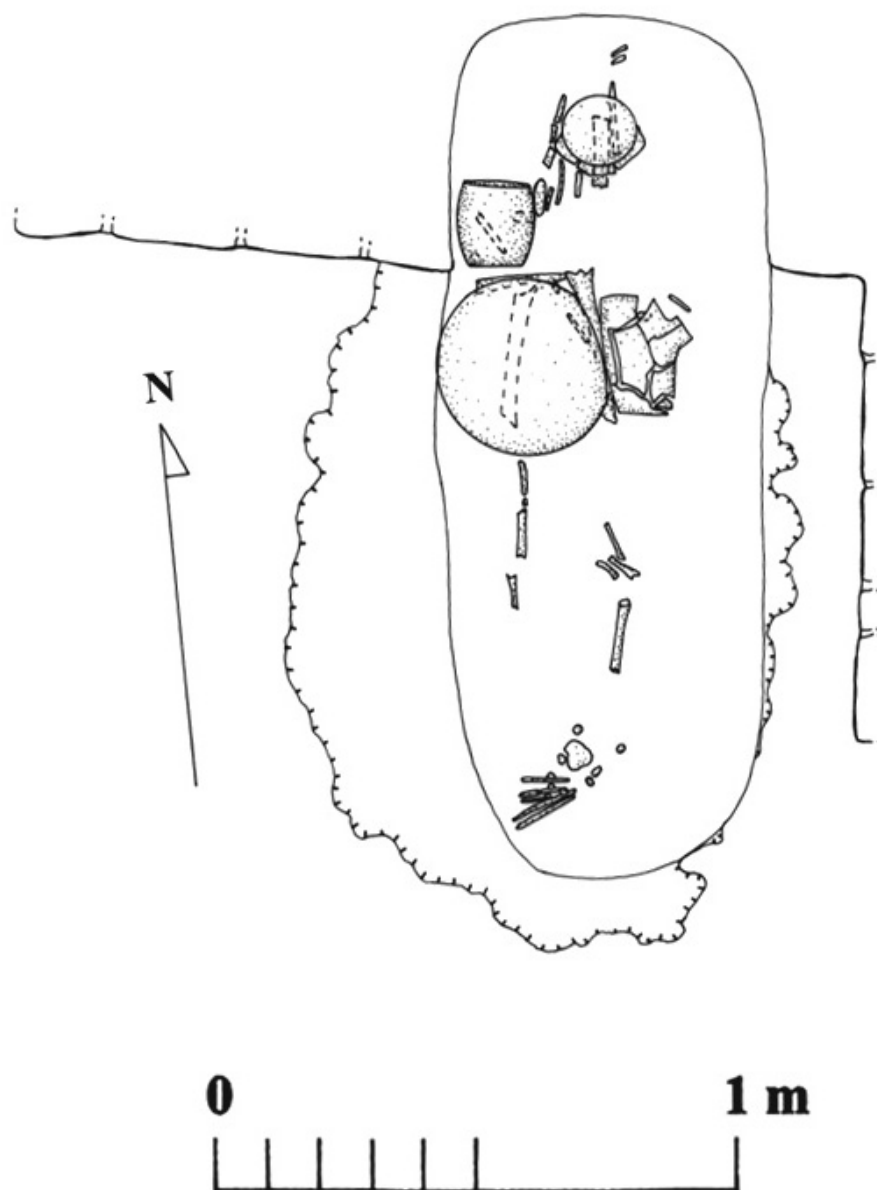
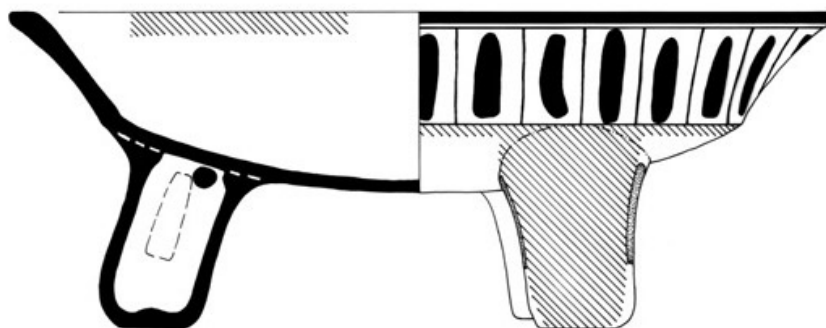


Figure 49. Plan of Special Deposit C172C-3 in excavation C172C.



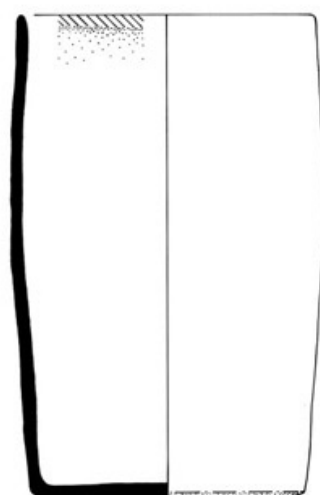
Figure 50. Photograph of pottery vessels in S.D. C172C-3, looking west.



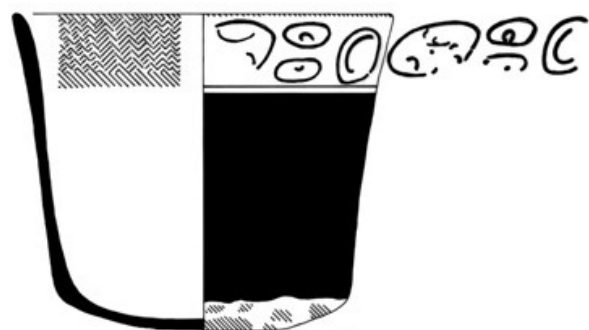
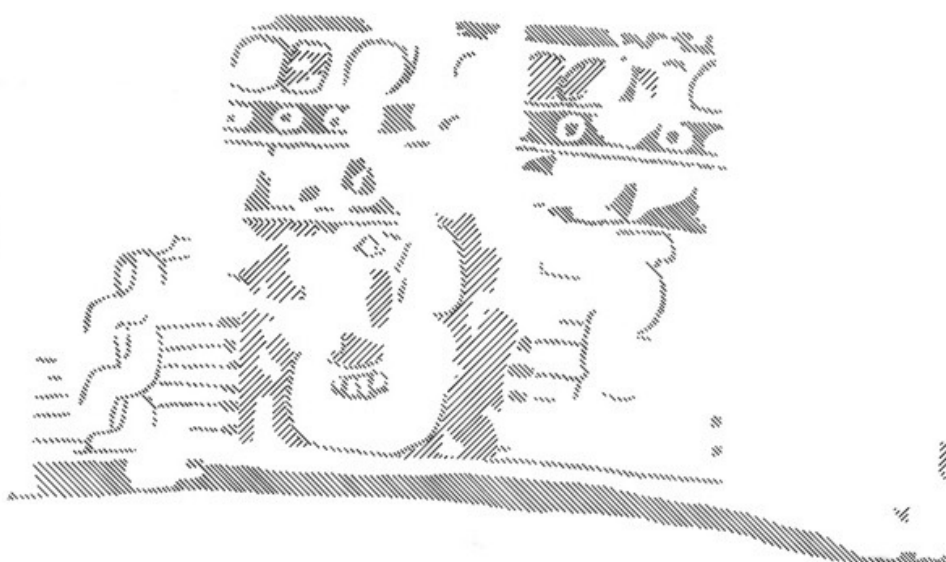


**a**

0 1 2 cm



**b**

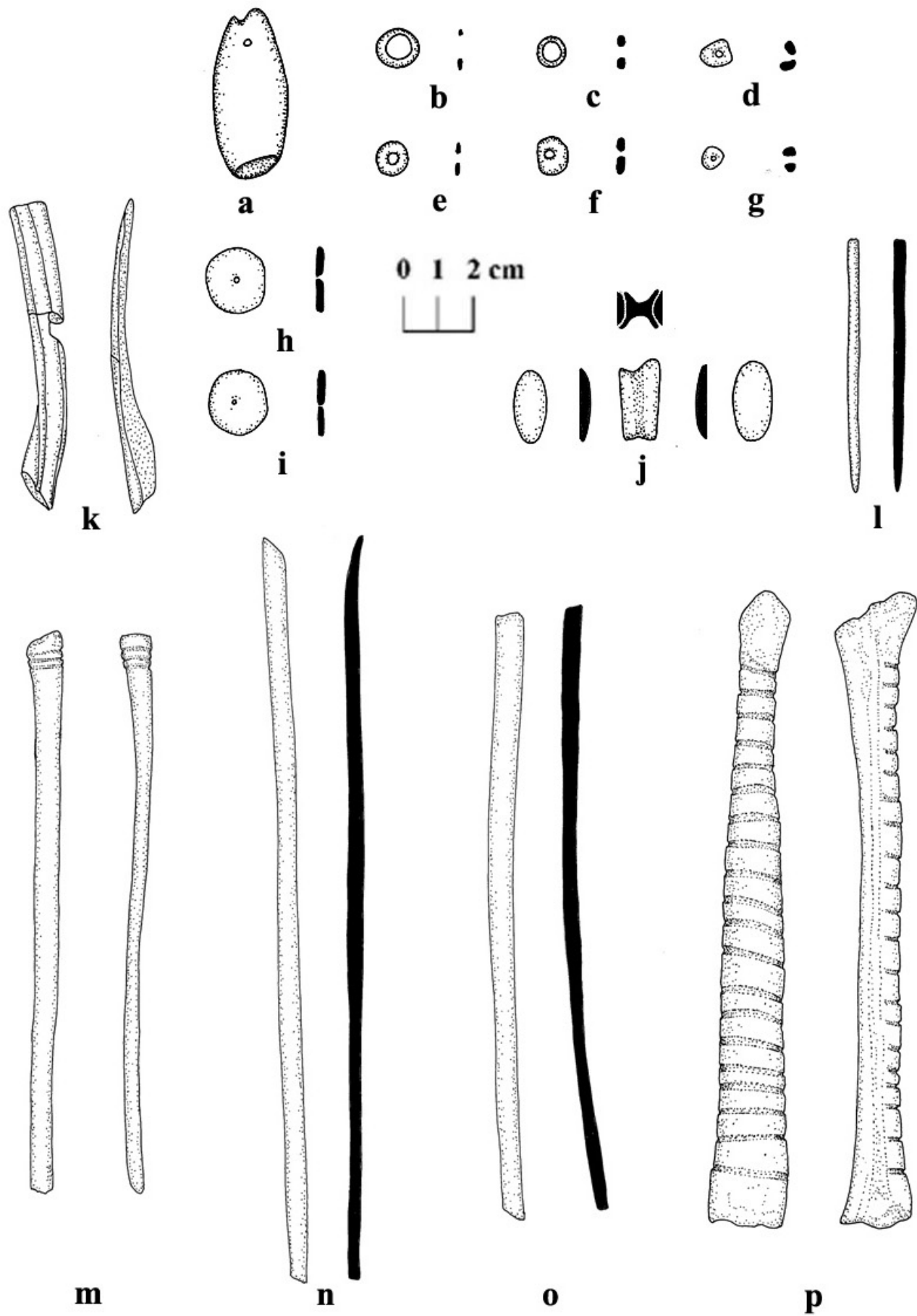


**c**

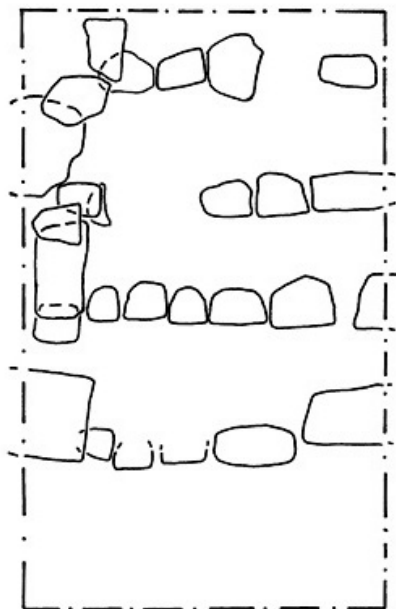


**d**

**Figure 51. Pottery vessels associated with S.D. C172C-3: (a) and (b) Zacatel Cream Polychrome; (c) and (d) Batcab Red Polychrome.**

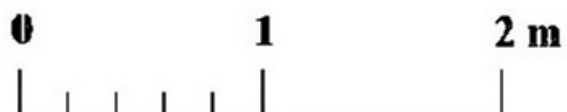


**Figure 52.    Artifactual material associated with S.D. C172C-3: (a) cowerie shell; (b)-(g) shell beads [selection]; (h) and (i) jadeite discs [earflares]; (j) labret [central bone with 2 pyrite inlays]; (k) bone scoop; (l) bone needle; (m)-(o) bone hairpins; (p) bone rasper.**

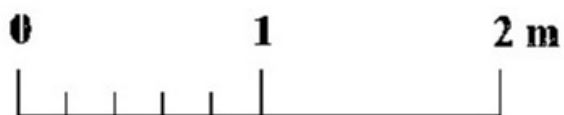
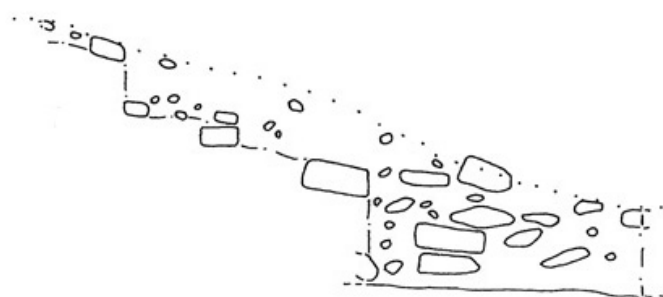


**excv. C172D**

**N**



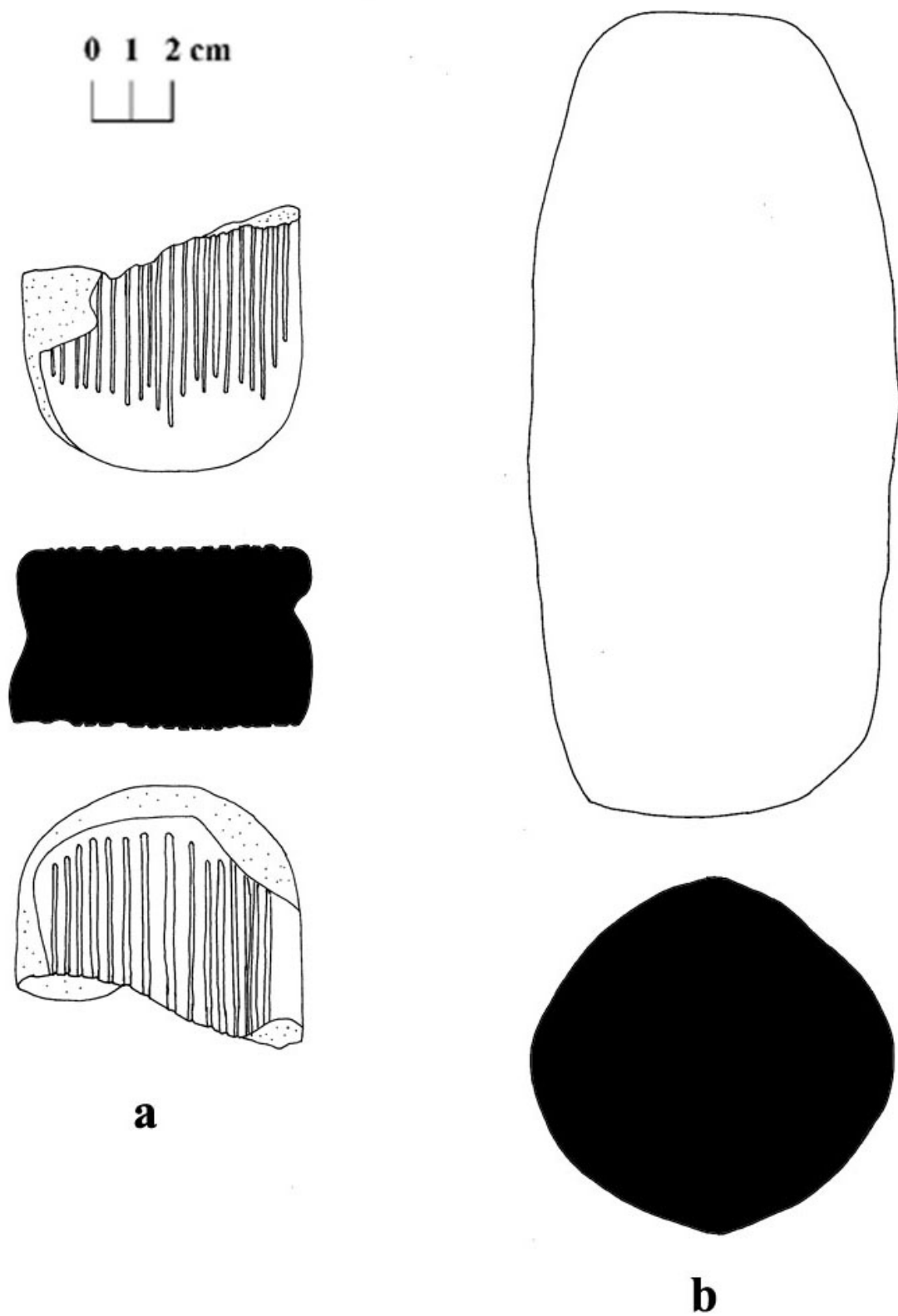
**excv. C172D**



**N**



**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.