

# **Trying to Understand the End: Continued Investigation of Small Structures in and near Caracol's Epicenter: 2006 Field Report of the Caracol Archaeological Project**

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The 2006 field season of the Caracol Archaeological Project was carried out from the very beginning of February through late March. Nineteen staff and six visitors participated in the field season (Table 1). One UCF graduate student in Maya Studies stayed on site for two weeks. Several UCF biologists (4 graduate students and 1 professor) also participated in the field season for approximately one week, beginning a long-term research initiative on the environmental biology of the Caracol area. As with the 2005 season, archaeology undertaken during the 2006 field

season was designed to specifically focus on issues relating to the Maya collapse. The ultimate goal was the excavation of on-floor materials associated with late architecture in and near the site epicenter to help shed light on the latest occupation and ultimate abandonment of Caracol. Toward this end, the season was an unqualified success.

Nearly all considerations of the ancient Maya are tied to conceptualizations of the Classic Maya collapse. Within the last decade, our understanding of the Maya collapse has begun to shift from one that focuses on single causal reasons to one that stresses material relationships evident within the archaeological record. Changes in Maya social structure have always lain at the core of most explanations of the collapse; the elimination of the Classic Maya elite – due to warfare, peasant revolt, or draught – was generally viewed as being the primary reason for the disintegration of Classic Period society. Traditionally, the abandonment of Maya sites was tied to the loss of elite Late Classic culture, defined primarily as the cessation of monumental building programs, carved monuments, and polychrome pottery. However, this material conceptualization over-simplifies the Terminal Classic Period (post A.D. 780) by assuming that Late Classic and Terminal Classic material culture were one and the same. They often were not. Significant change took place within the material culture used by the Terminal Classic Maya and it is only recently that we have been able to begin to recognize and investigate these changes archaeologically (A. Chase and D. Chase 2004, 2005).

The research reported on here adds to the already extant Caracol archaeological database for the Terminal Classic and provides additional permutations for the already established theme. Archaeological research at Caracol has shown that the Terminal Classic elite had access to a restricted ceramic subcomplex that was not generally available to the broader society (A. Chase and D. Chase 2004). These same elite worked oliva sea shells and had access to a wide array of fauna that included several varieties of sea fish (Teeter and Chase 2004), an indication of little diminishment in long-distance trade during the Terminal Classic Period (something also noted for Tikal, e.g. Harrison 1999). While this ceramic subcomplex can be found associated with all of Caracol's epicentral palaces, only isolated ceramic pieces (A. Chase and D. Chase 2005) are found in outlying residential groups. Thus, while it is evident that this ceramic subcomplex is associated with the highest stratum of Caracol's Terminal Classic society and not with Caracol's lower strata, it was not clear where else this subcomplex might occur. The 2006 research built on the 2005 field season and on the extant archaeological database for the Terminal Classic Period at Caracol by seeking to examine potential contexts that could reasonably be expected to produce Terminal Classic material culture. To accomplish this, three specific areas within and adjacent to the Caracol epicenter were targeted for investigation during the twenty-second season of the project (see Figure 1):

1. Structure A31, which was excavated with a combination of axial trenching and areal excavations that exposed the entire front face of this building as well as its corners;
2. the Northwest Acropolis (Structures A61-A69), which involved three excavations: trenching in front of Structure A63 and the completion of the recording of a looted tomb; an excavation on the southern side of the looted Structure A61; and, a long axial penetration through the palace complex called A69;
3. the Northwest Acropolis (Structures A61-A69), which involved three excavations: trenching in front of Structure A63 and the completion of the recording of a looted tomb; an excavation on the southern side of the looted Structure A61; and, a long axial penetration through the palace complex called A69;
4. the Gateway residential group (Structures B139-143), which had four excavations placed in and adjacent to three buildings.

Additionally, a looted tomb was located north of the Northwest Acropolis and was "excavated" and recorded during the 2006 field season.

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### **The Problem: Understanding the Nature of the Maya Collapse**

The Classic Maya collapse must be ranked highly among the most misunderstood enigmas in modern archaeology. New proposals claiming to explain the Maya denouement pop up almost yearly, usually receiving substantial newspaper and, sometimes, television coverage. Most recently, the end of the Maya civilization was claimed to have resulted from

destructive warfare, as indicated by a proffered “royal massacre” found at the site of Cancuen, Guatemala (USA Today and New York Times November 17, 2005; Discovery Channel Explorer: Last Days of the Maya, November 27, 2005). These are intriguing postulations that play well for the media and public, but they are based on archaeological data that are often open to other interpretations (as was noted in one of the accompanying news articles).

Warfare frequently has been offered as a potential reason for the Maya collapse. Two different warfare scenarios for the collapse focus on internal Maya warfare. Satterthwaite (1937a, 1937b) found defaced monuments, broken thrones, and burnt temples at Piedras Negras, Guatemala in the 1930’s. These archaeological data gave rise to the idea that the local Maya peasantry had revolted against their leaders at that site and destroyed symbols of rulership. Possibly building on the Russian revolution of the early 20th century (e.g. Becker 1979), an expansion of the idea of peasant revolts to other Maya sites led to the most popular explanation for the Maya collapse (Thompson 1954), one that became codified and still forms a basic underlying explanation for the collapse (Willey and Shimkin 1973).

Epigraphic research that focused on emblem glyphs (Berlin 1958; Mathews 1991) later fed a model of small city-states ritually warring with each other for regional control in the Late Classic Southern lowlands (Freidel 1986). Some researchers argued that such warfare was territorially driven (A. Chase and D. Chase 1989; D. Chase and A. Chase 2002, 2003; Demarest 1997a, 2004), even suggesting that internal warfare explains the Maya collapse (e.g., Demarest 1993, 1997b). However, the scope and scale of internal warfare is open to interpretation (A. Chase 1985; A. Chase and D. Chase 1998; D. Chase and A. Chase 1982; Webster 2000) and there is a suggestion that internal Maya warfare may have led to Terminal Classic expansionist polities (A. Chase and D. Chase 2004:366, 2005; Laporte 2004:224), perhaps even hegemonic empires. External warfare and foreign invaders became a popular explanation for the Maya collapse as a result of the excavations undertaken by Willey (1990; Sabloff and Willey 1967 [Binford 1968]) at Seibal, where Gulf Coast peoples were viewed as having established themselves. Adams (1991 [1977]) proposed that marauding groups of Mexican mercenaries decimated the Maya lowlands at the end of the Late Classic Period, thereby causing the collapse.

Apart from several variations on destructive warfare as having caused the Maya collapse, other recent explanations for the end of Classic Maya civilization have stressed an ecological collapse – based on either soil exhaustion and limited agricultural potential or on drought. Drought, in particular, has become a favorite explanation for the Maya collapse (Hodell et al. 1995, 2001; Gill 2000) with some researchers (Lucero 2002, Scarborough 1998, 2003) attempting to explain various other aspects of Maya civilization as related to water control. Yet, there were portions of the Maya area that had both water and substantial populations, irrespective of whether or not a drought was taking place. Lake Peten-Itza in the heart of Guatemala never ran dry and always had populations living on its shores (A. Chase 1990); similarly, the Belize Valley – and other numerous river valleys in the Maya lowlands [such as the one on which Cancuen is located] – always had running water and substantial populations (Garber 2004). Rainfall patterns also would have varied within the Maya lowlands and have been partially dependent on topography like the Maya Mountains (e.g., Johnson and Chaffey 1973a, 1973b). And, the long-term nature of the Maya collapse, spanning more than 150 years, suggests that environmental change likely was not the only factor involved. Thus, while drought may have impacted some parts of the Maya lowlands substantially, water would have been available somewhere in this region. Water and drought can not have been the sole factors involved in the Maya collapse.

No matter how one views the Maya collapse, there likely was not a “single” reason behind it. The length of time that the collapse took within the Southern lowlands, from the downfall of Dos Pilas in A.D. 760 (Demarest and 1997a, 2004) to the abandonment of other centers in the tenth century (Braswell et al. 2004; Tourtellot and Gonzalez 2004), indicates that several generations were involved in the process. Whereas the Maya collapse was once directly tied to the failure of the elite class (e.g. Willey and Shimkin 1973, Culbert 1973,1974), archaeological data indicate that the elite continued and prospered into the final moments of both Tikal (Harrison 1999) and Caracol (A. Chase and D. Chase 2004; A. Chase et al. 2004). Even at a single site, however, there were differential abandonment processes; the center of a site could be abandoned long before its outlying settlement (e.g. Copan, Webster et al. 2004 [but see Fash et al. 2004]). The complexity of the situation indicates that a multitude of linkages existed between any of the variables that have been offered as reasons for the demise of Classic Period Maya civilization in the Southern Lowlands. Thus, rather than looking for simple, one factor explanations, it is perhaps better to examine the intricacies of the archaeological data for more complex or comprehensive suggestions and interpretations (e.g., D. Chase and A. Chase 2005). This can only be accomplished through the systematic collection of data that pertains to the latest levels at any given site in such a way that they can be effectively contextualized and cross-referenced (e.g. D. Chase and A. Chase 2000). The 2006

excavations sought to add to the extensive Terminal Classic on-floor contexts already excavated at Caracol and to determine if there was variability in the distribution of different ceramic subcomplexes beyond a simple epicenter-core dichotomy and to determine if there was variation in ceramic distributions with regard to building type. This was done with the ultimate goal in mind of gaining a better interpretation – and, ultimately, understanding – of the Maya collapse at Caracol, Belize.

## **Research Undertaken During 2006**

The research that was carried out during the 2006 field season focused on three distinct locations at Caracol (Figure 1). All of these locales held some promise of elucidating issues that had to do with the latest occupation of the site. Even had Terminal Classic data not been forthcoming in these excavations, investigations of these locales still would have served to amplify other avenues of research that have been pursued over the past 22 years at Caracol. The goal of the 2006 field season, however, was to further our understanding of Caracol's Terminal Classic Period by explicitly looking for potential differences in the defined ceramic sub-complexes (A. Chase and D. Chase 2004, 2005) and their spatial location at the site. toward this end, three specific areas were selected for excavation: (1) Structure A31, a structure that was seemingly intrusive into the site epicenter and would presumably produce late artifactual remains; (2) the Northwest Acropolis, a palace group outside the epicenter, which would permit on-floor artifactual comparisons with true epicentral palaces; and, (3) the Gateway Group, which was tangent to the western limits of the site epicenter and would permit analysis of both late artifactual remains and small structure workshop areas.

## **Caracol Structure A31**

Small line-of-stone structures are found within several of the open spaces/plazas in the site epicenter (see Figure 1). Two small structures appear in relatively close proximity and at 90 degree angles to each other between the larger A Group architecture and the Central Acropolis. Structure A30 is a very low northern platform associated with two monuments that had been repositioned to either side of it. Structure A30 may form a formal group with the more elaborate western facing Structure A31. Structure A31 (Figure 2) evinces good cut stone architecture and a broad western stair, but no remnants of a building appear to cap this meter high substructure. Importantly, the placement of Structure A31 at the edge of a non-formal epicentral plaza is anomalous in terms of the overall site plan. Thus, if Structures A30 and A31 did form a late group, it was believed that investigation in either building would recover late materials remains. Even should such remains not have been forthcoming, excavation of Structure A31 (like Structure B143 in the Gateway Group) would be able to test Laporte's (1996) linkage between western buildings and Terminal Classic burials. And, even if not Terminal Classic in date, excavation in this area would shed light on the date and role of these platforms in Caracol's history.

As excavated, Structure A31 measured 17.5 m in length by 9.5 m in depth; the stairway projected an additional 1.5 m to the east of the substructure.

**Suboperation C173B** (Figure 3, Figure 6) was assigned for the areal excavation of the northwest corner of the building. Excavation was carried out only down to presumed floor level and followed the rear wall of the building for about 1.8 m and the northern wall of the building for approximately 4 m. Almost nothing in the way of artifactual materials was recovered. The corner itself was in an excellent state of repair.

**Suboperation C173C** (Figure 3, Figure 5, Figure 6) began as an excavation to expose the southern side of the Structure A31 stairway. It was extended to the south until it reached the southern extent of the platform; however, no corner was recovered and it is suspected that it was ravaged in antiquity by a tree. For the most part, excavation proceeded only to the base of the substructure of the building, following the presumed floor. Prior to backfilling, however, the inset corner where the stair and the substructure met was sub-floored, finding an earlier plastered surface approximately 70 cm below the level on which Structure A31 had been built (Figure 5). A large number of reconstructible ceramic vessels were recovered on the upper floor in the area immediately south of the axial stair. These vessels included domestic forms, serving wares, a possible hand drum (Figure 8s), and two censers - a Lamanai-style "Buk" incensario (Figure 8d) and a fine orange Mixtec-style incensario (Figure 8b). Much of the base of the Lamanai-style vessel lay against the side



of the stairway with the rim and body pieces scattered to the south; body pieces for this vessel were also recovered in excavation C173D, but in a much eroded condition making full assembly difficult. The globular body of the Mixtec-style incensario was presumably complete, but the piece was missing its two front legs and handle; the rim may have been ground down in antiquity. Many of the body sherds for the other vessels illustrated in Figure 8 were recovered, but could not be fully reconstructed given the time constraints of the field season. Two complete chert points and a chert pick were also recovered in this area (Figure 9), along with a hammerstone. Faunal remains associated with the vessels included unidentified burnt bone and more than a dozen deer bone fragments.

**Suboperation C173D** (Figure 3, Figure 6) consisted of an areal excavation that extended from the northern side of the Structure A31 stairway to the northeast corner of the building. In mirror image to the artifactual remains on the southern side of the stair, the artifactual remains on the northern side of the stair were restricted to an area between the stair and the midpoint to the corner. As in excavation C173C, the inset corner area was subfloored, again finding the lower plaza surface. Much of the sherd smash (Figure 7) immediately adjacent to the stair belonged to a single globular incensario (cover illustration; Figure 8a). Also included here was a partial “frying pan” incensario (Figure 8c), the only one formally known from Caracol. Pieces of several of the vessels found south of the stair were also found north of the two incensarios, but the sherd density was not as heavy.

**Suboperation C173E** (Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 6) was assigned for the excavation of the front steps and the axial trench that penetrated Structure A31. This axial trench measured 2 m (north-south) by 13.12 m (east-west). No features were encountered within the trench and the fills, largely consisting of large dry-core rocks capped with an upper surface, indicated that Structure A31 had been built in a single construction effort on a pre-existing plaza floor. A deeper probe in the eastern end of the trench revealed the same earlier floor found in the corner sub-floors as well as an earlier facing associated with this earlier floor that ran diagonal to the Structure A31 orientation (Figure 6). A large handled jar (Figure 8e) was recovered in the area in front of the steps.

**Suboperation C173F** (Figure 6) was assigned to an excavation designed to find the southwest corner of Structure A31. This excavation measured 1.3m (east-west) by 2.2 m (north-south) and was successful. Apart from a few sherds, no other artifactual material was recovered.

## Structure A31 Summary

The excavations undertaken on Structure A31 proved it to be a single phase Terminal Classic construction associated with sheet refuse in front of and to the sides of its frontal stairway. These materials are clearly associated and in situ. Yet, the censerware is so unusual as to raise questions of the dating of this material. In particular, the Lamanai-style incensario (Figure 8d) is quite distinctive in shape and decoration and has traditionally been dated to the Early to Middle Postclassic (Graham 1987); however, these “Buk” materials have also been found in another possible Terminal Classic context (Awe and Helmke 2000). Elsewhere (based on earlier typological considerations), we (A. Chase and D. Chase 2004:354) argued for the possibility of Early Postclassic visitation of the A Group. This argument was primarily based on what appeared to be a Postclassic olla on the floors of Structure A8 (A. Chase and D. Chase 2004: Fig. 16.4b) and A2; however, this same olla form was also subsequently recovered in sealed Terminal Classic contexts in Barrio (www.caracol.org 2001 field report Figure 16g, 16i, and 16k) and from the South Acropolis (2003 field report Figure 27a). Similar ollas also occur in the Structure A31 sheet refuse (Figure 8q, 8r, 8t, 8u). Therefore, these forms are not at odds with a Terminal Classic dating. One of the other large storage jars from Structure A31 similarly compares to other clear Terminal Classic context examples from the Northwest Acropolis (compare Figure 8k with Figure 28k and 28l). Thus, it is exceedingly likely that all of the ceramic materials from the single sheet refuse deposit associated with Structure A31 date to the same time period, that that time period is consistent with all of the other latest on-floor materials at Caracol, and that a Terminal Classic Period date is indicated (A. Chase and D. Chase in press). This conclusion has important ramifications for any interpretations concerning the Terminal Classic /Early Postclassic Period transition in the Maya area and also for Mesoamerica (especially in terms of “Mixtec” incensarios). In particular, these findings suggest that archaeologists may have aligned coeval materials into different temporal eras based largely on isolated samples and already formed preconceptions.

The excavations into and around Structure A31 were completely backfilled at the end of the 2006 field season.

## **The Northwest Acropolis: Structures A61-A71.**

The Northwest Acropolis constitutes a unique architectural complex at central Caracol. Before the 2006 field season, little scientific research had actually been carried out in this spatially important group (see Figure 1 and Figure 10). Prior to the start of the Caracol Archaeological Project in 1985, structures associated with this complex were savagely looted, specifically Structures A63 and Structure A61. A huge gulley existed where the core of Structure A61 had once been. Structure A63, a small eastern shrine building, had been axially looted, exposing a tomb. Excavations carried out in this group during 2006 focused on gaining a more complete understanding of Structure A63, on determining the quality of construction associated with Structures A61 and A69, on demonstrating that the group was actually a “palace,” and on ascertaining if in situ artifactual remains could be recovered in association with these buildings (as was the case with epicentral palaces). All of these goals were achieved. Importantly, the recovered in situ materials further emphasize the differences in ceramic subcomplexes between the epicenter and outlying Caracol (A. Chase and D. Chase 2005), even in palaces.

### **Structure A63 (Figure 10, [Figure 11](#))**

Set on the side of a raised plaza, Structure A63 has a rapidly plunging valley for a backdrop. Compared to the other architecture in the Northwest Acropolis - that utilizes the hillside to partially emphasize the massive proportions of the constructions - Structure A63 is quite diminutive. However, given its position on the eastern edge of a ravine and as the only eastern construction on the plaza, the building formed the focal point for this complex. Structure A63 was selected for further work because of the looted tomb that had been recorded in this building during the first year of the Caracol Project in 1985. The data from this Late Classic tomb needed to be contextualized. As the building appeared to be associated with a palace, it was thought that it would be useful to excavate the looted stairs and the plaza in front of the edifice to see if additional ritual deposits, such as caches or other burials, could be located. It was also recognized that, if other burials were encountered in front of the building, they would prove to be later than the tomb in date based on what is known about Caracol burial patterns and the sequencing of deposits in eastern mortuary constructions (D. Chase and A. Chase 2004).

**Suboperation C5B** (Figure 12) was assigned in 1985 to the clean-up investigation of a looted tomb that had been encountered in Structure A63 (originally nicknamed “Zoom” prior to mapping). A crude trench had penetrated the western facing of Structure A63, encountering the open chamber. The looters had clearly encountered materials on the bench, as this surface was completely clean and devoid of any artifactual materials. They had also penetrated the rear wall of the chamber, but had neglected to dig in front of the bench. The materials that they had removed consisted of bone and ceramic vessels (Figure 17), the majority of which were recovered on the front surface of the structure.

**S.D. C5B-1** (Figure 12, Figure 14, Figure 15, Figure 16) was assigned to the tomb in Structure A63. The chamber was well constructed with an eastern bench and a southern entryway. The chamber measured 1.5 m in height by 2.2 m in length by 0.95 m in width; the entryway extended an additional 1.05 m to the south. The bench only rose 20 cm above the western floor. The chamber encompasses 4.19 cubic meters of space, putting it in the mid-range of Caracol’s tomb volumes.

As noted in the original reports (A. Chase and D. Chase 1987:37; D. Chase 1994:136), the bone from the looted tomb was collected from the looters’ backdirt and the front of the bench area was excavated, resulting in the recovery of in situ skeletal remains and 1 vessel (Figure 17d). The analysis of the skeletal remains indicated that minimally 2 to 3 individuals were present in this tomb; these individuals were adult and 1 was identified as male and 1 was identified as female. Four ceramic vessels (Figure 17) were recovered from outside the chamber on the looters’ spoil heap. The 2006 excavations fully cleared the chamber and also the looters backdirt from their axial trench. These investigations resulted in the recovery of the additional remains of minimally 2 subadults, 1 aged 4 and 1 aged 7; these bones were recovered outside the chamber in areas that the looters had filled in as they were digging and it is unclear whether these materials originally came from inside the tomb or from another burial that was encountered in front of

the tomb. Given the integrity of the 1985 skeletal remains as all from adult individuals, it is suspected that one or more child burials west of the chamber were encountered by the looters. However, additional artifacts can be added to the tomb corpus. One bone pin (Figure 18c) was recovered from inside the tomb chamber during cleaning and another bone pin (Figure 18b) was recovered from outside the chamber in lenses that indicated in had originally been inside the tomb. Also found in this same lens of dirt was a jadite “button” (Figure 18a) from an ear assemblage.

**Suboperation C5C** (Figure 12) was assigned to the trench, measuring 1.5 m (north-south) by 5.1 m (east-west), which encompassed the looters’ excavation into Structure A63. This excavation encountered three sequential floors as well as the lowest step for Structure A63. The lowest floor was bedded over a dry core matrix of very large stones. This floor ran completely under Structure A63 and appears to have been the surface on which the chamber housing S.D. C5B-1 was constructed. The second floor was raised approximately 30 cm above the initial one and ran completely under the stairwell, ending in a slight turn-up approximately 60 cm from the interior of the tomb. This turn-up may represent a ripped out facing which would have connected with a higher floor that was found in the looters’ excavation east of the chamber. Whatever the case, clearly some construction was removed to place the tomb and bed it on the lower floor. The stairway for Structure A63 was then constructed over this chamber. This stair was abutted by yet a later floor. Dating for these event is clearly Late Classic based on the contents of S.D. C5B-1. One other deposit, S.D. C5C-1 (Figure 13) was found in the western extent of the excavation; this deposit was associated with two capstones and was placed directly on the dry core fill. Because no intact floors existed in this portion of the trench, the exact stratigraphic position of this deposit is unclear.

**S.D. C5C-1** (Figure 13) was assigned for human juvenile long bone fragments that were sealed beneath two capstones in the eastern limit of excavation C5C. Because these remains had been placed directly on dry core fill, it is possible that the deposit was disturbed in antiquity by animals that could have easily crawled through the spaces between the stones. It is also not know if this deposit was sealed by any of the floors, although it likely was. The deposit cannot be directly dated at this point in time, although it is certainly generic Late Classic.

### **Structure A69 (Figure 10, [Figure 19](#))**

A second major area of research during the 2006 field season was the building that formed the western edge of the Northwest Acropolis. Surface indications suggested that it had a small inner courtyard and, in fact, excavation proved this to be the case. Both the building and the courtyard were also associated with late in situ trash, much like epicentral palace groups like Barrio (A. Chase and D. Chase 2004; see also 2001 season report at <http://www.caracol.org>). It is very useful for any number of reasons to compare this late ceramic assemblage from just outside the epicenter with the status-linked ceramic sub-assemblage so common in epicentral palace complexes.

**Suboperation C5D** ([Figure 19](#), Figure 20, Figure 21) was assigned to a 1.5 m (north-south) by 7.05 m (east-west) trench into the front room of Structure A69. This excavation encompassed a frontal stairway platform and the actual building itself. It extended to the interior (western) wall of the structure and had the southern doorjamb in section. A red-painted bench with a slight projecting cornice abutted the rear wall and extended complete across the excavation. The northern part of the bench interior was removed down to the underlying floor and an earlier northern facing for this bench was found just off section (Figure 21). The actual building that comprised Structure A69 was bedded on a construction floor that ran beneath the bench and the two walls. The height for Structure A69 was made up of a dry core fill that in some instances contained very large boulders. These boulders had in turn been placed over a buried platform that rose over 1.5 m above the earlier floor level (recovered in the eastern extent of excavation C5D). The side of this earlier construction ran down the middle of excavation C5D, making a corner in the area of the later doorjamb; the rear corner of this construction was recovered in excavation C5E, indicating a side length for the earlier building of 6.8 m. A deep probe was dug in the eastern limit of excavation C5D in front of the lowest step for Structure A69-1st. This excavation uncovered an interior corner which extended down to what appeared to be a crypt that had been looted in antiquity. The fill in this area contained both capstones and fragments of human bone. Other artifacts recovered from excavation C5D included a cave stalagmite in sealed building fill, modeled stucco that once adorned the exterior building, and a modeled ceramic face (Figure 29a).

**S.D. C5D-1** (Figure 22) was assigned for a crypt that clearly had been entered in antiquity. The latest floor in front of the step for Structure A69 was broken and human bone was recovered in the fill overlying the crypt. Nothing was in situ inside the crypt and the southern capstones were not in place, instead probably being some of the stone slabs in the overlying fill. The crypt measured 1.7 m in length by 0.4 m in width. The intact capstones over its northern end indicated an open-air interior height of just over 30 cm. The crypt was set directly on an earlier floor level. From the bone recovered in the fill over the crypt, it can be deduced that the individual was an adult male (based on the sciatic notch of a pelvis). Subflooring the crypt yielded two other floors, indicating substantial earlier construction activity in the Structure A69 locus.

**Suboperation C5E** (Figure 23, Figure 24, Figure 25) was assigned for a trench that measured 1.5 m (north-south) by 5.5 m (east-west). This trench ran through the interior courtyard for Structure A69 and was located in line with and 80 cm west of excavation C5D. Excavation C5E was separated from excavation C5D only by the rear wall for Structure A69. A doorway for an adjacent building defined the western extent of this suboperation. Cut stones and cobbles appear to have been stockpiled against the rear wall for Structure A69 inside the courtyard, possibly for future building activities. A single floor crossed the courtyard and was bedded directly on large boulder dry-core fill. This dry-core fill was laid over the southern edge (Figure 26) of the same earlier construction that had been encountered in excavation C5E. This earlier construction was sealed under the existing plaza floor. A substantial quantity of artifactual material was recovered in association with the courtyard floor. Half of a large jar (Figure 28l) was found in front of westernmost building and other partial ceramic vessels were also recovered in the courtyard, as well as two pieces of model-carved pottery. Other artifactual material from the courtyard area included faunal remains, worked bone fragments, architectural stucco (Figure 29b), a chert point (Figure 29c), and a whole sea shell (Figure 29d). The carved bone and the marine shell are consistent with items that were worked in the epicentral palaces (A. Chase and D. Chase 2001).

### **Structure A61 (Figure 10)**

Dominating the north side of the Northwest Acropolis, Structure A61 had been gutted by looters prior to the start of the 1985 field season. Its interior today resembles a crater. In spite of all of the effort devoted to this building by looters, it is not clear that any deposits were found. At the start of the 2006 field season, it was not clear as to what direction the building faced. As a result of excavation undertaken during 2006, it is evident that Structure A61 did not face the plaza on which Structure A63 is situated.

**Suboperation C5F** (Figure 30, Figure 31, Figure 32) was assigned to a 4 m (north-south) by 2 m (east-west) excavation placed on axis to the southern side of Structure A61. This excavation succeeded in uncovering a terrace floor that abutted two side step ups that led to the side of the building substructure for Structure A61. The building substructure exhibits a basal plinth. A great number of artifactual remains and reconstructible vessels were recovered in association with this side of Structure A61. Besides architectural stucco from a collapsed building and unidentified faunal material from the floors, a basalt metate (Figure 34B) and a ceramic figurine head (Figure 34a) also were recovered. At least 5 reconstructible vessels were also found (Figure 33b, d, e, g, h), clearly indicative of Terminal Classic use. The terrace floor was subfloored south of the building risers. This deeper penetration yielded an earlier floor and step that repeated that same orientation as Structure A61. While this earlier construction appeared to be set on bedrock, dry-core fill, which extended to a depth greater than 1 m, was in evidence in the eastern part of the excavation.

### **Northwest Acropolis Summary**

All of the excavations undertaken in the Northwest Acropolis indicate that this complex was not a single phase construction, but instead shows multiple constructions that must have spanned some time. This can clearly be seen in the complex construction sequence that was recovered in association with Structure A69 (Figure 27). Perhaps the most important conclusion that can be reached from the 2006 excavations in the Northwest Acropolis is that this complex was intensively utilized during the Terminal Classic Period. Significantly, the ceramic vessels recovered here differ from the standard epicentral subcomplex of the Terminal Classic, specifically in their focus on a standard bowl shape that is



common in the central Peten of Guatemala (Figure 28) but that is not generally used at Caracol in the epicentral palaces. The use of the straight sided Peten bowl was clearly preferred by the inhabitants of the Northwest Acropolis; several of these bowls were recovered here – with only a single part of the more common form, an incurved rim footed bowl (Figure 28b) being found within the Structure A69 courtyard. Plates from the Northwest Acropolis (Figure 33) are similar to those recovered from the summit of Caana (A. Chase 1994). The jars against the side facings of Structure A61 (Figure 33) match one found associated with Structure A31 (Figure 81). Thus, the Northwest Acropolis ceramic assemblage for the Terminal Classic shows hints of being “the same, but different.” Any number of economic or proxemic arguments may be employed to explain these differences in a complex setting like Caracol.

At the conclusion of the field season, all of the excavations in the Northwest Acropolis were completely backfilled.

### **The Gateway Group: Structure B139-B143.**

The Gateway group was selected for investigation for several reasons. It is literally on the border of the site epicenter. The group is adjacent to Reservoir C and defines the south end of the west epicenter wall (see Figure 1). The Gateway Group is characterized by long low structures on its northern, eastern, and southern sides; its western side exhibits a low platform building (Figure 35). Its spatial position may be considered analogous to the Caretaker Group (Structure B39-B47) that was excavated during the 2005 field season and which produced Terminal Classic debris, including whole vessels, related to the epicenter sub-assemblage. Thus, it was felt prior to excavation that this group might also produce Terminal Classic status-linked ceramics (e.g. A. Chase and D. Chase 2004). Excavation was undertaken in the group’s western building, Structure B143, to test Juan Pedro Laporte’s (1994, 1996, 2004) findings related to western buildings in the southeastern Peten of Guatemala. There, such structures were often associated with Terminal Classic burials (e.g., A. Chase 2004). Thus, it was hoped that investigation of Structure B143 would produce interments dated to this late era; this expectation was not met. Instead, fill materials were recovered that indicated that chert production had taken place nearby, presumably in the Terminal Classic era; these data indicate that the Gateway Group was probably involved in epicentral workshop support activities, much like the small platforms excavated during the 2000 field season (www.caracol.org 2000 field report).

### **Structure B140 (Figure 35, [Figure 36](#))**

A long low platform that presumably supported a perishable construction, Structure B140 occupies almost the entire eastern side of the Gateway Group supporting platform. The eastern side of the Gateway Group is unusual in not evincing a small shrine building.

**Suboperation C174B** (Figure 37, Figure 38) was assigned for a 2.0 m (north-south) by 1.5 m (east-west) excavation that was set over the boundary area between Structure B140 and B141. It was designed not to penetrate the building and succeeded in locating the southern facing for Structure B140. Although this facing was only two courses in height, it does demonstrate the existence of at least two buildings on the supporting platform.

### **Gateway Chultun (Figure 35, [Figure 39](#))**

Upon clearing the Gateway Group, a localized depression became very evident immediately north of Structure B143. This clearly represented some sort of collapse, indicative of either an underground chamber or a chultun. If a chamber, it was felt that the position of the collapse on the western side of the plaza might be indicative of a Terminal Classic date. If a chultun, then it too would prove to have useful material, such as burials (Hunter 1994) or trash (www.caracol.org 2003 field report, Figures 19-23). Thus, it was deemed to be a useful location for an excavation.

**Suboperation C174C** (Figure 40, Figure 41, Figure 42) was assigned for a 2.0 m (north-south) by 1.5 m (east-west) excavation that was positioned over the depression north of Structure B143. Excavation quickly showed that a collapse had indeed taken place and at a depth of 1.9 m, an open air space was discovered indicative of a chultun. The chultun



was almost completely filled with fill and dirt that had to be removed to get to the chamber floor. Eventually, the excavation reached a depth of 3.8 m at which point a burial was encountered. Partial ceramic vessels dating to the later part of the Late Preclassic era (Figure 44) were recovered from the matrix layer that covered the bottom of the chultun. For the most part, however, the materials within the collapse in the chultun were mixed, ranging in date from Late Preclassic to Terminal Classic. It seems likely that there was some Terminal Classic activity in this locus as a model-carved sherd was found deep within the chamber. Artifactual materials were plentiful and included: faunal remains, a stalagmite, a partial chert point, a partial ceramic labrette (Figure 45c), a partial sandstone palette, a worked shell (Figure 45b), a large obsidian blade (Figure 45d), an obsidian core, chert drills, worked shell fragments (Figure 45a); a shaped drilled sherd, drilled spondylus shell, a partial slate palette, a stingray spine (Figure 45e), and a worked deer tine (Figure 45f). An unexpected amount of chert was also recovered from the fills within the chultun. The quantity of chert (in conjunction with the antler tine) indicates that this material was being worked nearby and then perhaps purposefully redeposited in or near the chultun. The recovered chert included: 281 “chunks,” weighing 3,459.2 grams; 602 flakes, weighing 1,955.0 grams; 3 blade fragments, weighing 5.5 grams; 8 tools, weighing 39.4 grams; and 4 drills, weighing 3.6 grams.

**S.D. C174C-1** (Figure 43) was assigned to the remains of two individuals who were recovered on the floor of the chultun. An adult female was to the north and a young adult male was to the south. Some lipping was present on the vertebrae of female. It is suspected that these two individuals were placed in the chultun during the Late Preclassic era, based on materials in the soils immediately above them, and then covered with the later collapse probably during the Terminal Classic Period.

### **Structure B142 (Figure 35, [Figure 46](#))**

The tallest building in the Gateway Group, Structure B143 sits on the southern side of the common plaza. No actual structural remains could be ascertained on its surface, nor could any stairway be discerned on the northern side of the structure. Excavation revealed a crude construction at best that was probably constructed relatively late.

**Suboperation C174D** (Figure 47, Figure 48) was assigned for a 6.92 m (north-south) by 1.5 m (east-west) axial trench through Structure B142. No stairway could be located on the northern side of the building platform, although two construction walls became evident very quickly. A single burial (S.D. C174D-1) was found at the base of the northernmost construction wall. Possible low facings were found immediately below the ground surface, but were impossible to confirm except for one toward the rear of the building. The crudeness of this latest construction effort was very reminiscent of some of the platforms excavated just outside of the epicenter and south of Structure B5 during the 2000 field season ([www.caracol.org](http://www.caracol.org) 2000 field report). Stratigraphically, it became apparent that this latest building effort – approximately 1 m in height – was constructed over an earlier construction that was stepped in 30 cm increments above an associated plaza floor. The rear facing for this construction was located almost immediately below the later one, and at the same angle, indicating continuity in building efforts. A deeper excavation on the northern side of Structure B142 recovered pieces of two earlier floors but little else. Ceramically, the latest construction effort at the Structure B142 locus was associated with a reconstructible burner and censer lid (Figure 50) dating to the Terminal Classic. Other interesting artifacts recovered in the structure fills included a drilled sherd, 2 partial chert points, a cave concretion, a shell inlay (Figure 54b), a sandstone palette fragment, and 2 fragments of green obsidian (date unknown).

**S.D. C174D-1** (Figure 49) was assigned to a concentration of bones, primarily long bone fragments (femur, tibia, fibula) from an adult, that had been placed at the base of the northern construction wall. As these remains were actually adjacent to a large rodent hole, it may be that other bones from this interment were moved elsewhere in the borrow. There were no associated artifacts with this burial. Stratigraphically, the interment should be Terminal Classic in date.

### **Structure B143 (Figure 35, [Figure 51](#))**

Structure B143 is a very low platform that is the only formal building on the western edge of the Gateway Group. It was

excavated to check for the existence of Terminal Classic burials. None were found.

**Suboperation C174E** (Figure 52, Figure 53) was assigned to a 1.5 m (north-south) by 2.5 m (east-west) axial excavation that encompassed a large portion of Structure B143. Even in this small building sequent constructions were evident. As originally constructed, Structure B143 had been bi-level. At some time the easternmost facing was raised to a level that buried the inner facing in the core of the building. Artifactual materials recovered in the building fills of Structure B143 included a hammerstone, a pyrite fragment, and 3 worked shells (2 shown in Figure 54a and 54c). However, more than 2000 pieces of chert were recovered from a fill layer to the west of the innermost facing (Figure 55). As classified, the chert that was recovered in the excavation included: 295 “chunks,” weighing 2,128.3 grams; 1,746 flakes, weighing 1,557.5 grams; 13 blade fragments, weighing 41.3 grams; 56 tools, weighing 96.8 grams; and 46 drills (Figure 55), weighing 73.8 grams. Clearly, chert working took place somewhere nearby and the debitage was redeposited as fill when the first version of Structure B143 was built.

## Summary of Gateway Group

While surface artifactual materials were not plentiful, but there are indications that the Gateway Group was in use through the Terminal Classic Period. A model-carved sherd was recovered from deep within the chultun. The burner and censer lid from the front of Structure B142 are indicative of Terminal Classic use. Fill ceramics from Structure B143 are also indicative of a later date. What is interesting is the large quantity of chert debitage that was recovered from Structure B143 and the chultun excavation. The inhabitants of this group were clearly manufacturing items in or near this locus, using chert tools. This activity was taking place either during the later part of the Late Classic or during the Terminal Classic Period. Whether the chert tools were used for shell products, wood products, some combination, or something else cannot yet be ascertained.

All excavations undertaken in the Gateway Group were backfilled at conclusion of 2006 field season.

## Structure H2: A Looted Tomb

During excavation of the Northwest Acropolis, it was discovered that the sizeable eastern building in the group immediately to north of this complex had been looted (see Figure 1). A collapsed entryway to a tomb had provided access to it and human bone and pottery sherds belonging to reconstructible vessels lined the surface of the structure at the entryway. Based on the amount of leaf-litter over these materials, the looting was not recent. It had, however, occurred in the last 20 years; when the group was mapped in 1985, this activity had not yet taken place.

**Suboperation C175A** ([Figure 56](#), Figure 57) was assigned for activities involved in collecting the remains on the surface of Structure H2 and in cleaning out and recording the tomb.

**S.D. C175A-1** (Figure 58, Figure 59) was assigned for the looted chamber that was encountered in Structure H2. The side entryway to the chamber had collapsed inward, which is how the looters had gained access to the tomb (Figure 56). The chamber measured 2.4 m in length by 1.2 m in width by 1.4 m in height. It encompassed 3.46 cubic meters of space, making it smaller in volume than the chamber in nearby Structure A63. The looters had penetrated the floor of the chamber against the eastern wall, exposing dry core fill beneath the tomb. Parts of seven vessels were recovered from about the mouth of the tomb entrance and pieces from these vessels were recovered through the excavation of the chamber; these materials (Figure 60) clearly point to late Late Classic date for the interment. Also associated with this interment are: faunal material; a drilled oliva shell (Figure 61a); and fragments of carved bone (Figure 61b). The collected human bone indicates that minimally 2 adults had been placed in this burial; a third individual is possibly present based on extra teeth that were recovered. No sex identification was possible based on the poor condition of the bone. A jadeite inlay exists in an upper right first premolar, indicating that others were likely present (and taken by the looters); an inlay hole also exists in an upper right lateral incisor. Two incisors show evidence of exterior polish, perhaps as a result of some occupational use. Calculus, caries,

and hypoplasia also are all in evidence on the recovered teeth. The remains from this chamber roughly correspond to those found in the Structure A63 tomb and indicate that the Structure H2 group was utilized in the same time period as the Northwest Acropolis.

## **Significance**

Each discrete package of information that is collected during each field season at Caracol adds to our broader understanding of the site. Among other goals, the 2006 investigations sought to build on investigations of small epicentral structures that had been undertaken during the 2000, 2003, 2004, and 2005 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. The 2006 investigations were particularly important for understanding Terminal Classic variability in material culture through permitting a better definition of the latest occupation and ultimate abandonment of Caracol. The Structure A31 locus permits insight into Terminal Classic non-residential ritual patterns. Taken together, the ceramic data from these excavations suggest that the typological frameworks into which these materials are sorted may be analytically weak and confuse spatial variation with temporal variation. Contextual considerations suggest that multiple sub-assemblages coexisted at any one point in time and that typological analysis of sherd materials has difficulty recognizing such spatial variation, instead often leading to the sorting of non-primary sherd materials into temporal distinctions (when such may not actually exist). This important conclusion has significant implications for wider interpretations of the Classic Maya Collapse.

## **Acknowledgements**

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### **TABLE 1: Caracol Project Members: 2006 Field Season**

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Chris Parkinson (UCF Biology colleague)  
Norman Edwards (UCF Maya Studies student)  
Elena Benard (UCF Biological Graduate student)  
Joyce Brown (UCF Biological Graduate student)  
Amanda Cooper (UCF Biological Graduate student)  
Mary Anne Kovosy (UCF Biological Graduate student)

## Figures:

[Cover](#): Photograph of censer (C173D/3-15) recovered in front of Structure A31.

[Figure 1](#). Map of the Caracol epicenter, showing the location of loci (Structure A31, Structure H2, Northwest Acropolis, Gateway Group) investigated during the 2006 field season.

[Figure 2](#). Photograph of Structure A31.

[Figure 3](#). Plan of Structure A31, showing the location of the 2006 excavations relative to the building.

[Figure 4](#). Section of excavation C173D that penetrated the axis of Structure A31.

[Figure 5](#). Elevation and corner section of southern edge of front stairs for Structure A31.

[Figure 6](#). Detailed plan of Structure A31 showing basal wall stones, plinth, and steps as well as the location of the recovered vessels (lettering corresponds with vessel lettering in Figure 7).

[Figure 7](#). Photograph of sherd smash north of Structure A31 stairs, which produced two censers (Figure 7a and 7b).

[Figure 8a](#), [Figure 8b](#), [Figure 8c](#). Vessels recovered in association with Structure A31 (see Figure 6 for locations; missing body sherds for most vessels are present in recovery lots): (a) undesignated censer type; (b) possibly Miseria Appliqued; (c) unnamed Altar Orange type; (d) unnamed Lamanai Orange type [“Buk”]; (e) undesignated unslipped, (f) Tinaja Red; (g) probably Valentin Unslipped; (h), (i), and (j) undesignated unslipped; (k) Valentin Unslipped, (l) possibly Infierno Black; (m), (o), and (p) undesignated unslipped; (n) possibly Asote Orange; (q)-(u) Valentin Unslipped.

[Figure 9](#). Lithic artifacts from excavation C173C, south of the Structure A31 stairway: (a) chert point (C173C/7-1); (b) chert pick (C173C/4-1); (c) chert point (C173C/9-5).

[Figure 10](#). Detailed plan of the Northwest Acropolis, showing the location of the 2006 excavations relative to Structures A61, A63, and A69.

[Figure 11](#). Photograph of Structure A63 looking east, with excavation C5C in the foreground.

[Figure 12](#). Axial section through Structure A63, showing excavations C5B and C5C.

[Figure 13](#). Detailed plan of S.D. C5C-1 in the western end of excavation C5C.

[Figure 14](#). Detailed plan of S.D. C5B-1 in Structure A63.

[Figure 15](#). Long cross-section of S.D. C5B-1 in Structure A63.

[Figure 16](#). Short cross-section of S.D. C5B-1 in Structure A63

[Figure 17](#). Vessels recovered in association with S.D. C5B-1 (after A. Chase 1994:175): (a) possibly Canoa Incised; (b) and (c) San Pedro Impressed; (d) Machete Orange-Polychrome; (e) possibly Tenaja Fluted.

[Figure 18](#). Artifactual materials associated with excavations 5C and 5D, probably from the looted tomb: (a) jadeite “button” (C5C/5-4); (b) bone pin (C5C/5-3); (c) bone pin (C5B/4-3).

[Figure 19](#). Photograph of Structure A69 and excavation C5D looking west.

[Figure 20](#). Axial section of excavation C5D through Structure A69.

[Figure 21](#). Plan of excavation C5D showing buried features recovered.

[Figure 22.](#) Detailed plan of S.D. C5D-1 and other features, located in the eastern end of excavation C5D.

[Figure 23.](#) Photograph of excavation C5E looking west over inner courtyard.

[Figure 24.](#) Section of inner courtyard behind Structure A69 and on same axial line.

[Figure 25.](#) Plan of excavation C5E showing stone piled against the rear wall of Structure A69 and buried architecture within the inner courtyard between buildings.

[Figure 26.](#) Profile of buried architecture sealed beneath the courtyard floor.

[Figure 27.](#) Aligned plans and sections of excavations C5D and C5E aligned to better see construction and building relationships.

[Figure 28.](#) Partial vessels recovered in association with floor surfaces from excavations C5D and C5E: (a) probably Zacatel Cream-Polychrome, (b) Tinaja Red, (c) Tenaja Fluted, (d) undesignated, (e) Tialipa Brown, (f) Tinaja Red, (g) Canoa Incised, (h) San Julio Modeled, (i) and (j) Valentin Unslipped, (k) Ceiba Unslipped, (l) Valentin Unslipped.

[Figure 29.](#) Artifactual materials from excavations 5D and 5E: (a) ceramic face (C5D/2-2); (b) stucco face (C5E/3-2); (c) chert point (C5E/10-1); whole sea shell (C5E/6-6).

[Figure 30.](#) Photograph of excavation C5F looking north, showing basalt metate in situ.

[Figure 31.](#) Section of excavation C5F; side of Structure A61 defines northern excavation limit.

[Figure 32.](#) Plan of excavation C5F showing recovered features associated with Structure A61.

[Figure 33.](#) Partial and reconstructible vessels recovered on floors in excavation C5F (many bodies are present but not attached to the jars and ollas): (a) possibly Torro Gouged-Incised; (b) Infierno Black; (c) possibly Tolla Fluted; (d) Martin's Incised; (e) Pantano Impressed; (f) Zacatal Cream-Polychrome; (g) and (h) Valentin Unslipped.

[Figure 34.](#) Artifactual materials from excavation 5F: (a) ceramic figurine head (C5F/8-1); (b) basalt metate (C5F/3-1).

[Figure 35.](#) Detailed plan of the Gateway Group, showing location of 2006 excavations relative to Structures B140, B142, and B143.

[Figure 36.](#) Photograph of excavation C174B.

[Figure 37.](#) Section of excavation C174B.

[Figure 38.](#) Plan of excavation C174B showing building edge for Structure B140.

[Figure 39.](#) Photograph of excavation C174C.

[Figure 40.](#) Plan of excavation C174C, showing collapsed chultun entryway and the maximum extent of the chultun.

[Figure 41.](#) East-West section of excavation C174C through collapsed chultun.

[Figure 42.](#) North-South section of excavation C174C through collapsed chultun.

[Figure 43.](#) Detailed plan of S.D. C174C-1 at the bottom of the collapsed chultun.

[Figure 44a.](#) [Figure 44b.](#) Partial vessels recovered in the bottom layer of the chultun in excavation C174C: (a) and (b) Sierra Red; (c) Sierra Red or Union Appliqued; (d) Sierra Red with post-slip incision; (e) possibly related to Pochitocus Punctated; (f) Ceiba Unslipped; (g) Flor Cream; (h) Sierra Red; (i) Laguna Verde Incised; (j) Sierra Red; (k) and (l) related to Hoya Punctated; (m) and (n) possibly Corriental Appliqued; (o) related to Old River Unslipped; (p) Sierra



Red.

[Figure 45.](#) Artifactual materials from within the fill of the chultun: (a) worked shell (C174C/9-1); (b) complete shell drilled for suspension (C174C/15-1); (c) ceramic labrette (C174C/5-9); (d) obsidian knife (C174C/14-1); (e) stringray spine (C174C/14-12); (f) worked deer tine (C174C/5-10).

[Figure 46.](#) Photograph of excavation C174D.

[Figure 47.](#) Section of excavation C174D through Structure B142.

[Figure 48.](#) Plan of excavation C174D, showing recovered building and construction walls.

[Figure 49.](#) Detailed plan of S.D. C174D-1.

[Figure 50.](#) Partial vessels from the front of Structure B142: (a) and (b) Cohune Composite.

[Figure 51.](#) Photograph of excavation C174E.

[Figure 52.](#) Section of excavation C174E through Structure B143.

[Figure 53.](#) Plan of excavation C174E.

[Figure 54.](#) Artifactual materials from excavations C174D and C174E: (a) worked shell disk (C174E/3-11); worked shell inlay (C174D/7-6); partially worked shell rectangle (C174E/9-1).

[Figure 55.](#) Photograph of lithics from lot C174C/3, a fill layer within the core of Structure B143.

[Figure 56.](#) Photograph of collapsed tomb entrance in Structure H2.

[Figure 57.](#) Section through Structure H2, showing tomb cross-section.

[Figure 58.](#) Plan of tomb in Structure H2.

[Figure 59.](#) North-South section of tomb in Structure H2

[Figure 60.](#) Ceramic vessels associated with the Structure H2 tomb: (a) related to Talipa Brown, but fluted and incised; (b) San Pedro Impressed; (c) Belize Red; (d) possibly Tialipa Brown; (e) and (g) Machete Orange-Polychrome; (f) burnt Zacatel Cream-Polychrome.

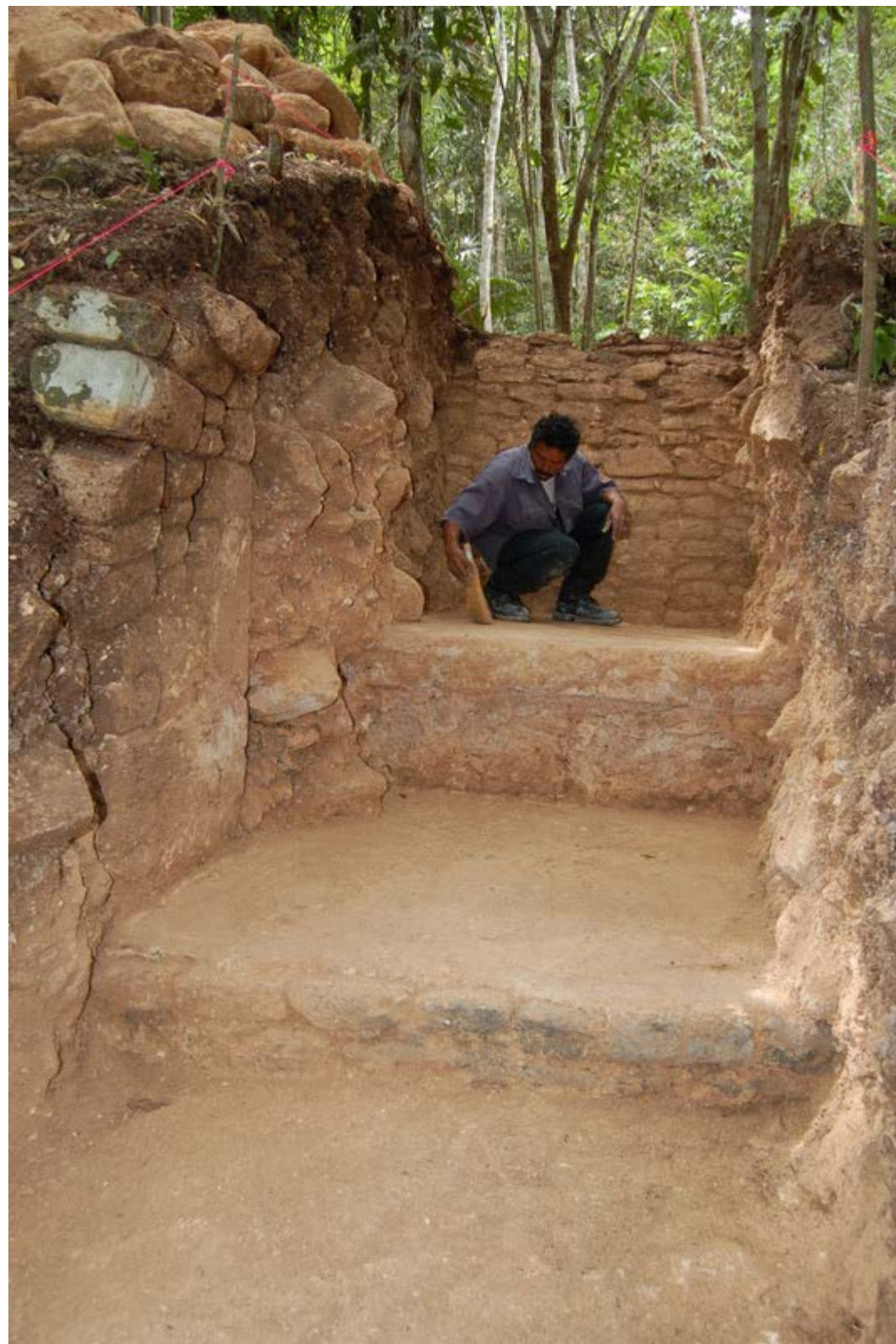
[Figure 61.](#) Artifactual materials from within the Structure H2 tomb: (a) oliva tinkler (C175A/2-4); (b) carved bone (C175A/2-3).

[Figure 62.](#) Laboratory work being undertaken on reconstructible ceramics.































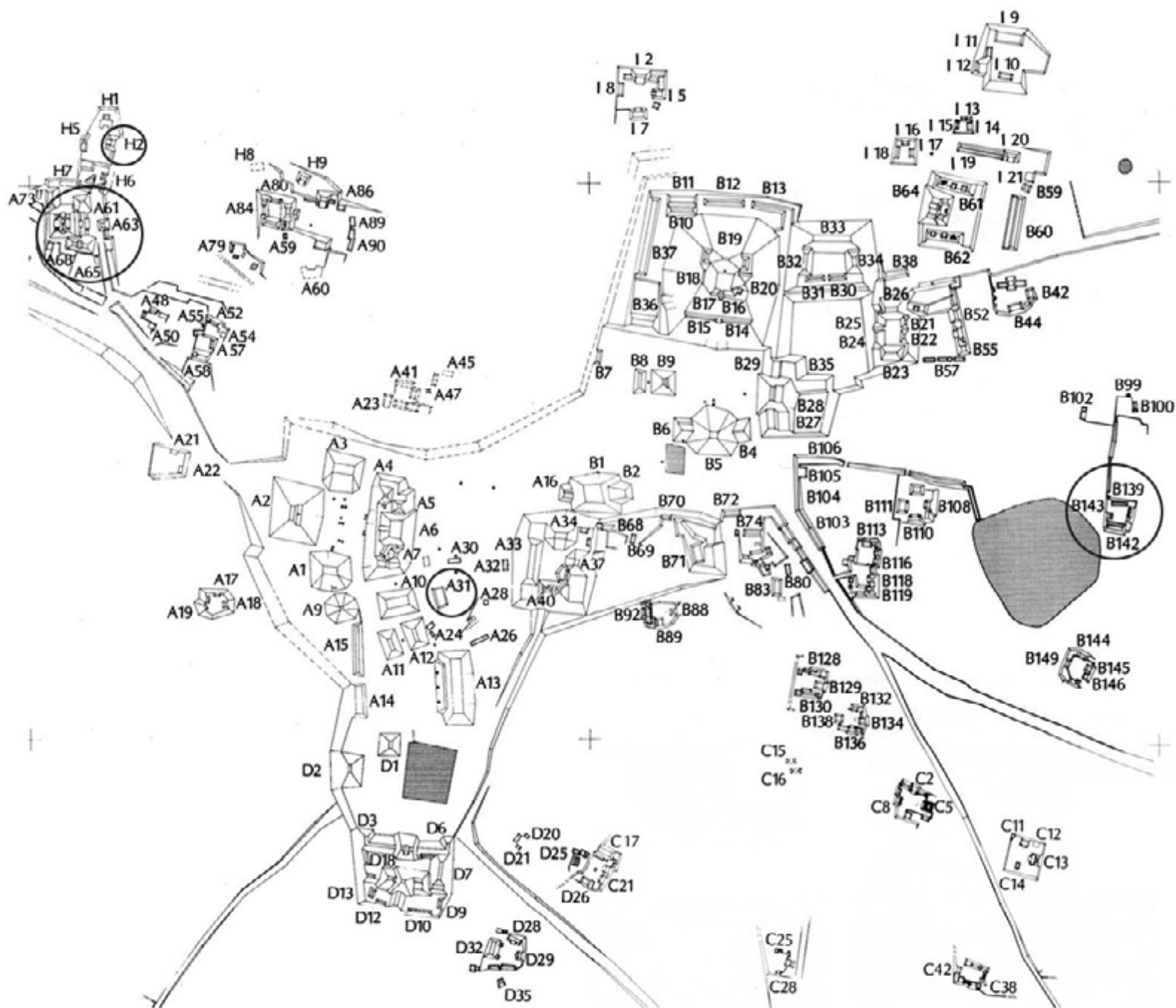




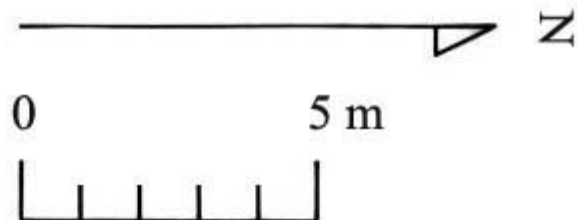
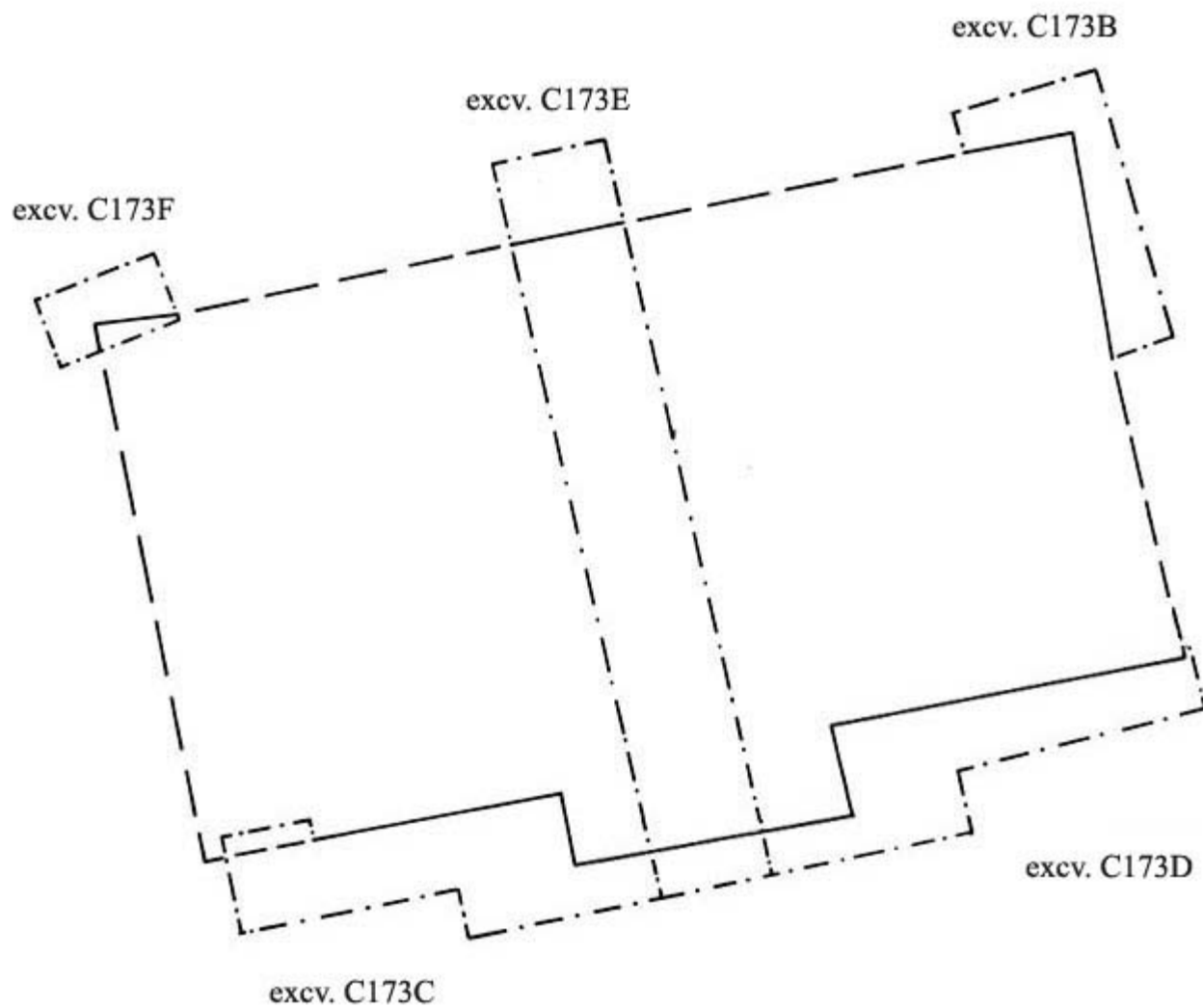




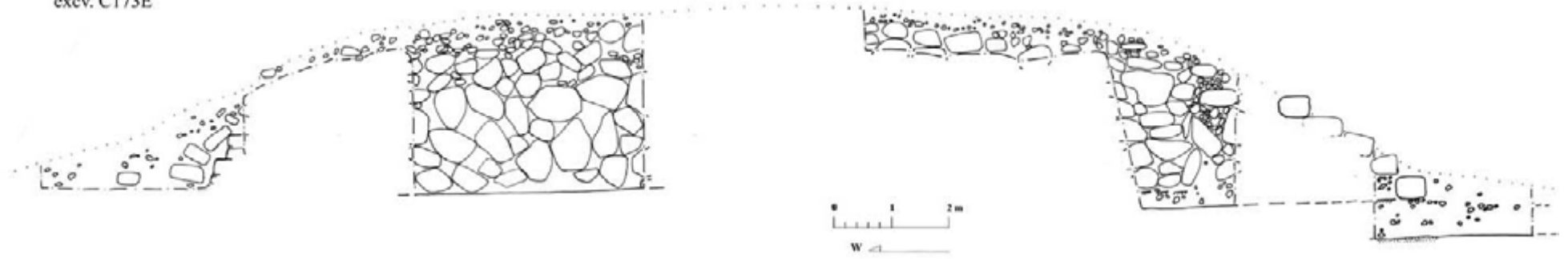




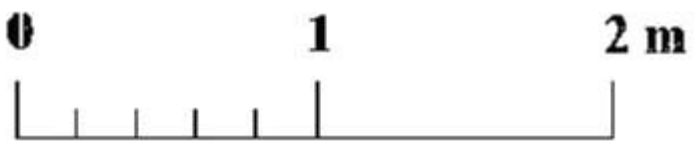
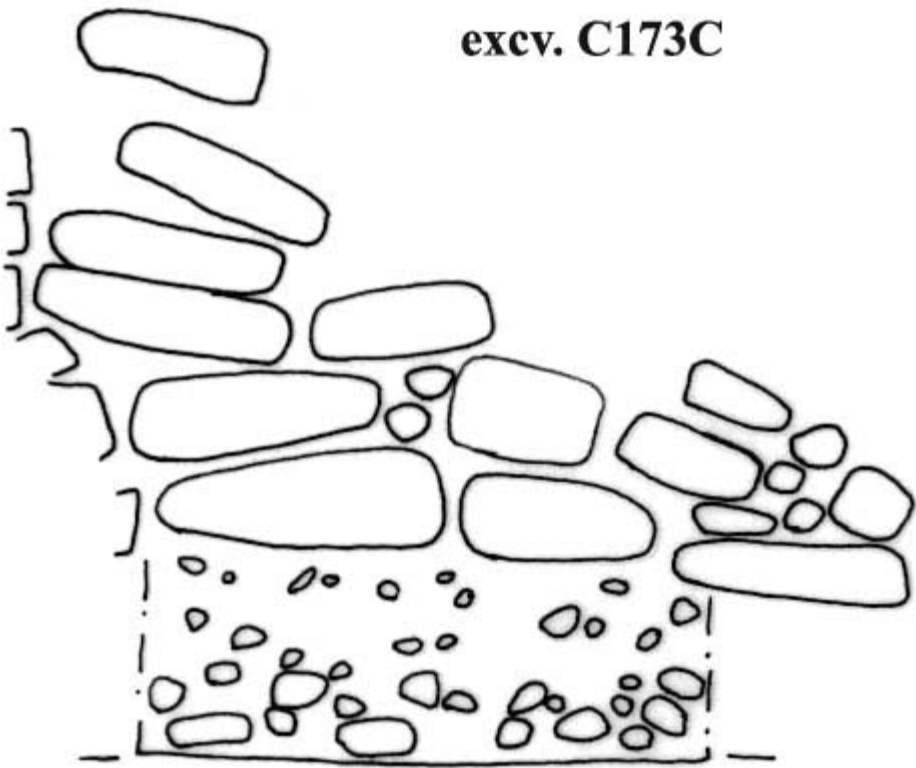
# Caracol Structure A31



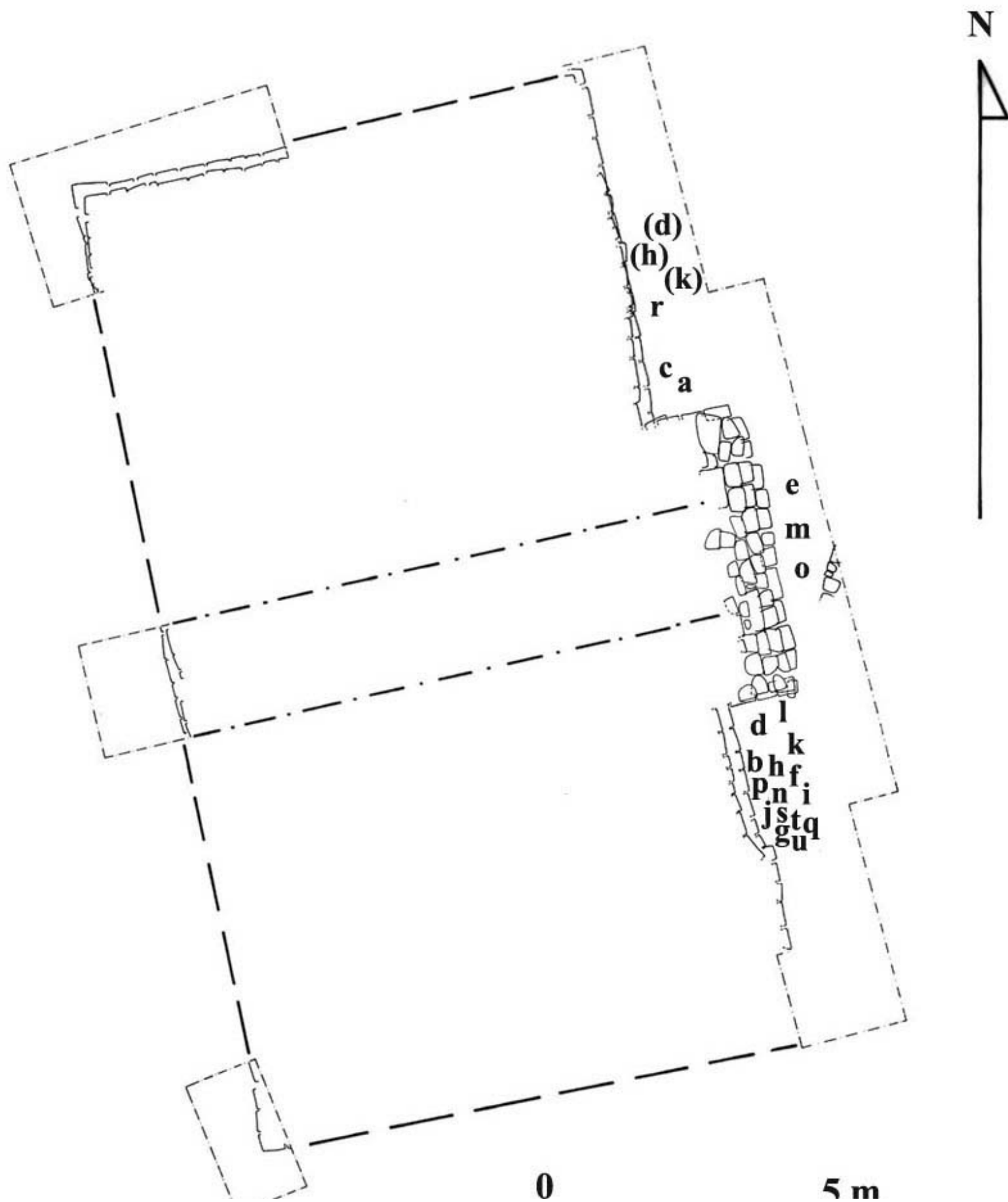
**Caracol Structure A31**  
excav. C173E



excav. C173C



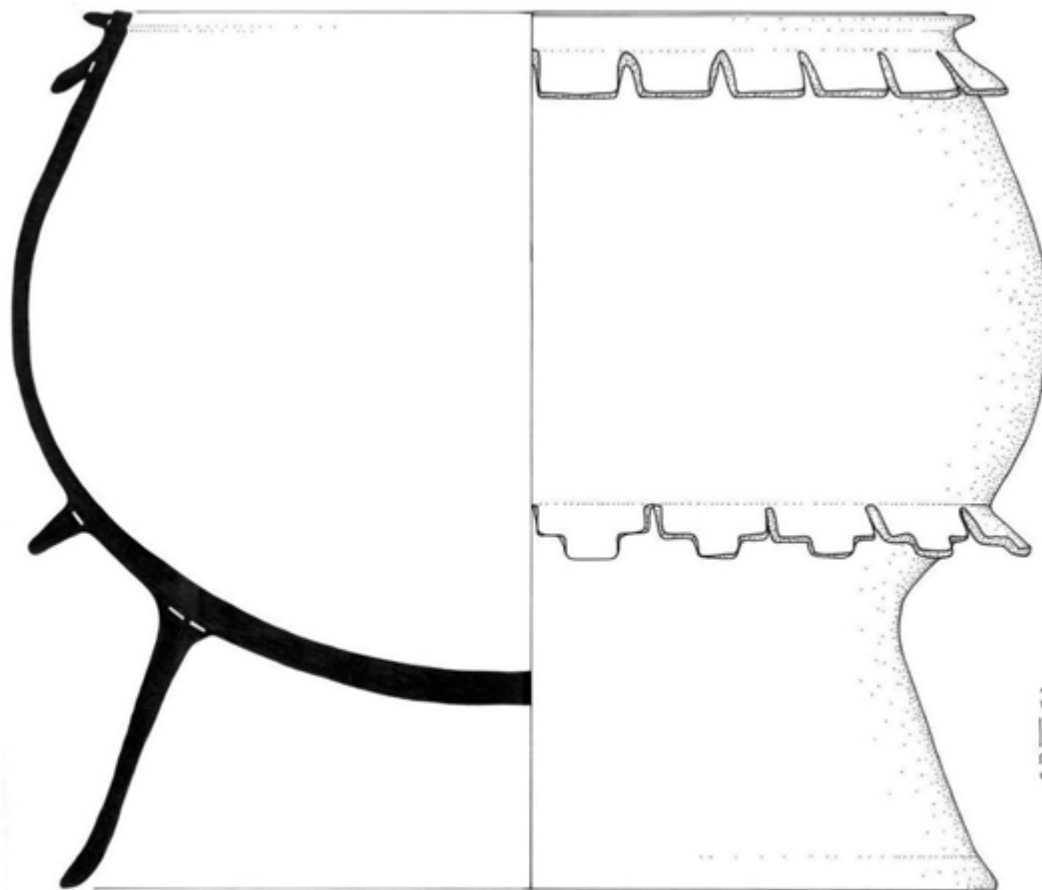
# Caracol Structure A31



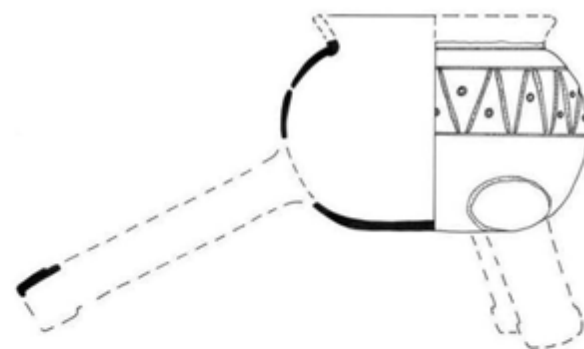


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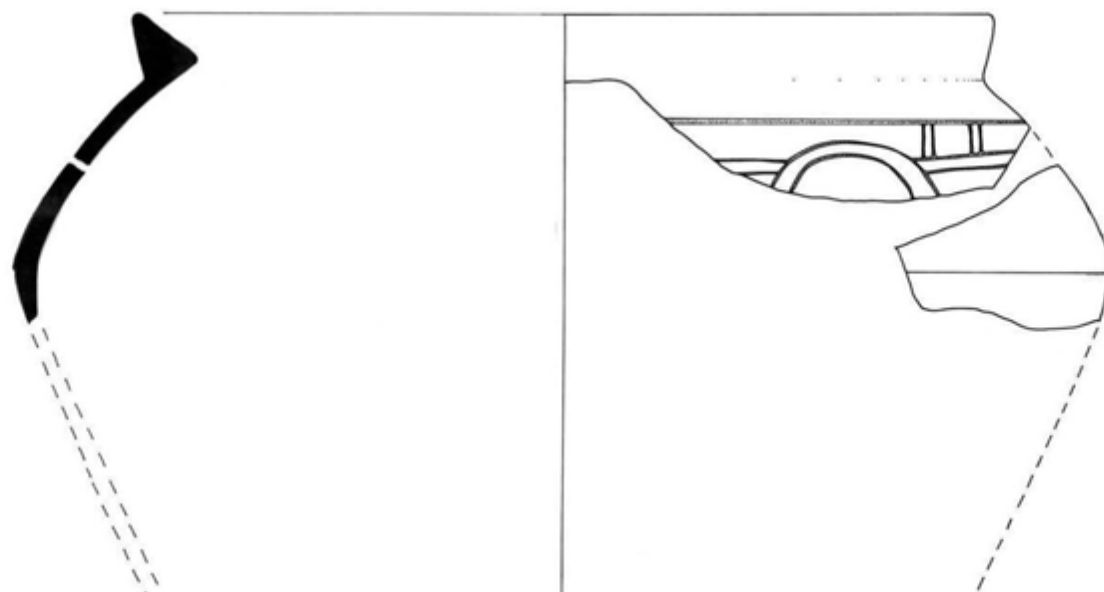
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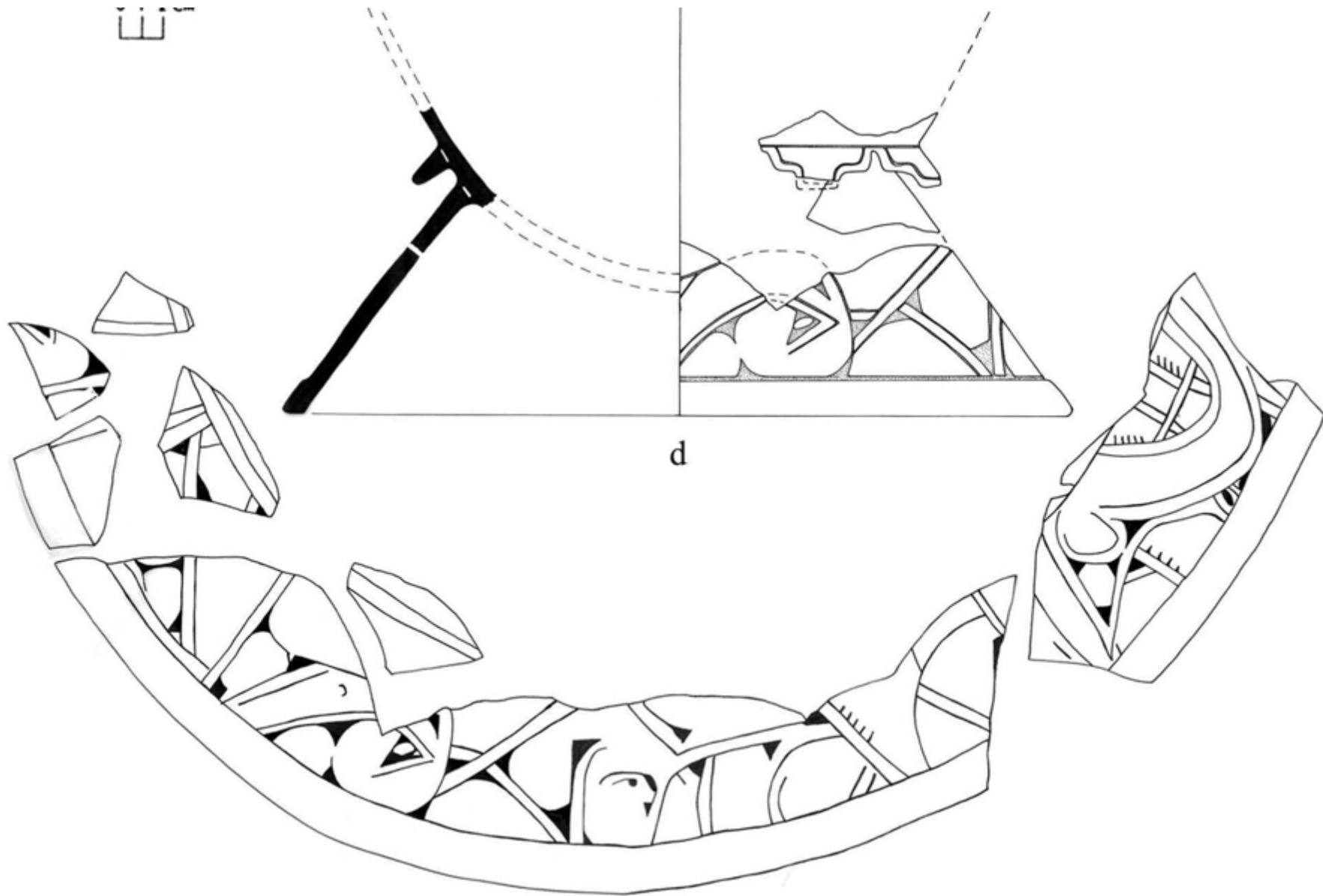
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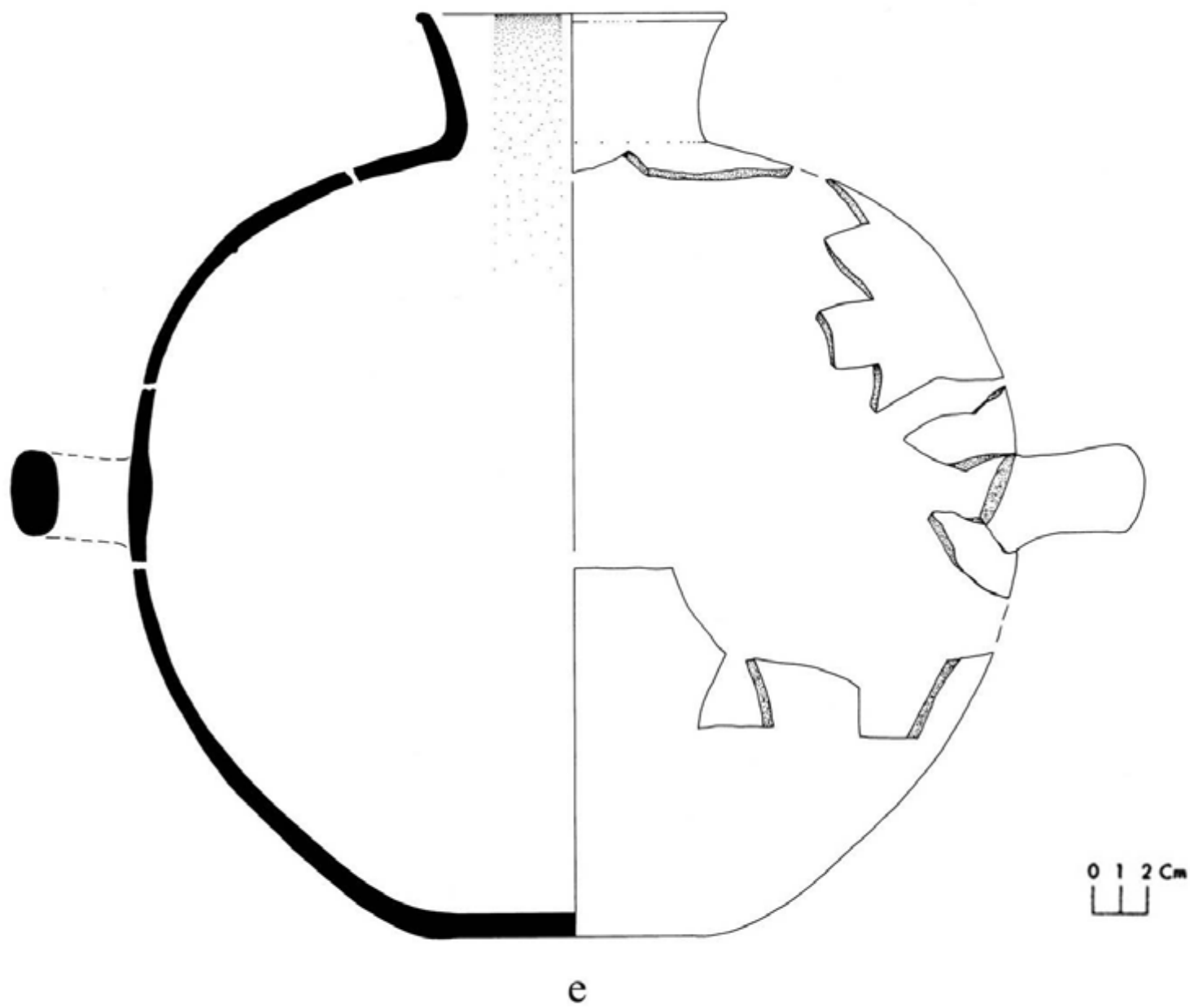


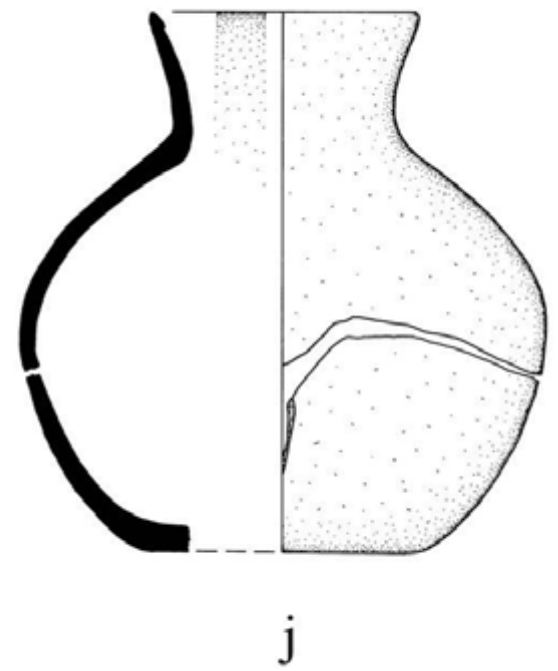
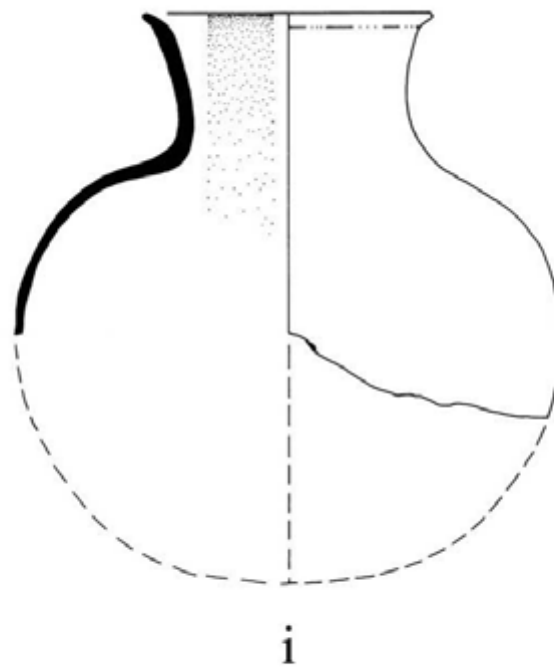
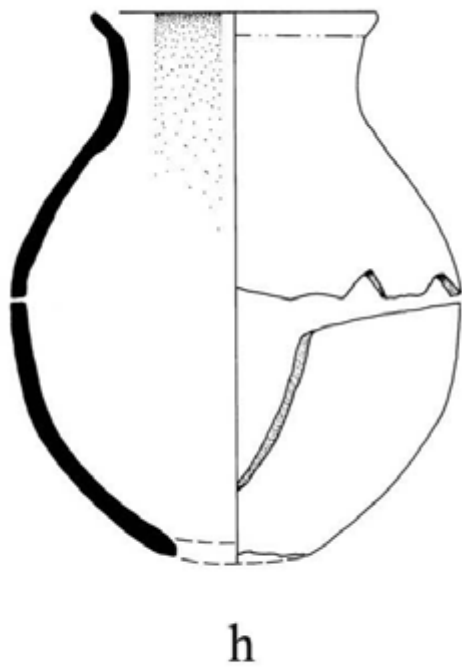
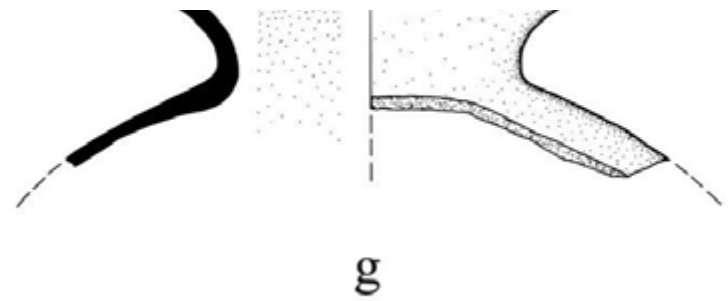
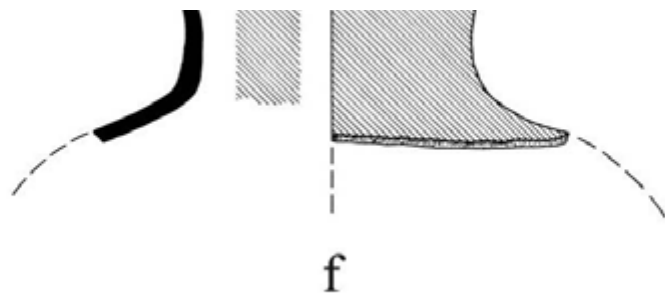
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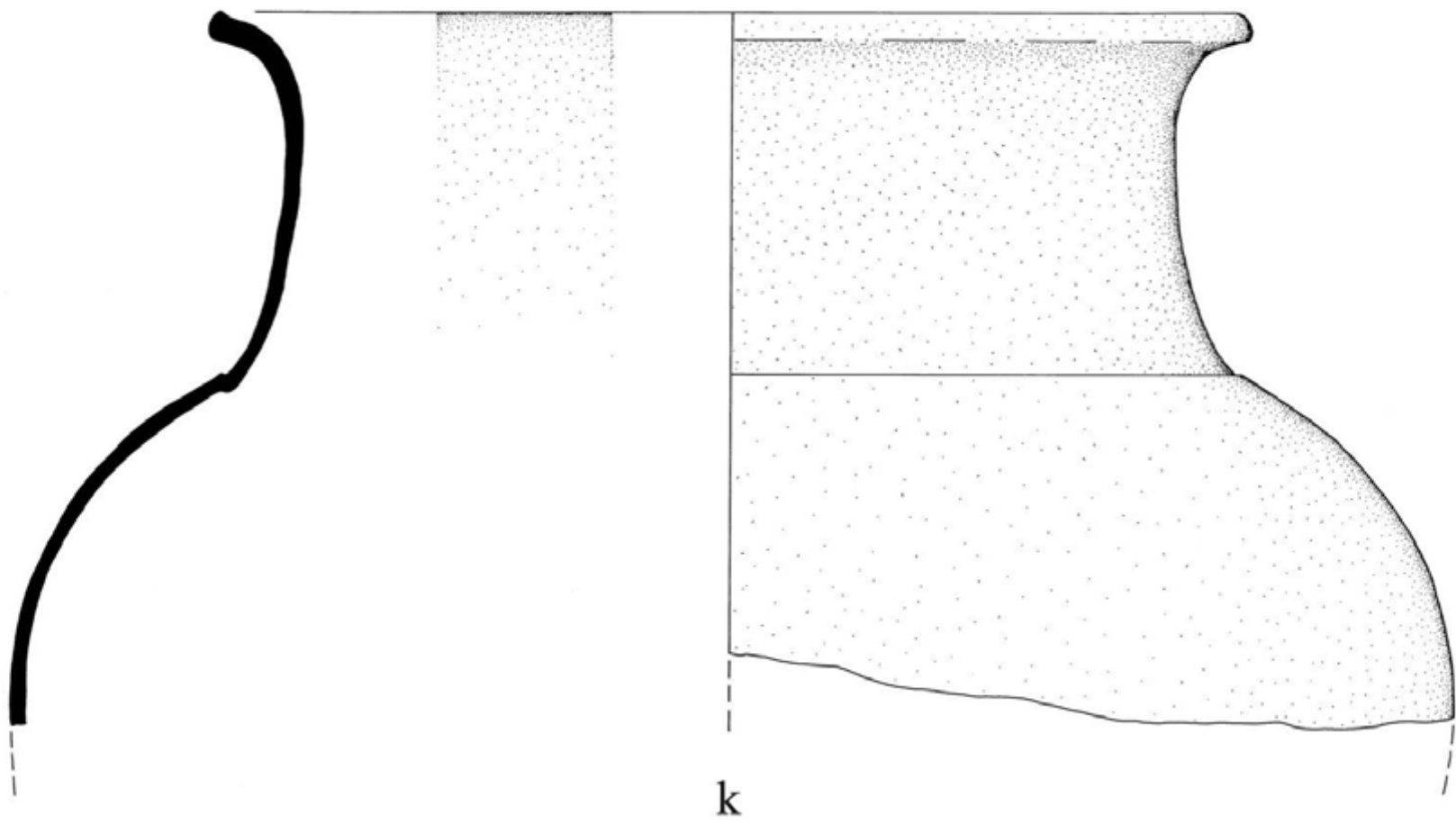


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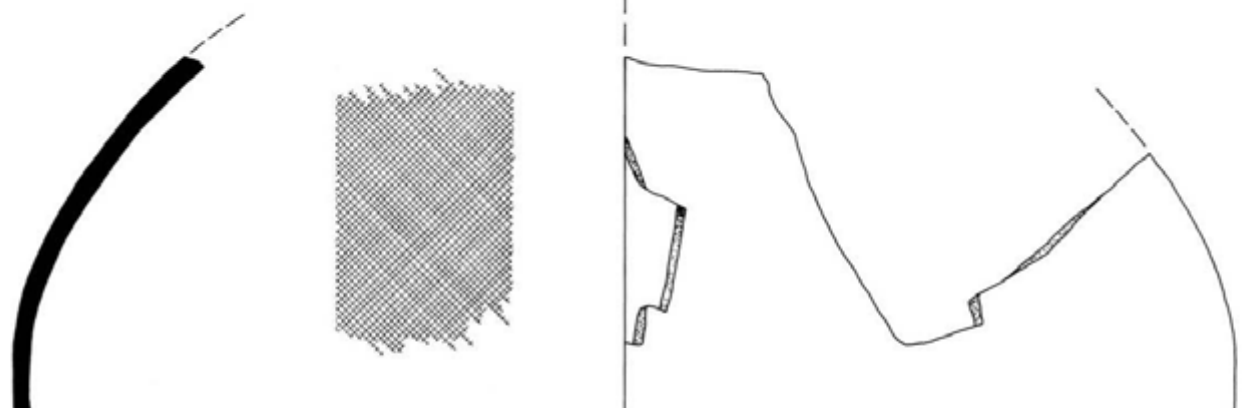




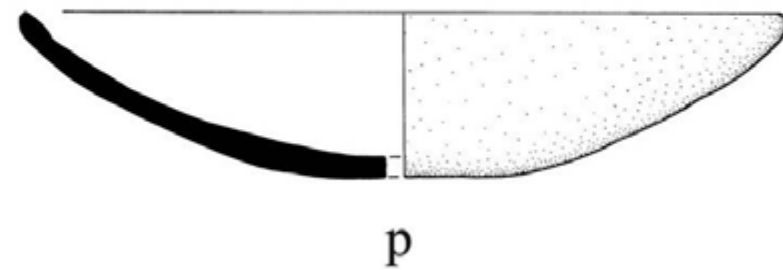
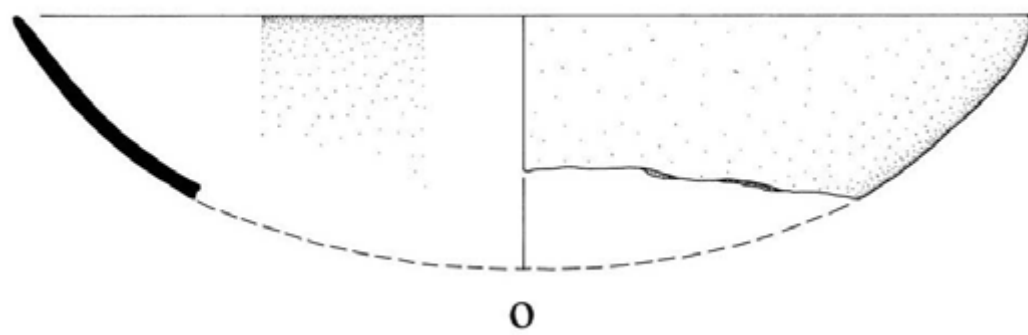
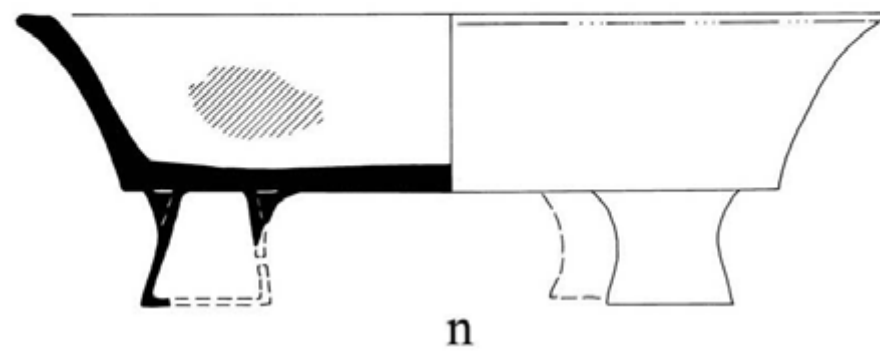
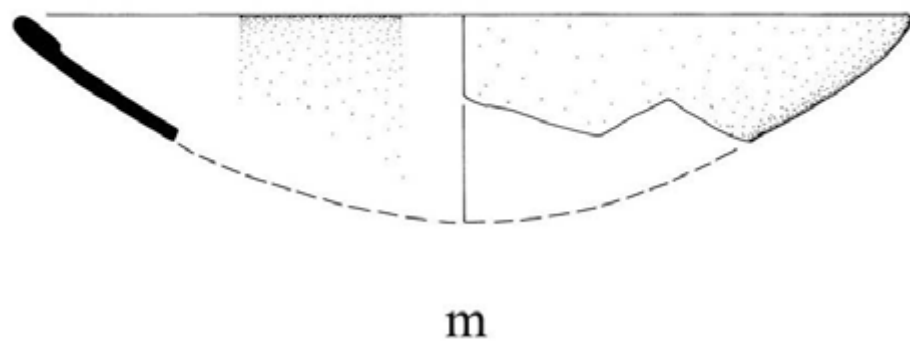
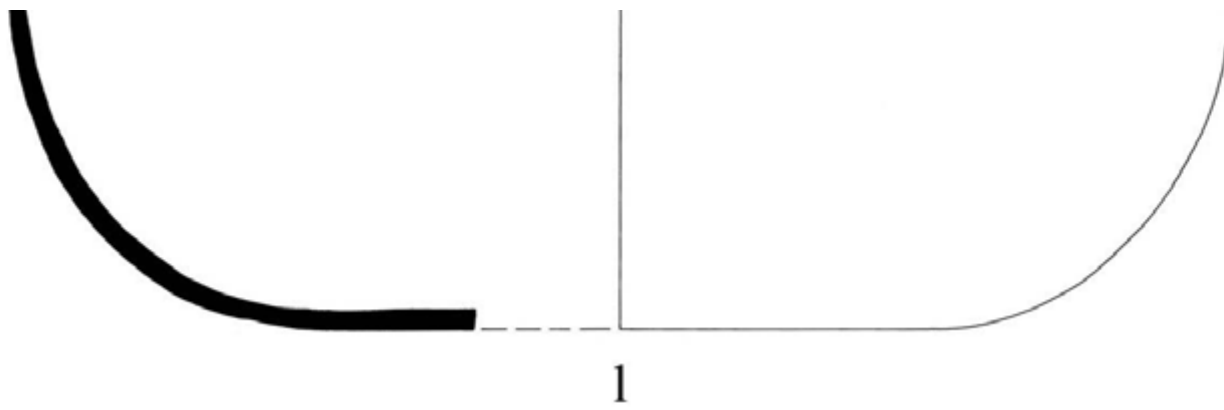


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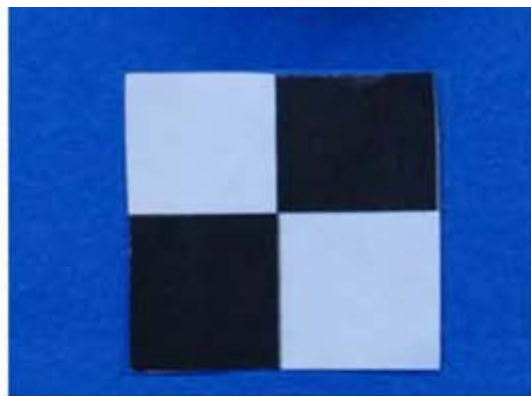
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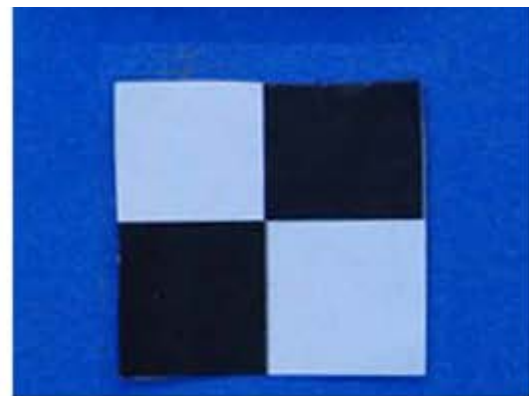




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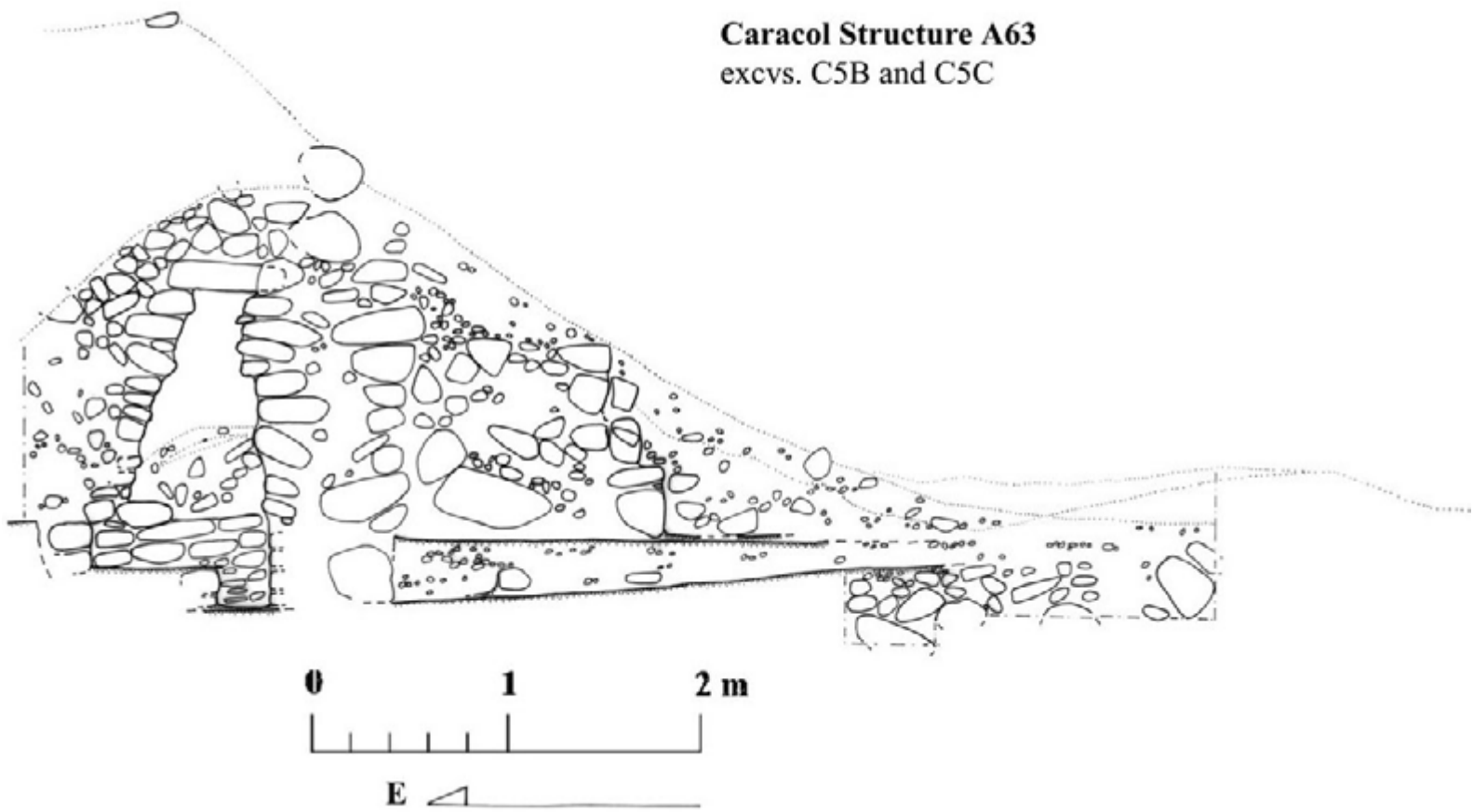


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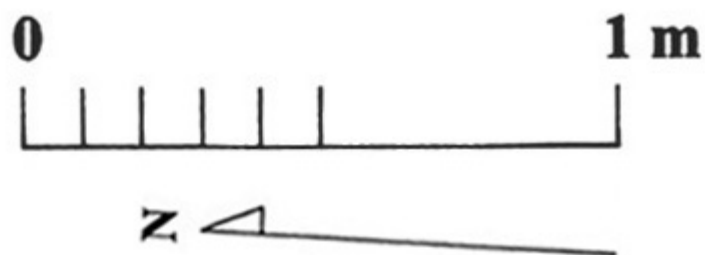
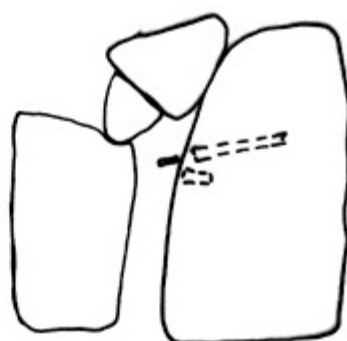


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**Caracol Structure A63**  
excvs. C5B and C5C

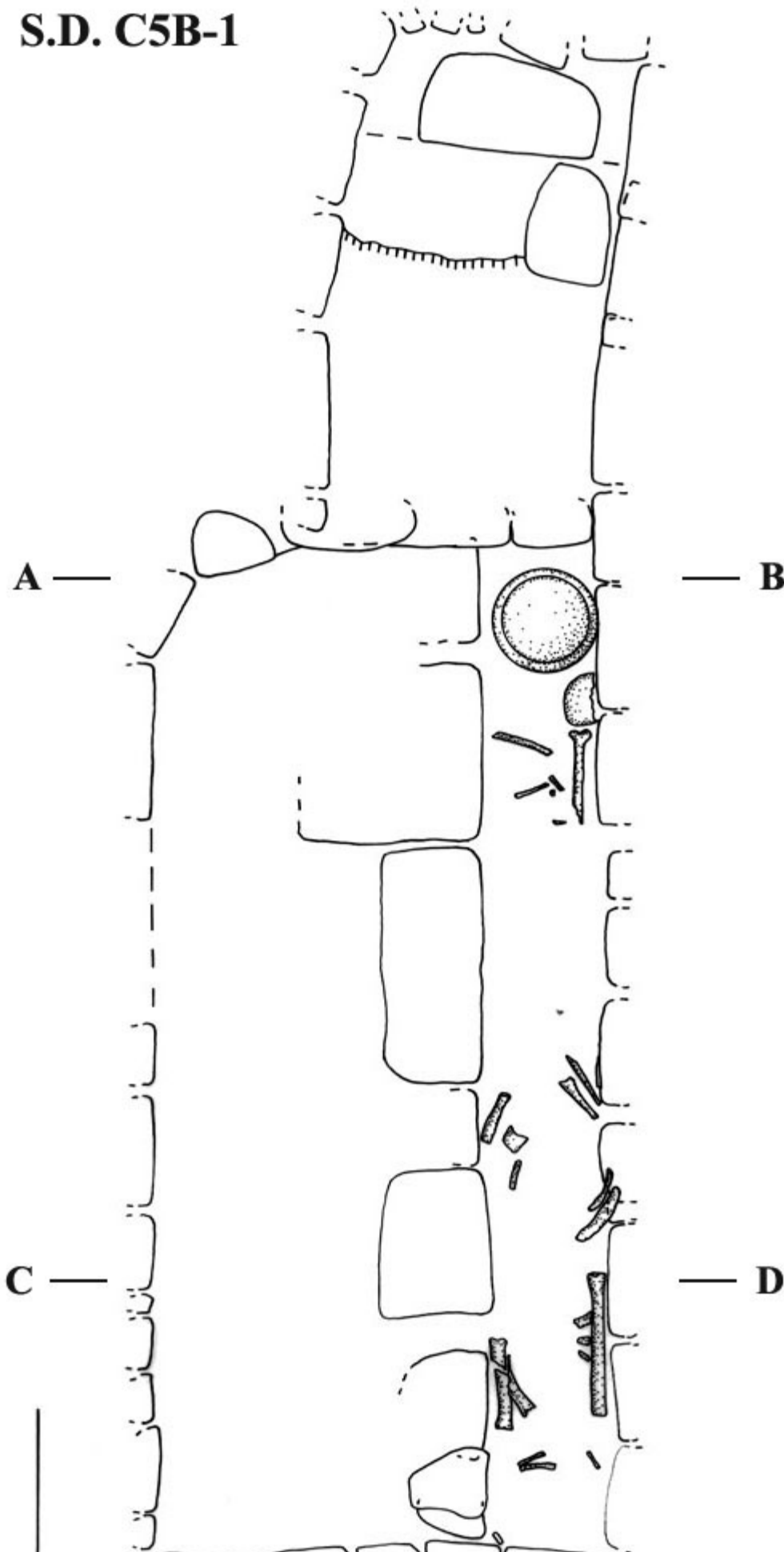


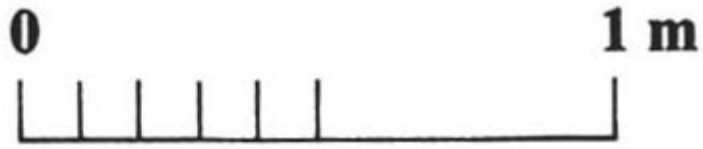
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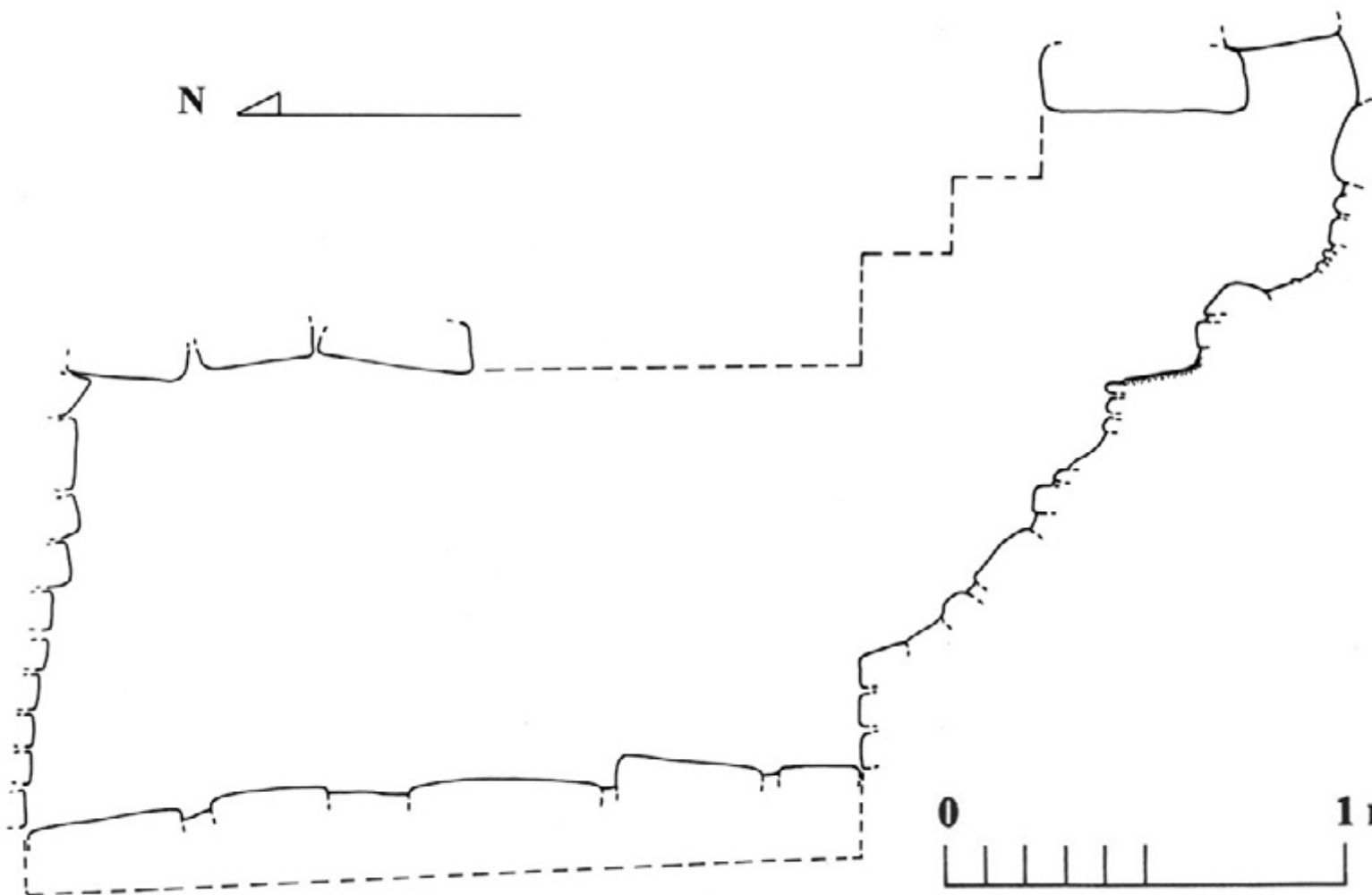


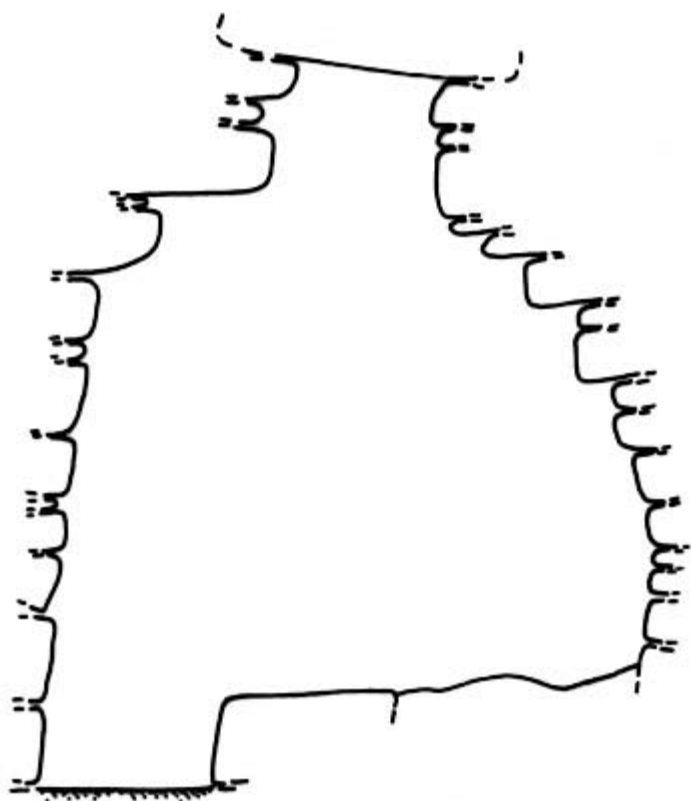
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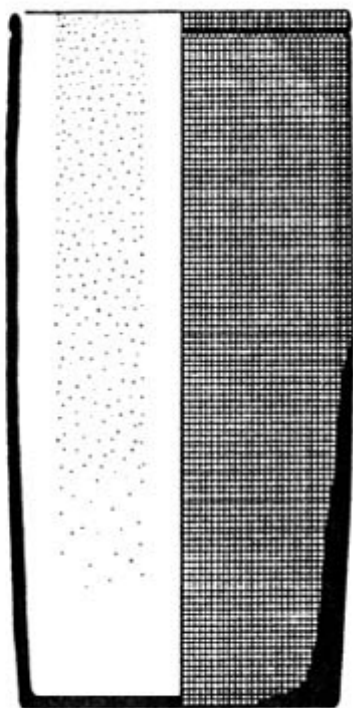
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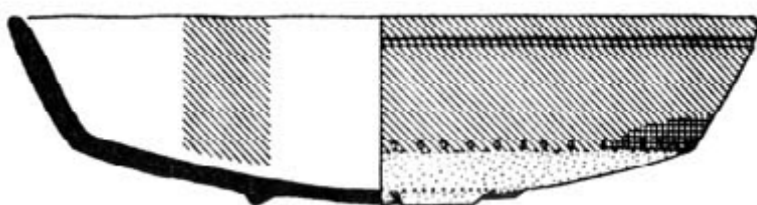


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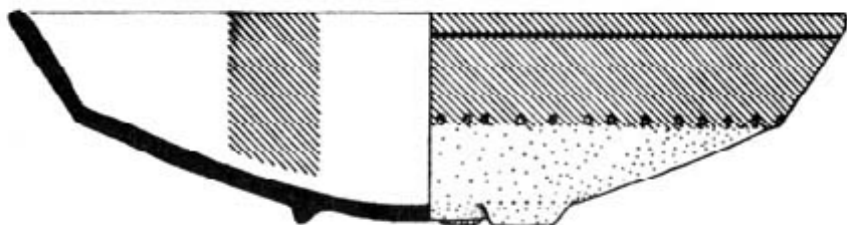




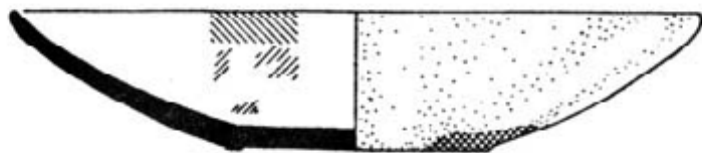
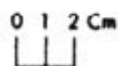
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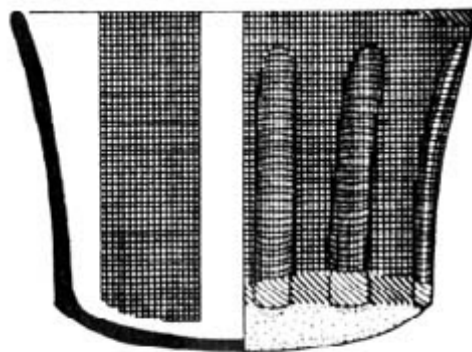
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Str. A69  
excv. C5D

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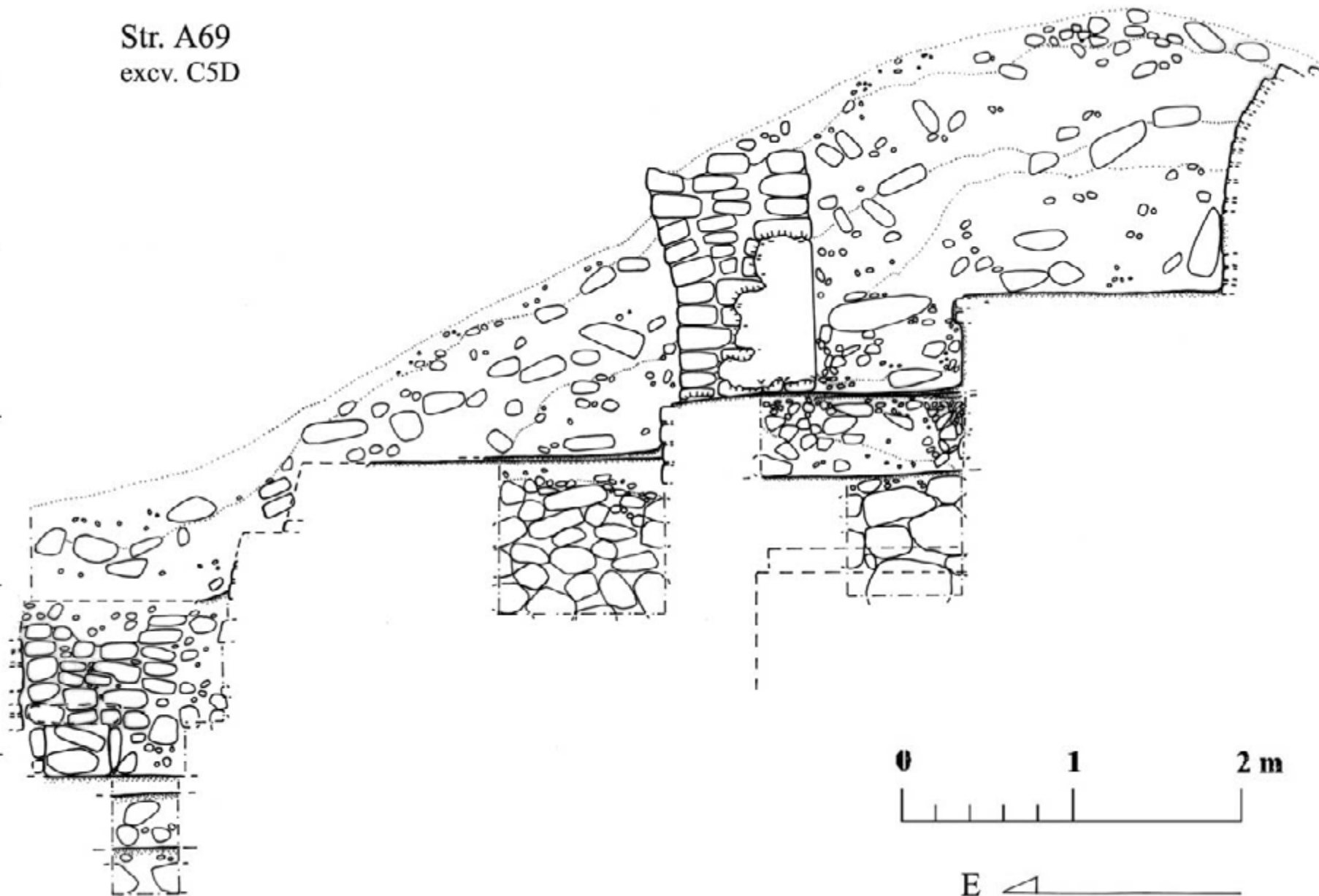
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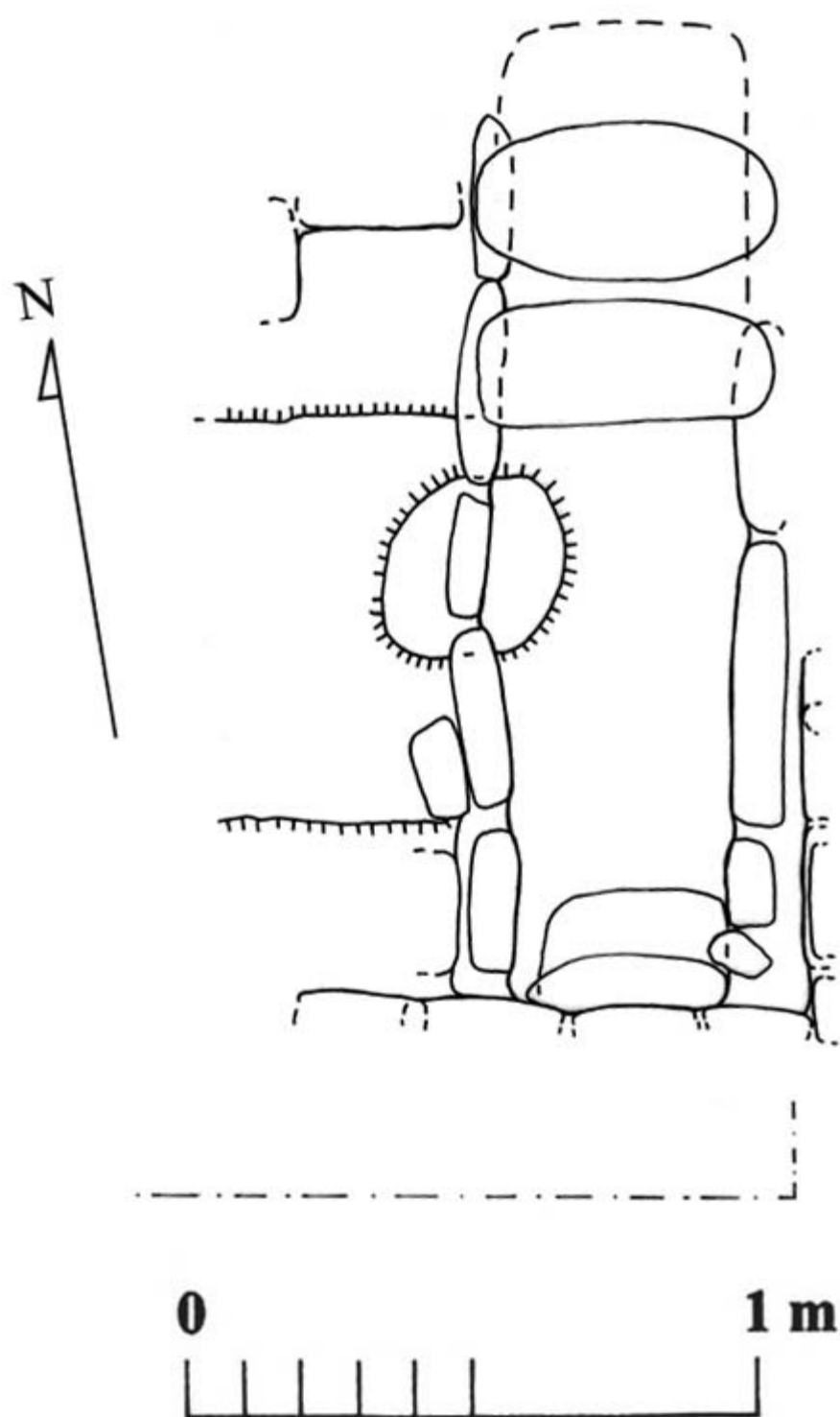
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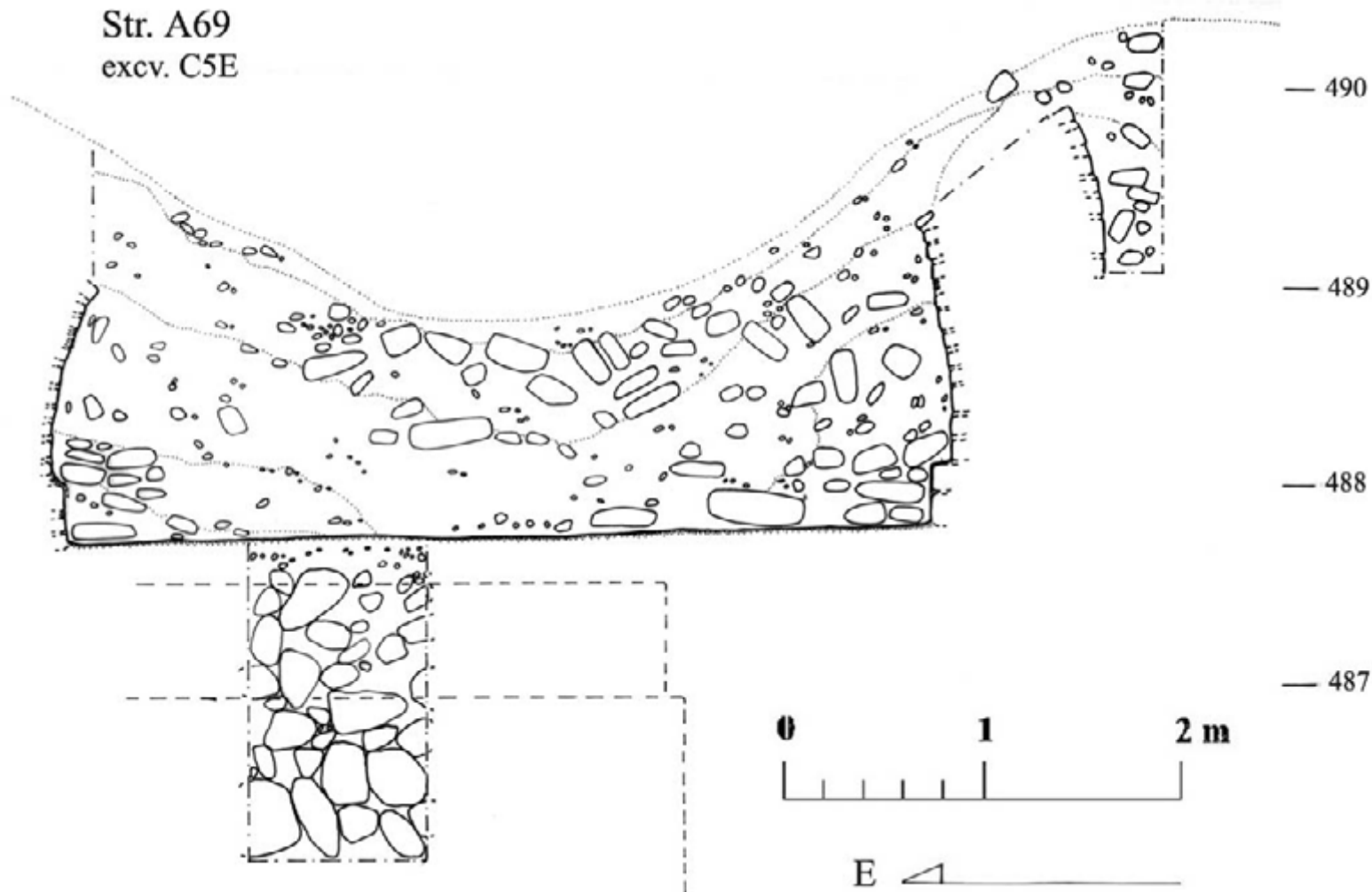
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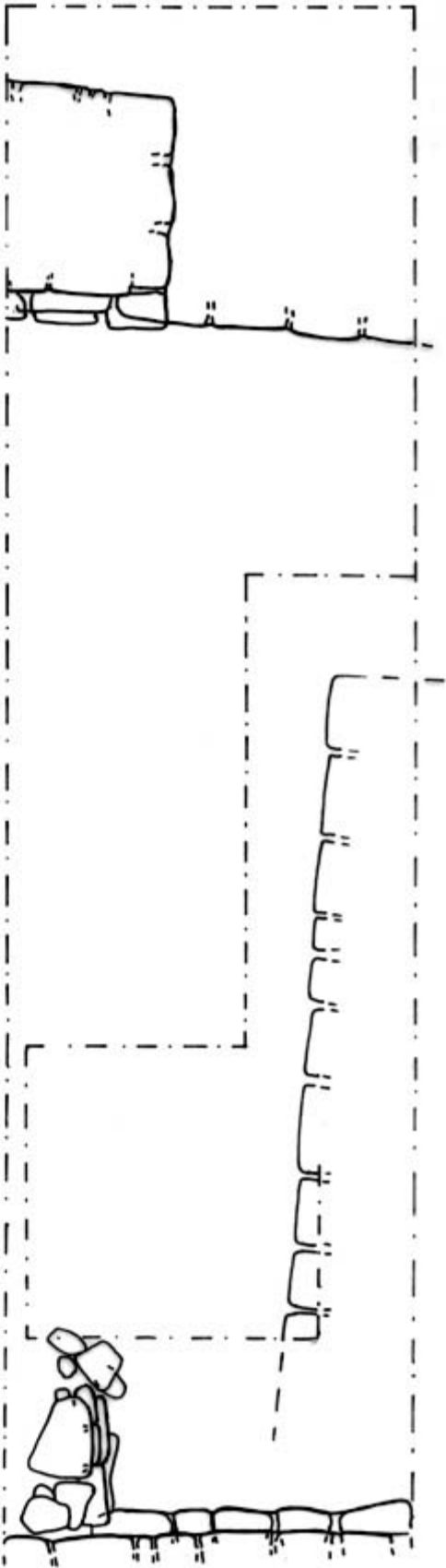
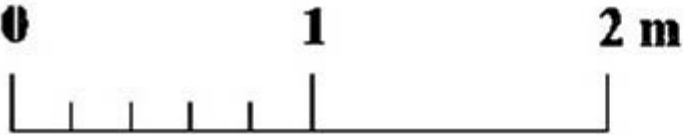
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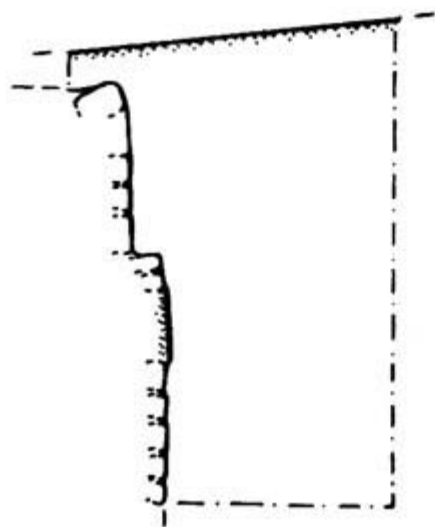
Str. A69  
excv. C5E



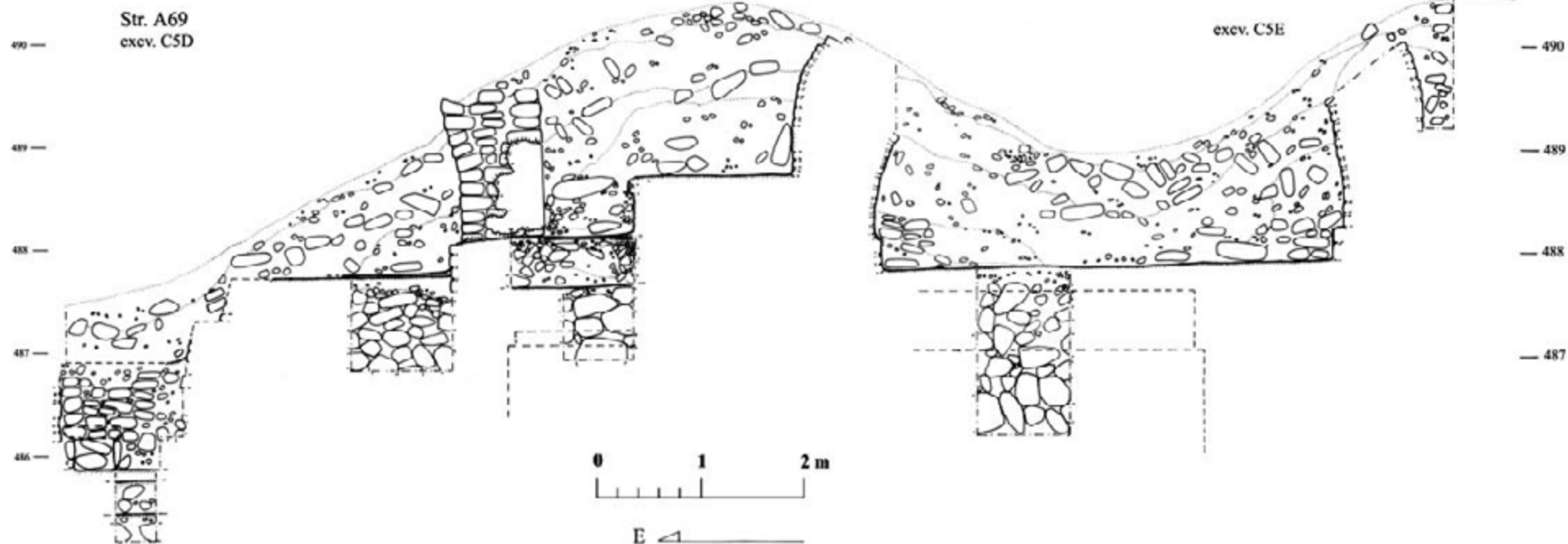
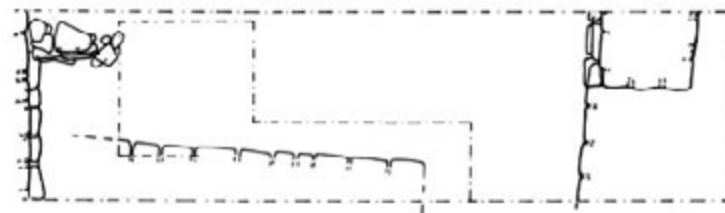
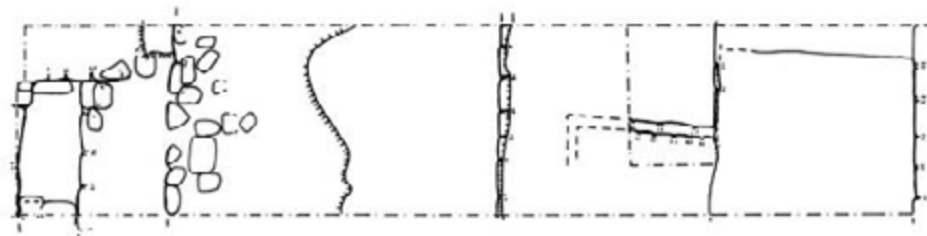
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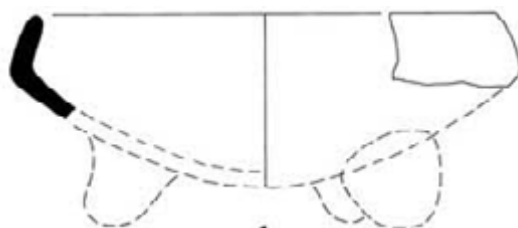




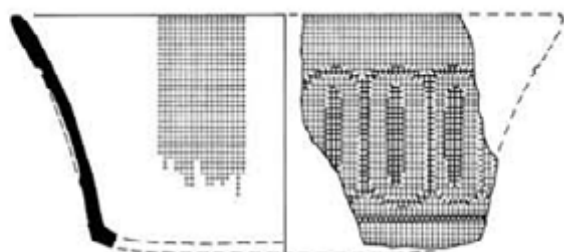




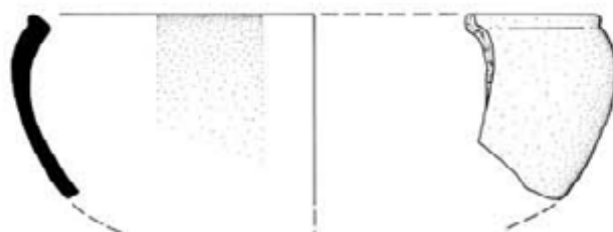
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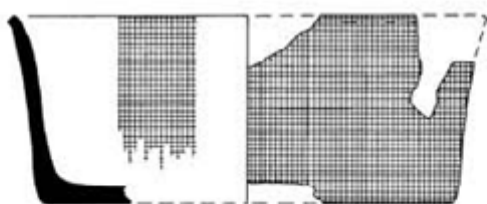
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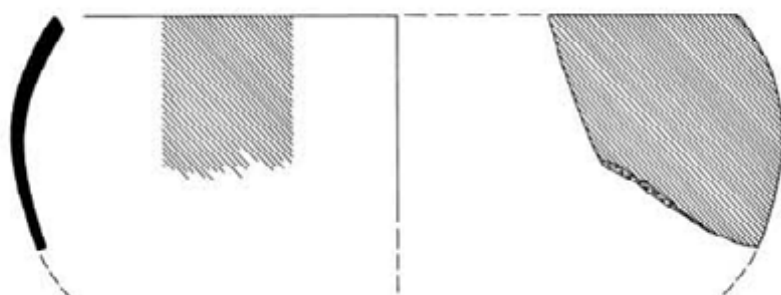
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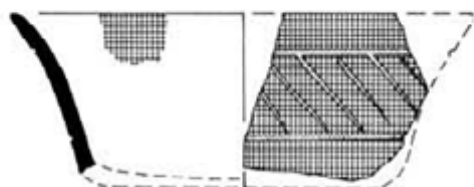
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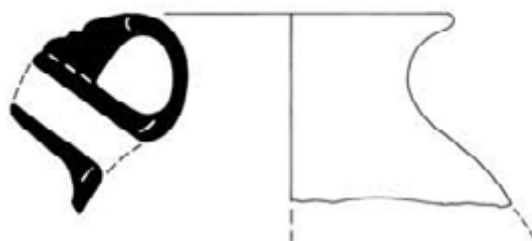
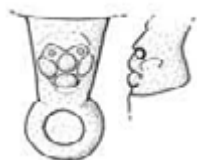
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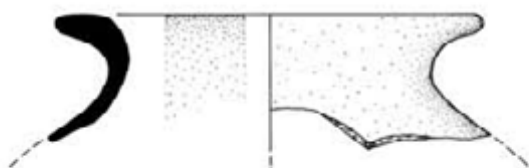
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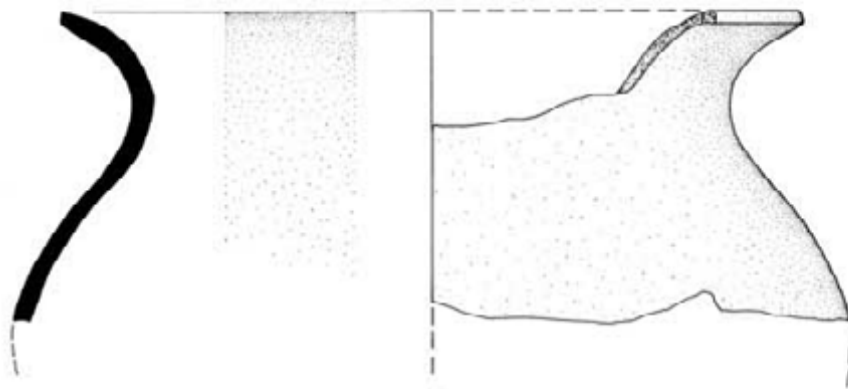
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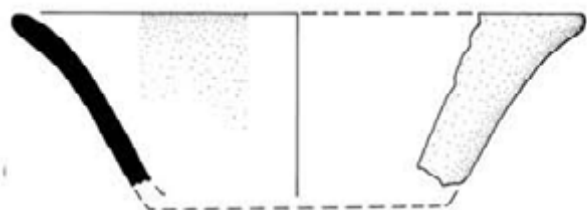
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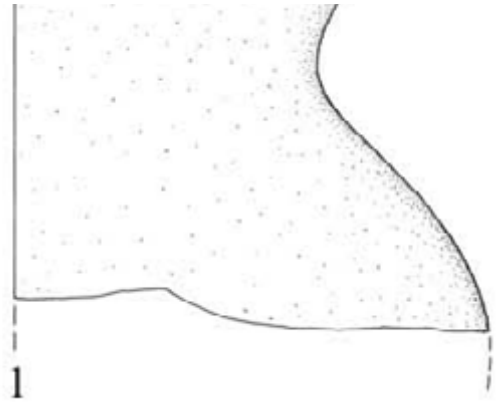
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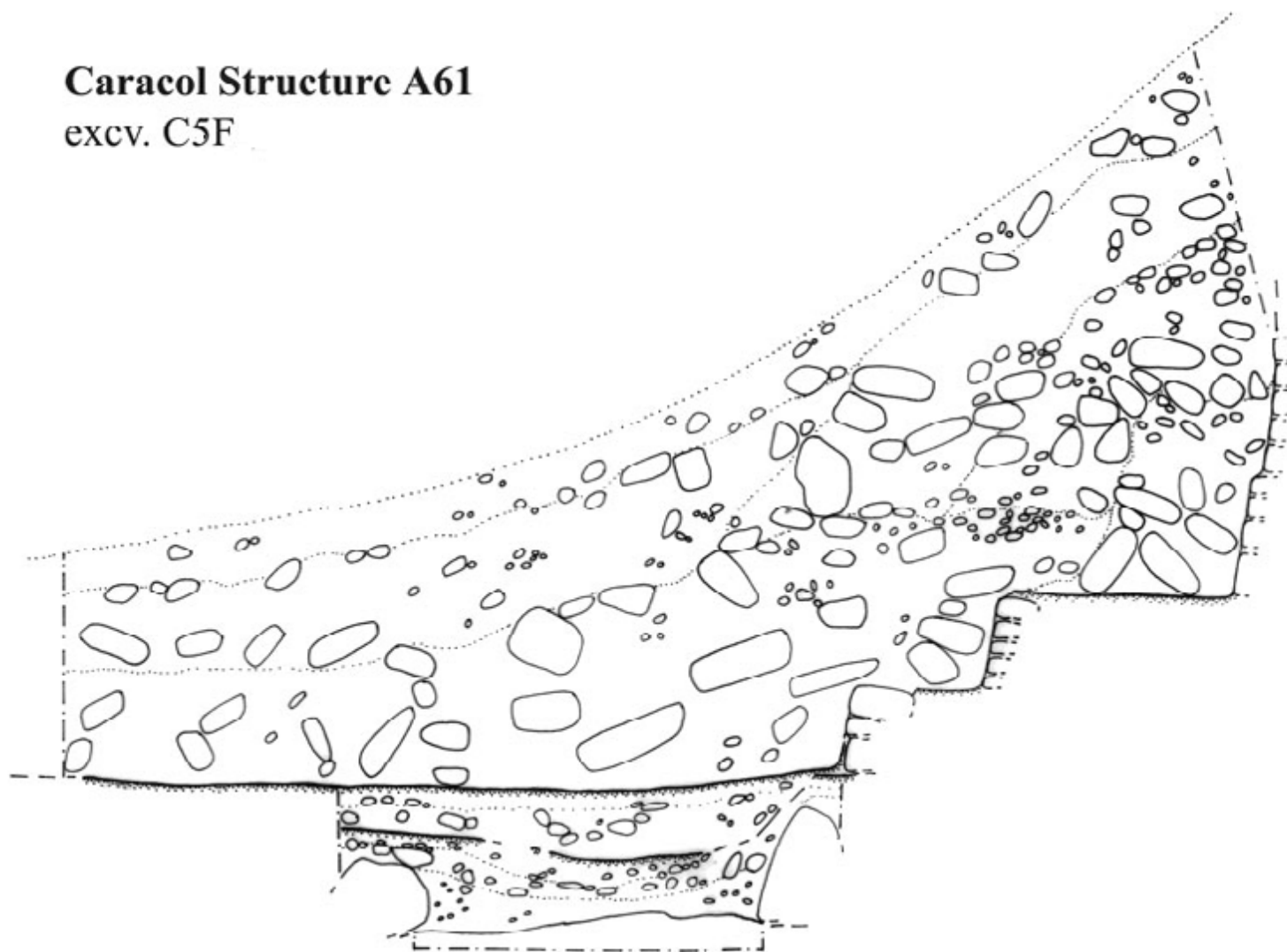


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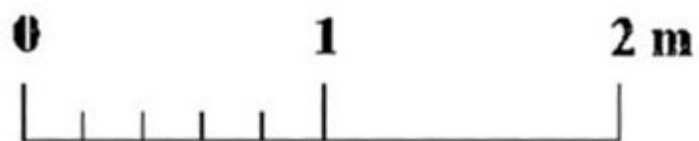
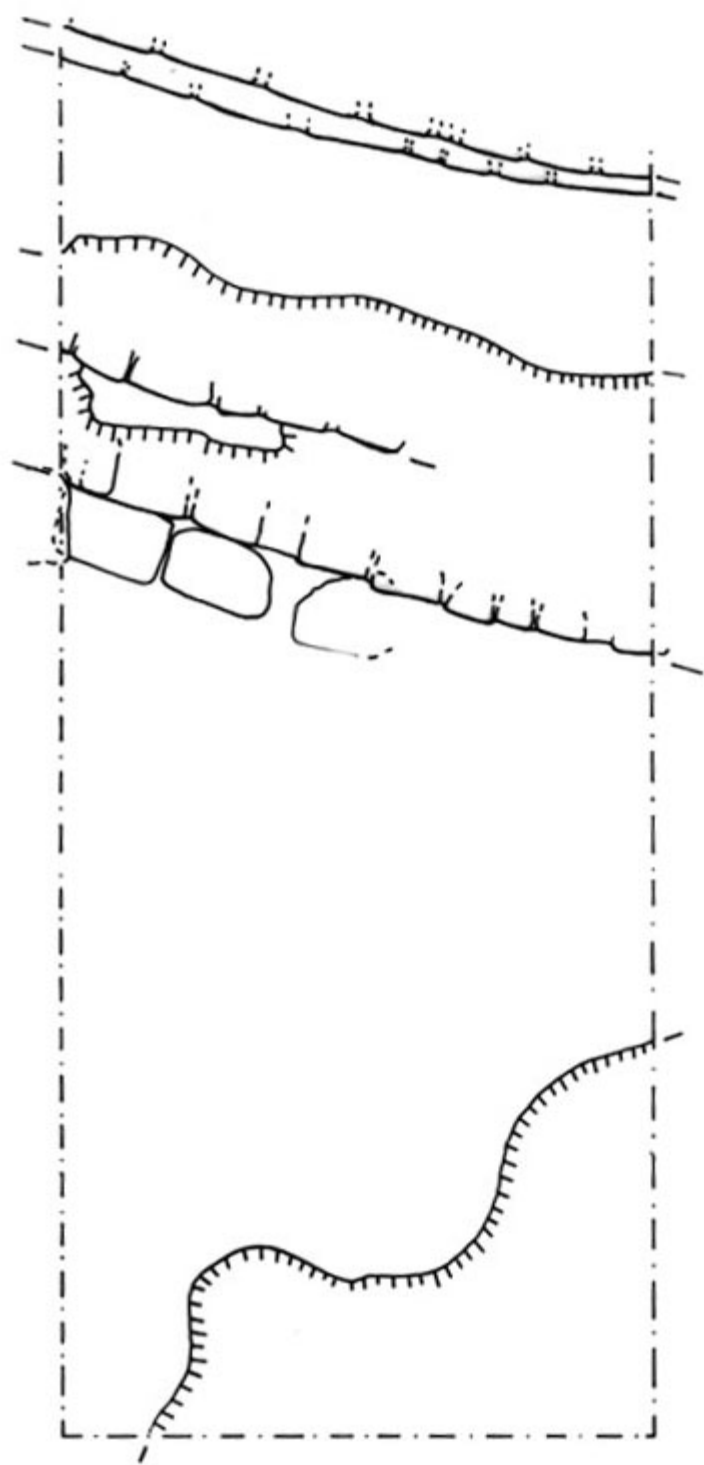
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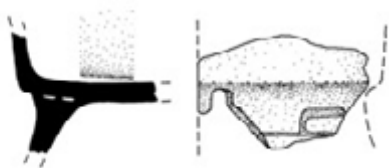
excv. C5F



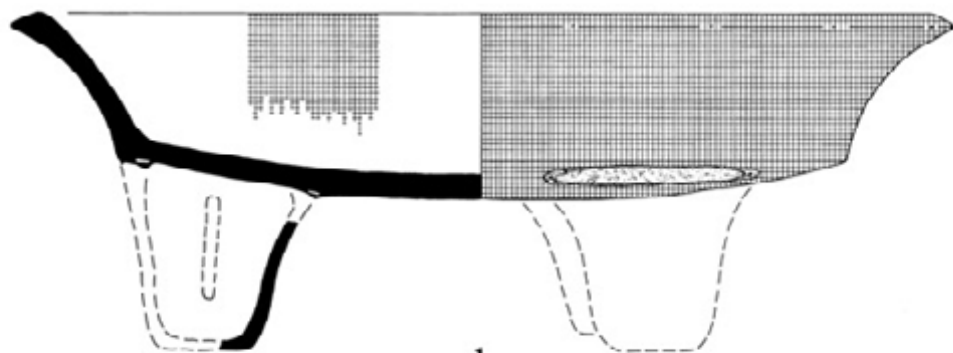
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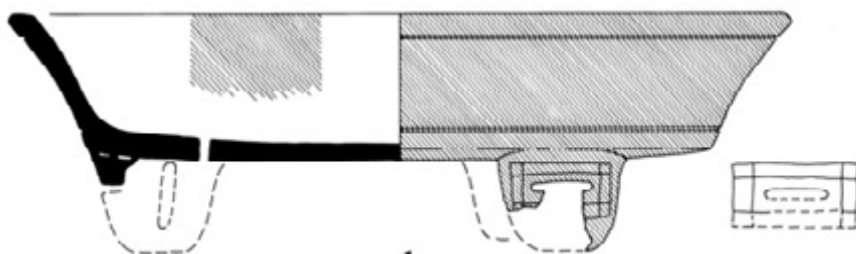
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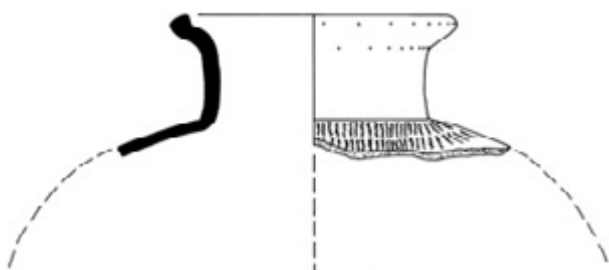
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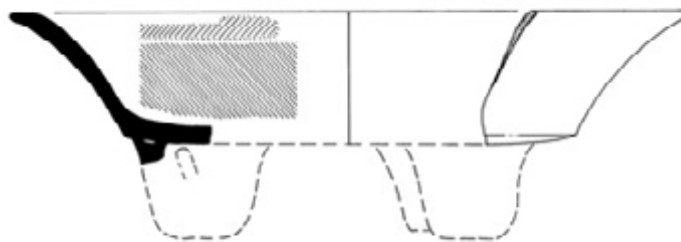
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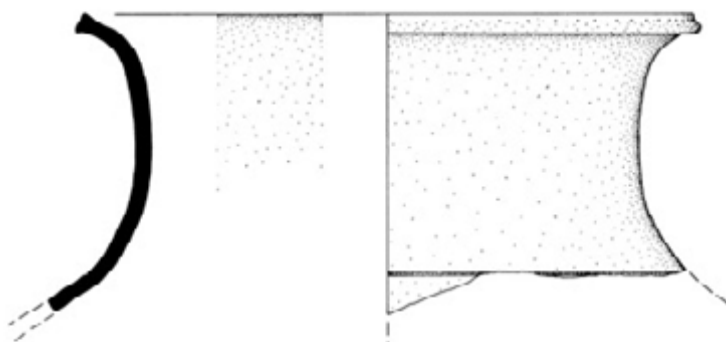
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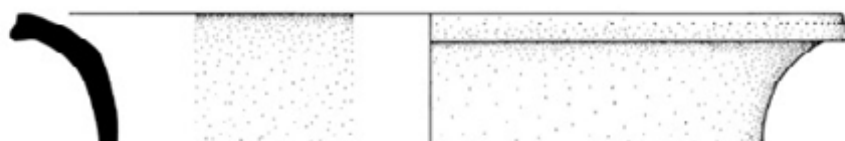


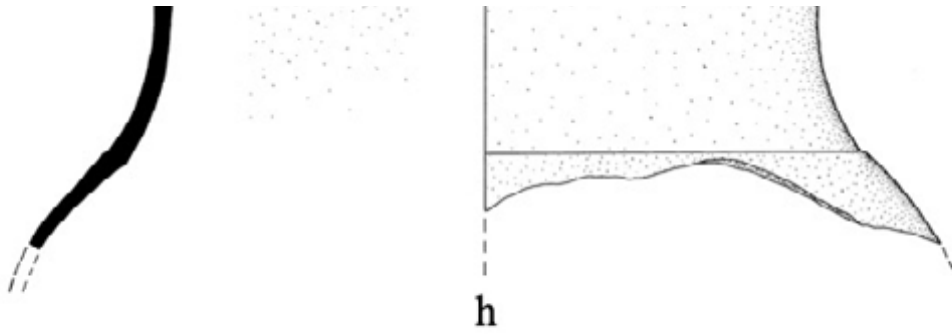
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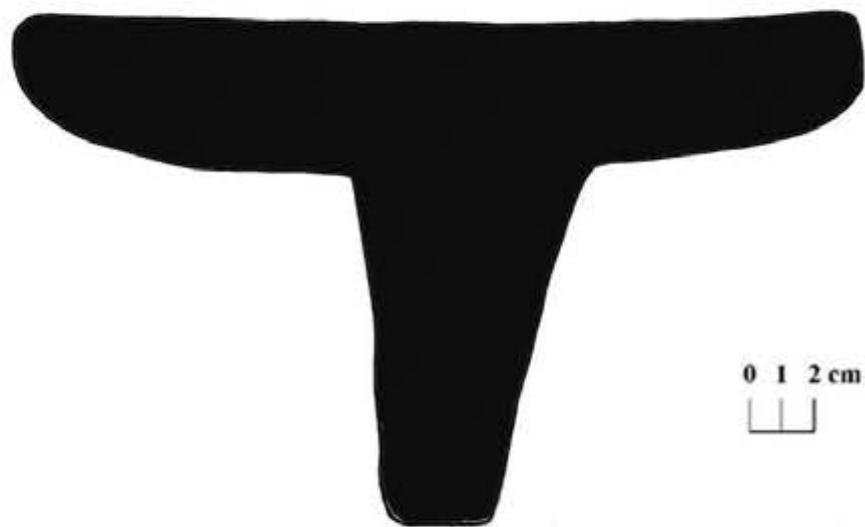






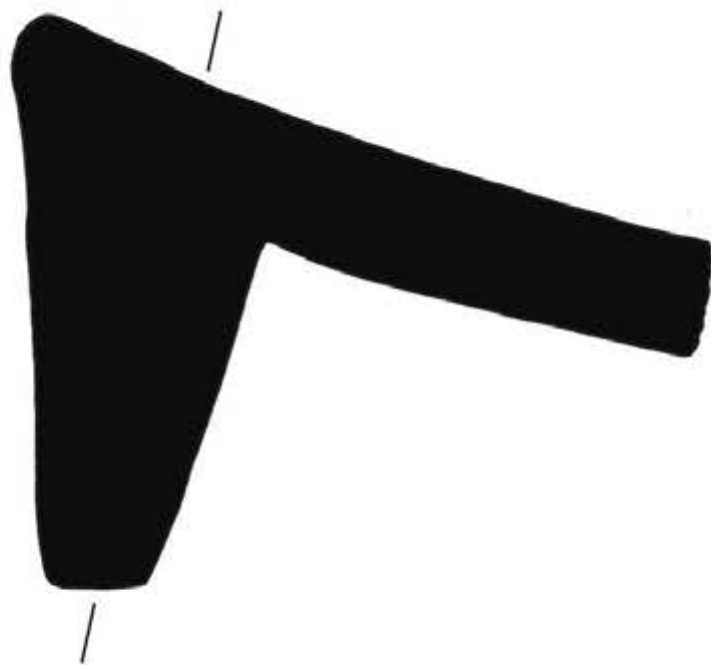
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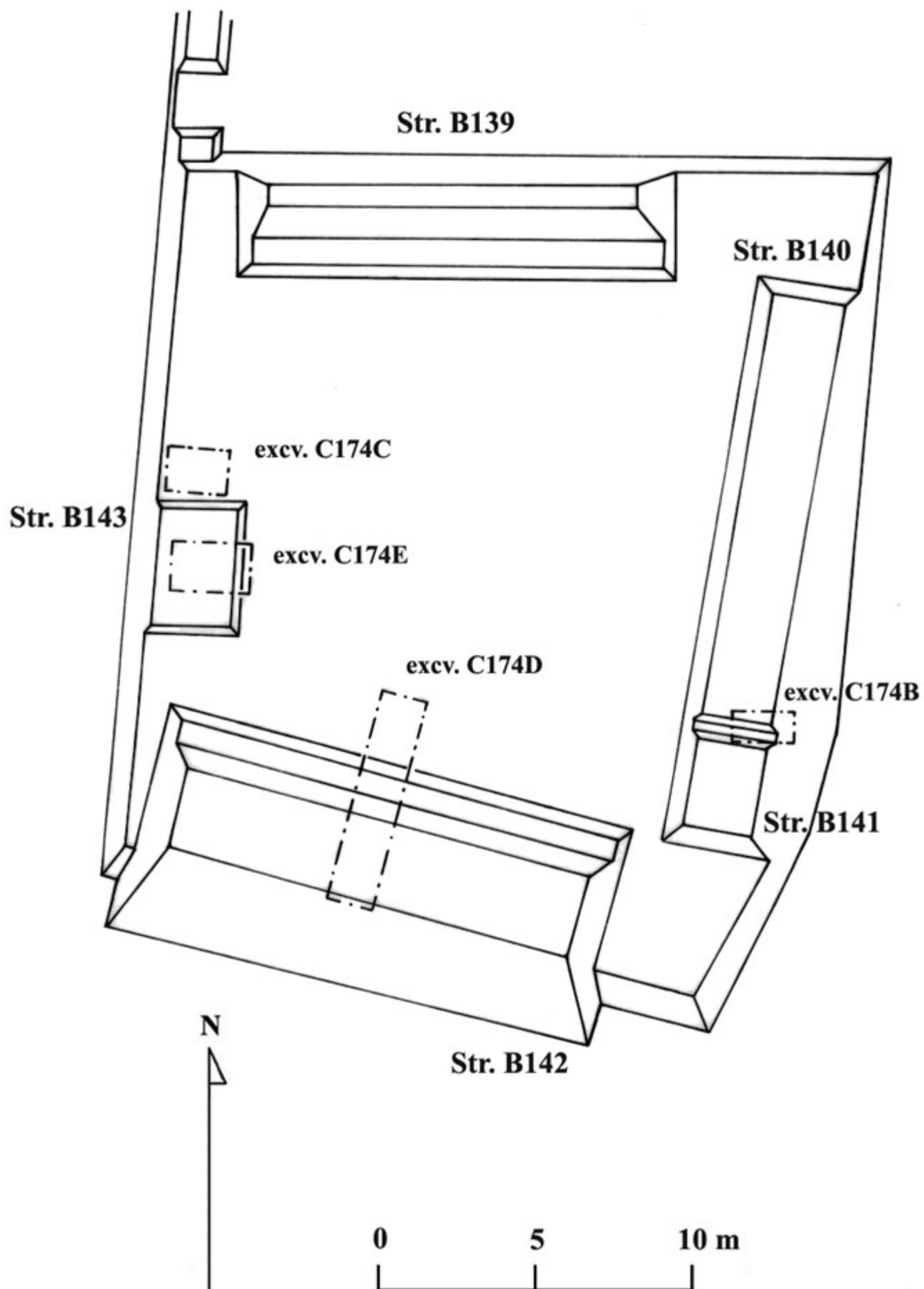




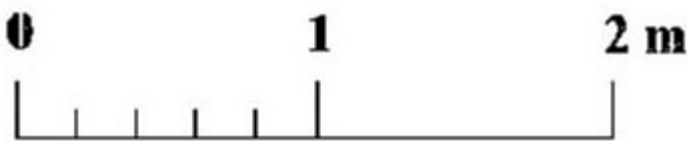
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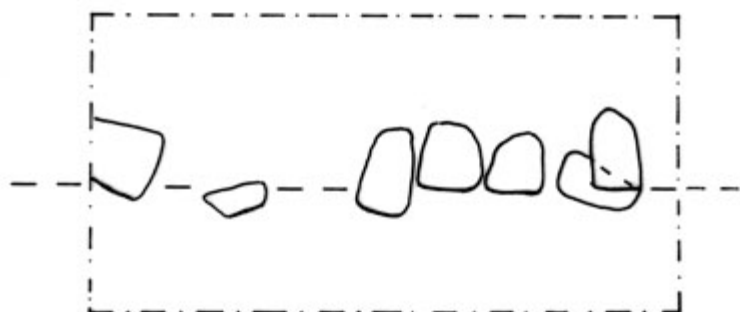




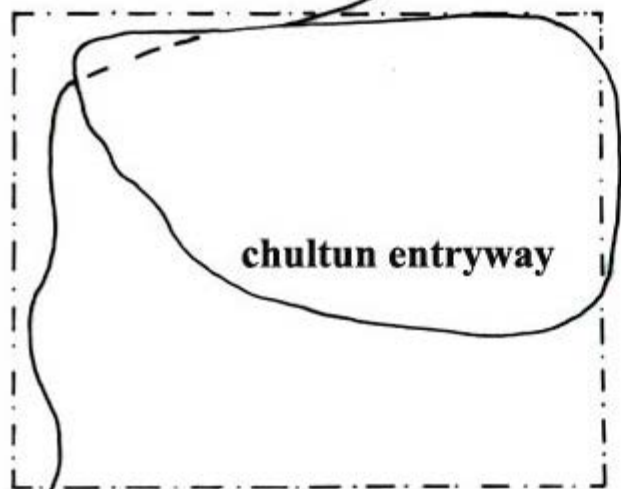
**excv. C174B**



**excav. C174B**

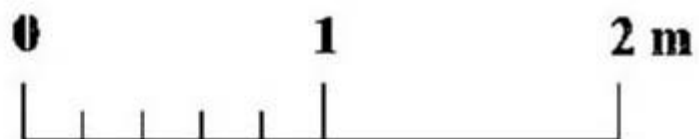


**excv. C174C**



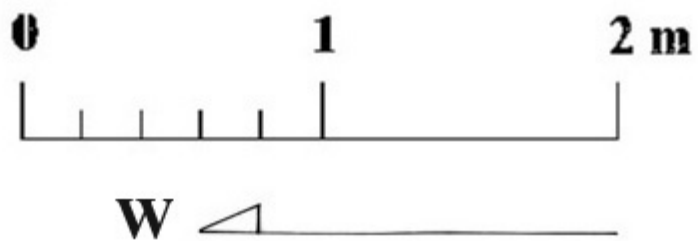
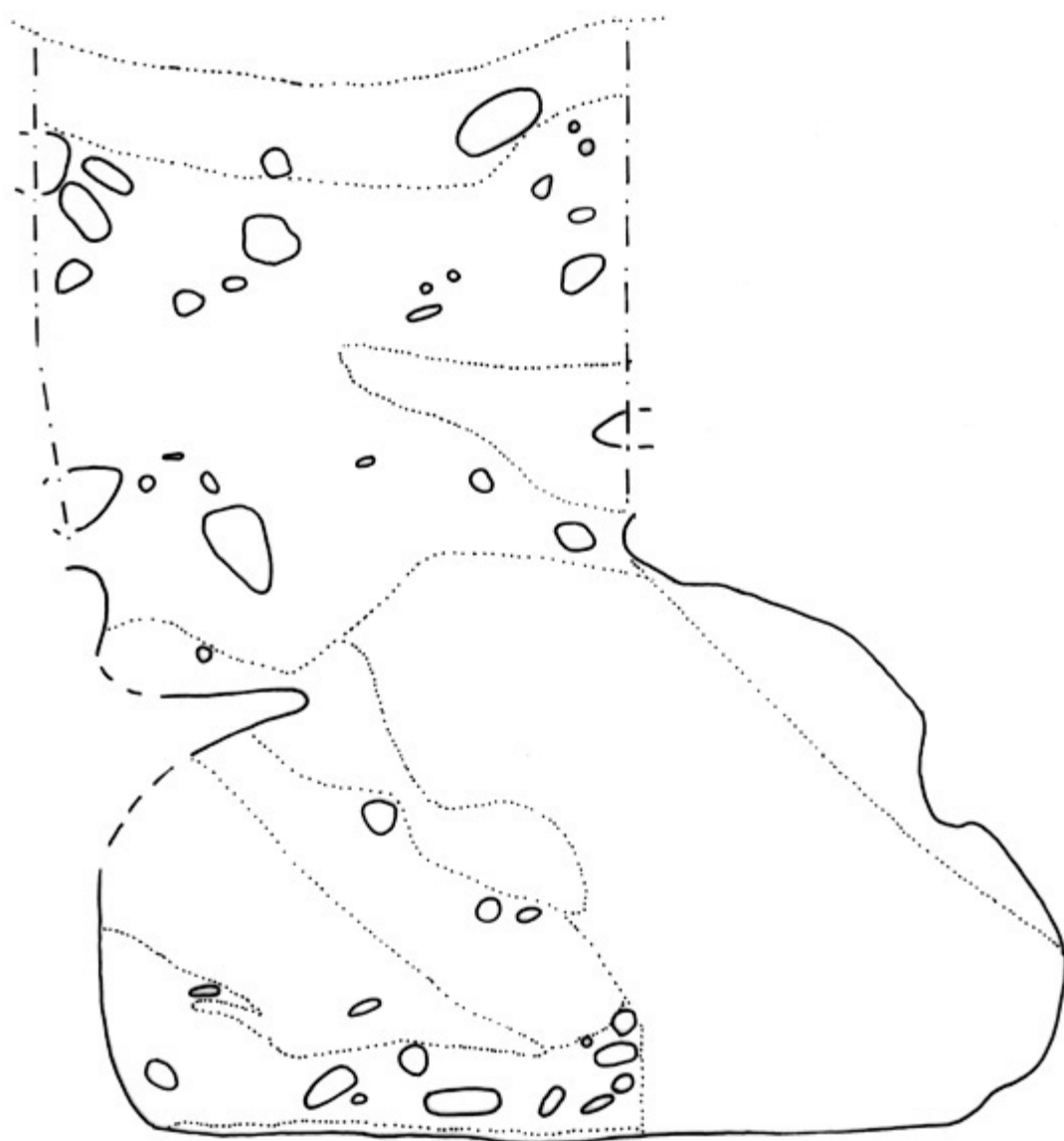
**chultun entryway**

**chultun maximum extent**

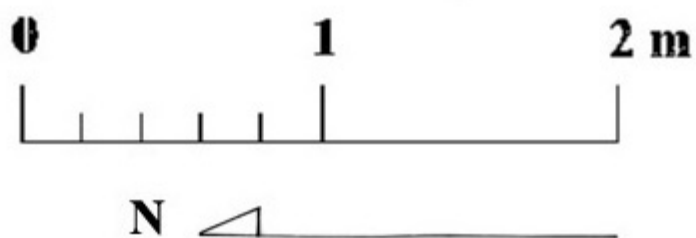
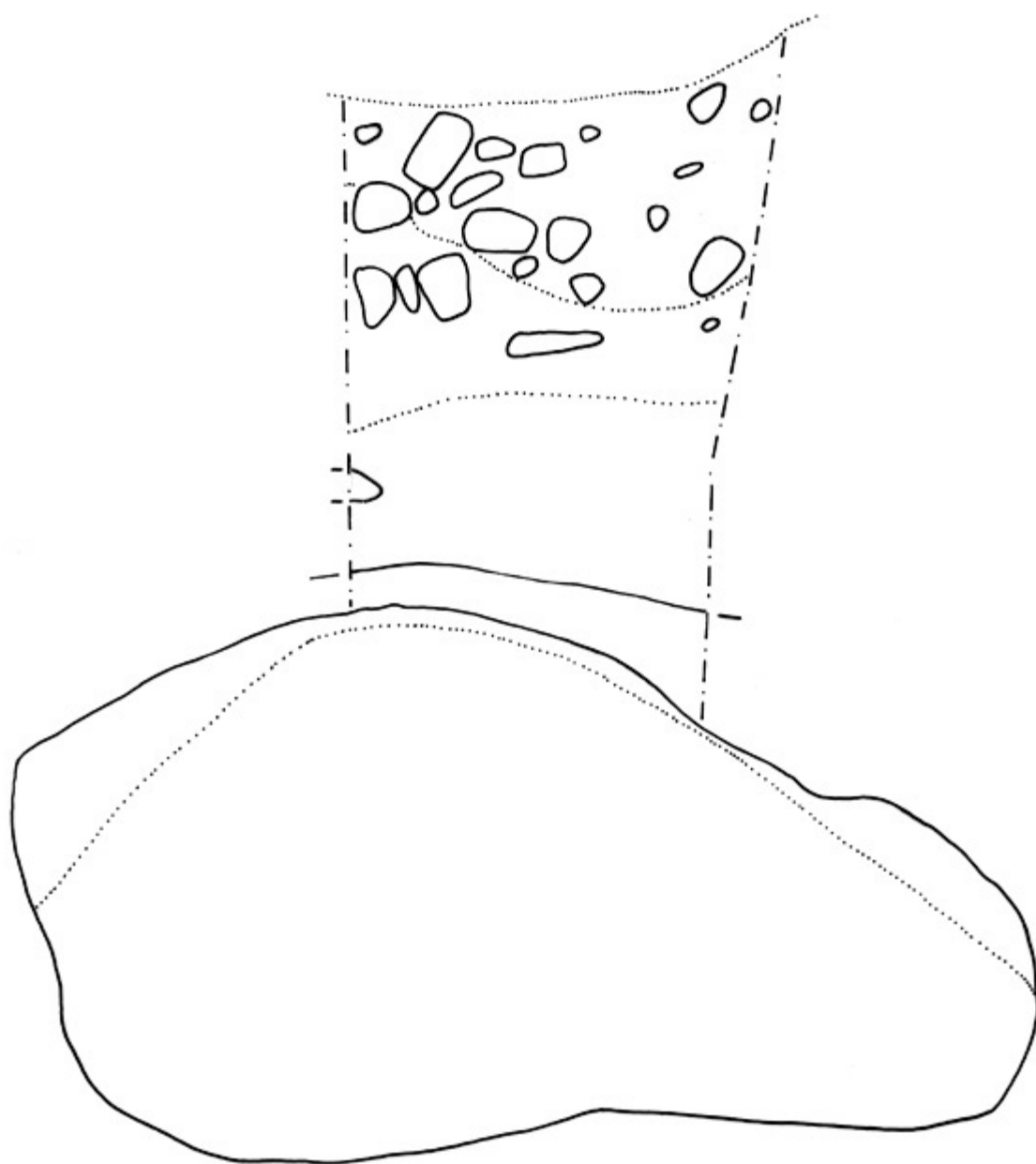




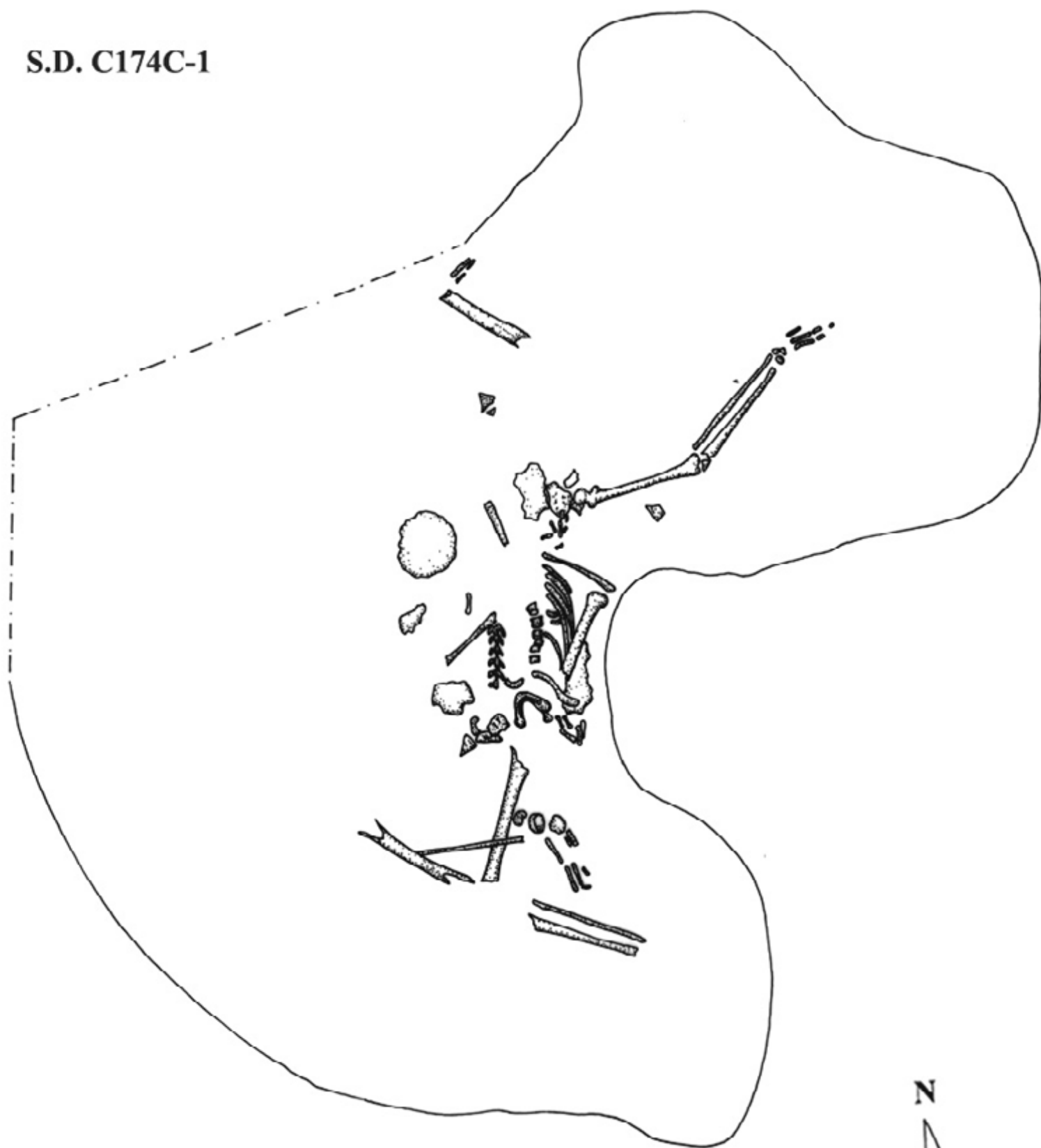
**excv. C174C**



excv. C174C



S.D. C174C-1



0

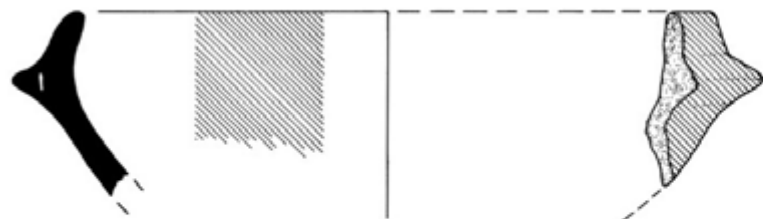


1 m

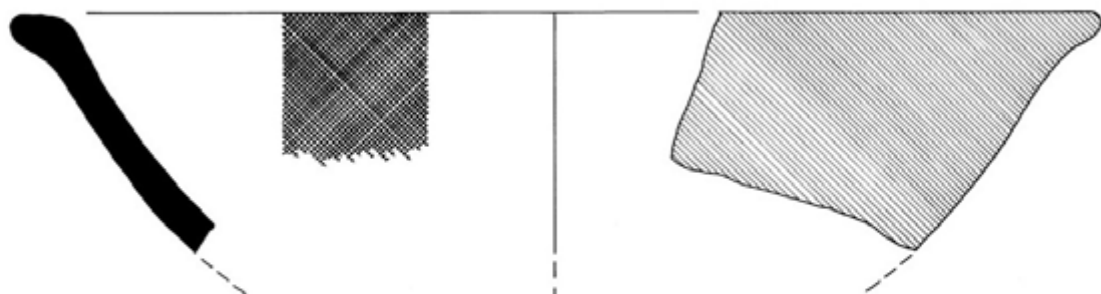




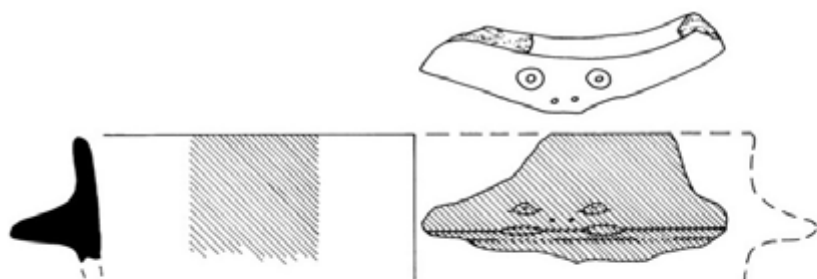
1



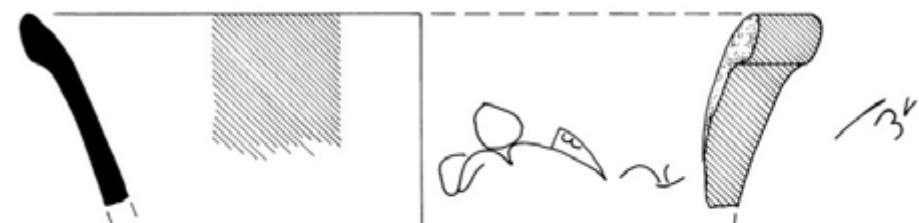
a



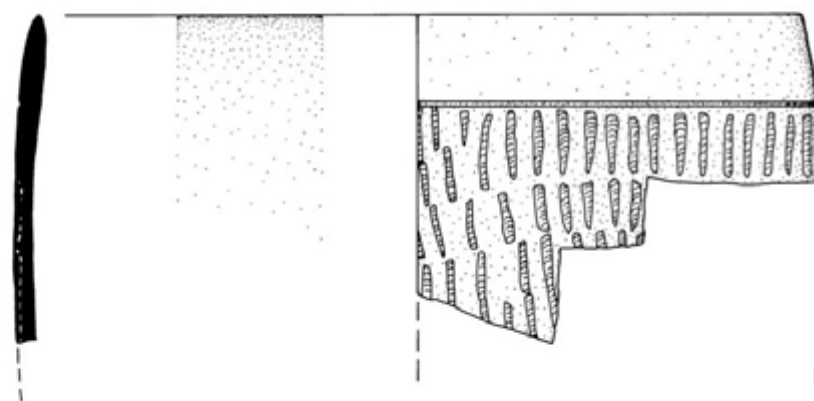
b



c



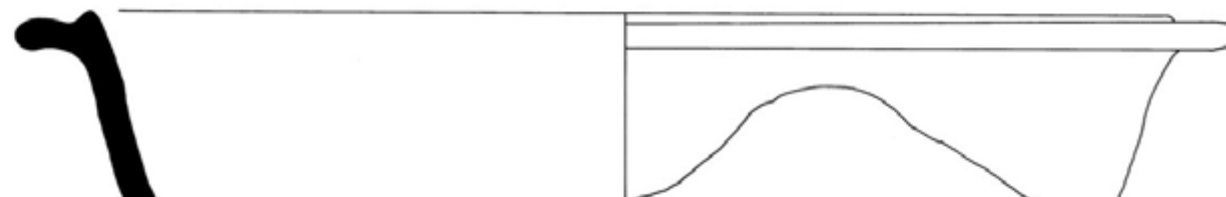
d



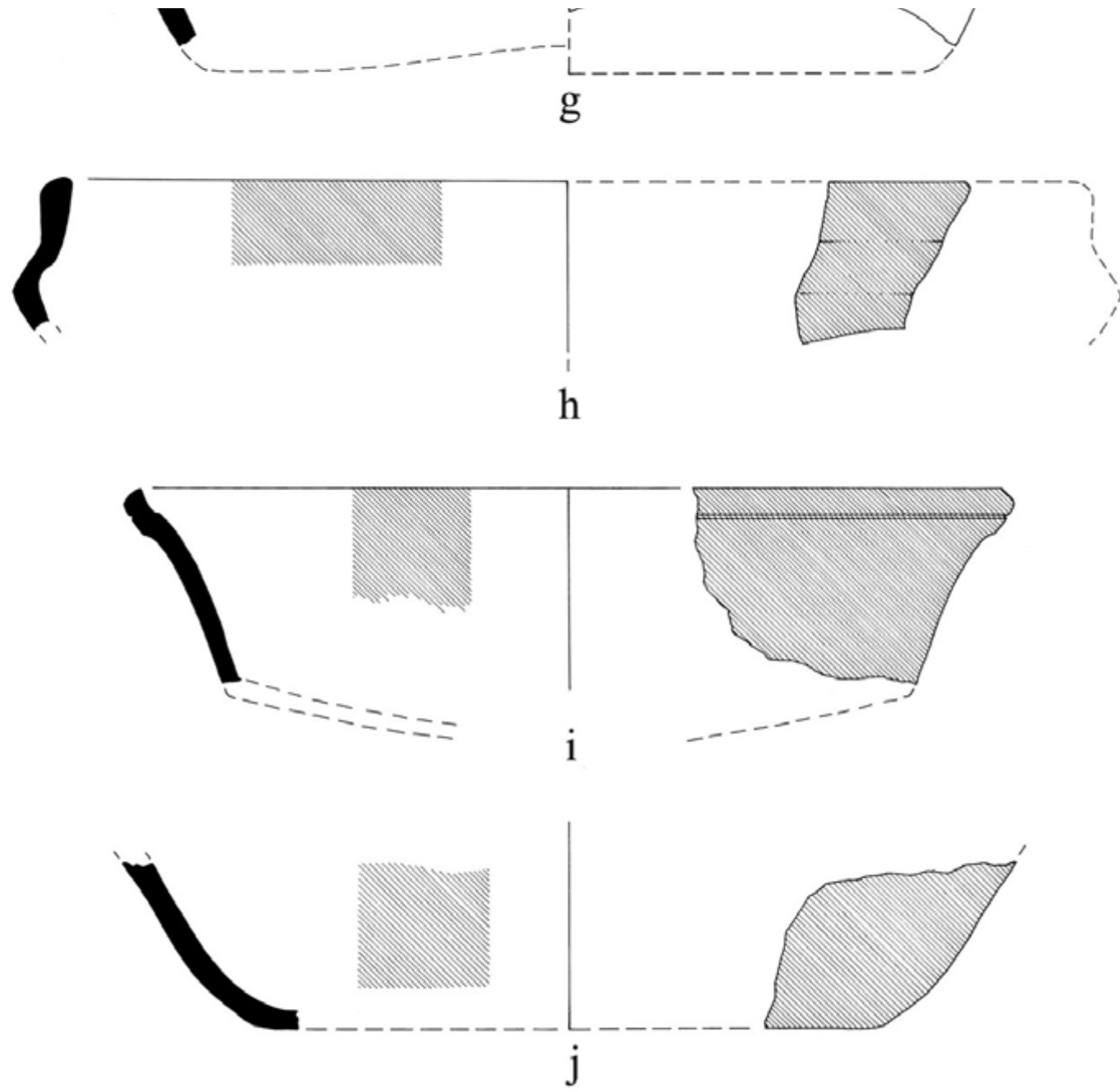
e



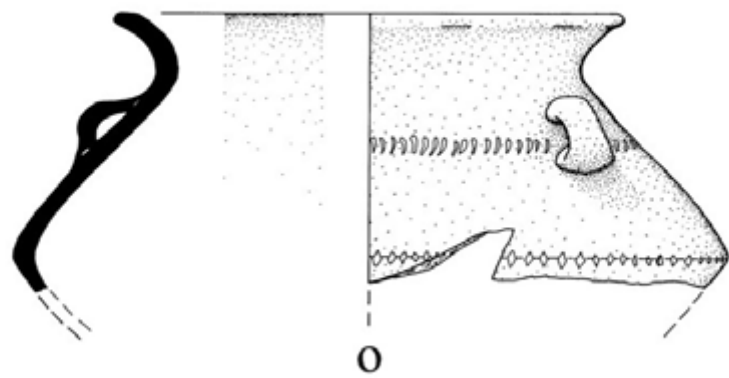
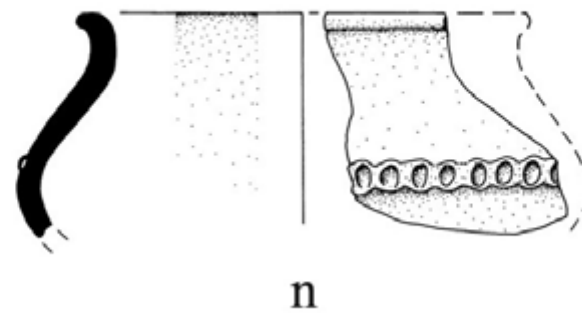
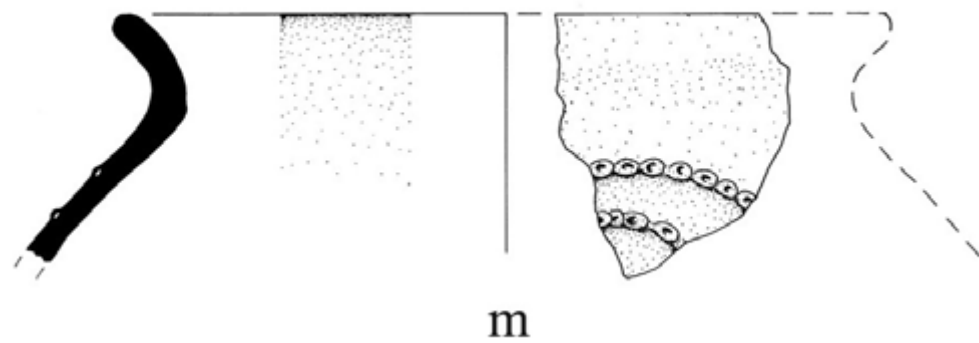
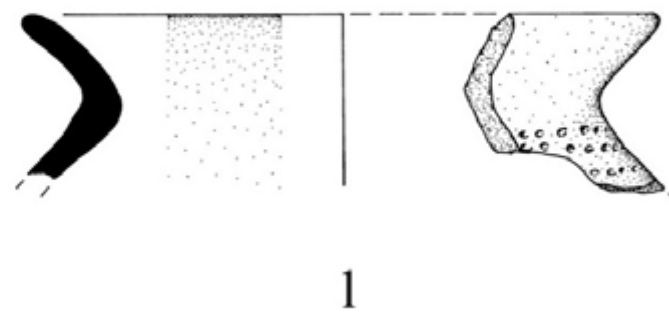
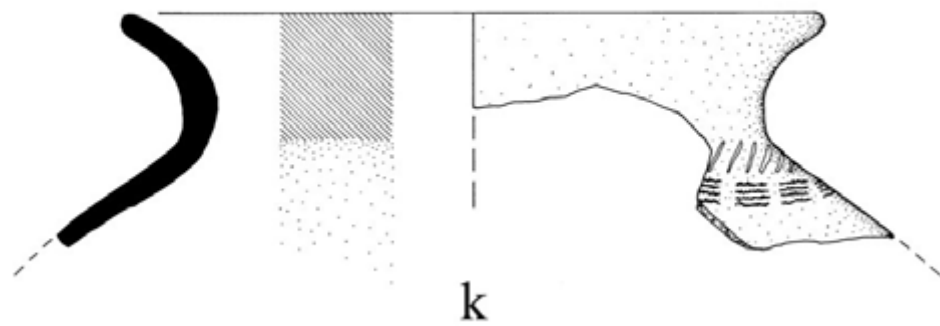
f



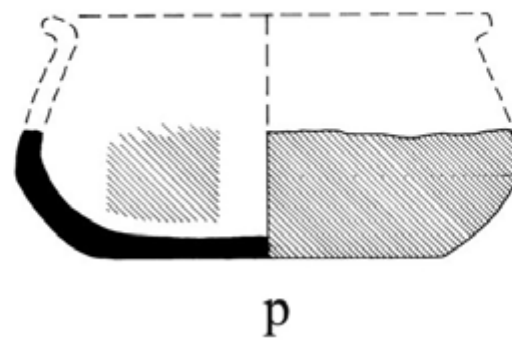




0 1 2 Cm



0 1 2 Cm







**a**



**b**



**c**





**d**

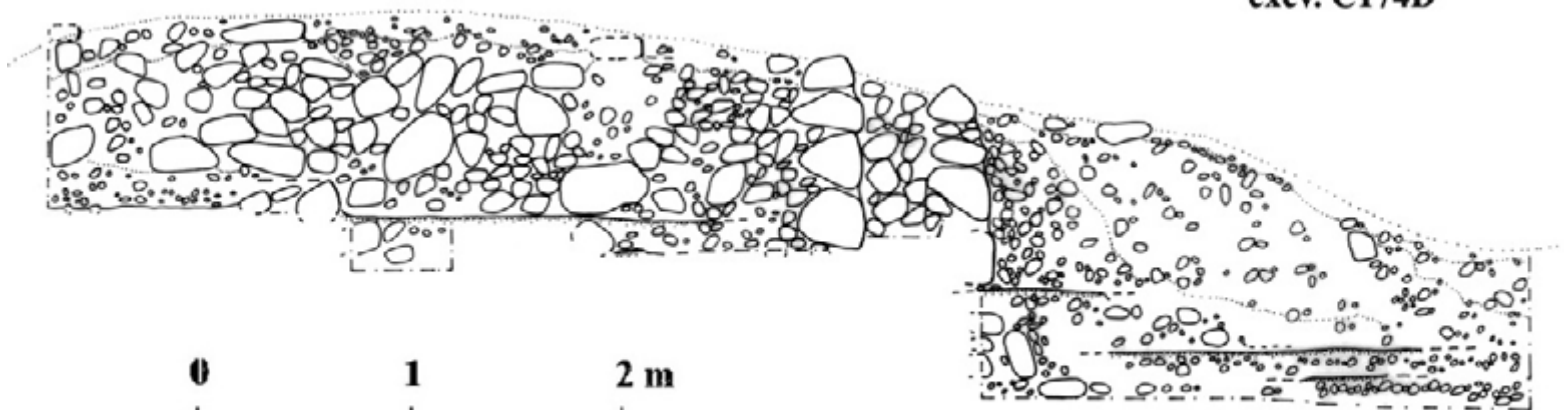


**e**



**f**

**Str. B142**  
**excv. C174D**

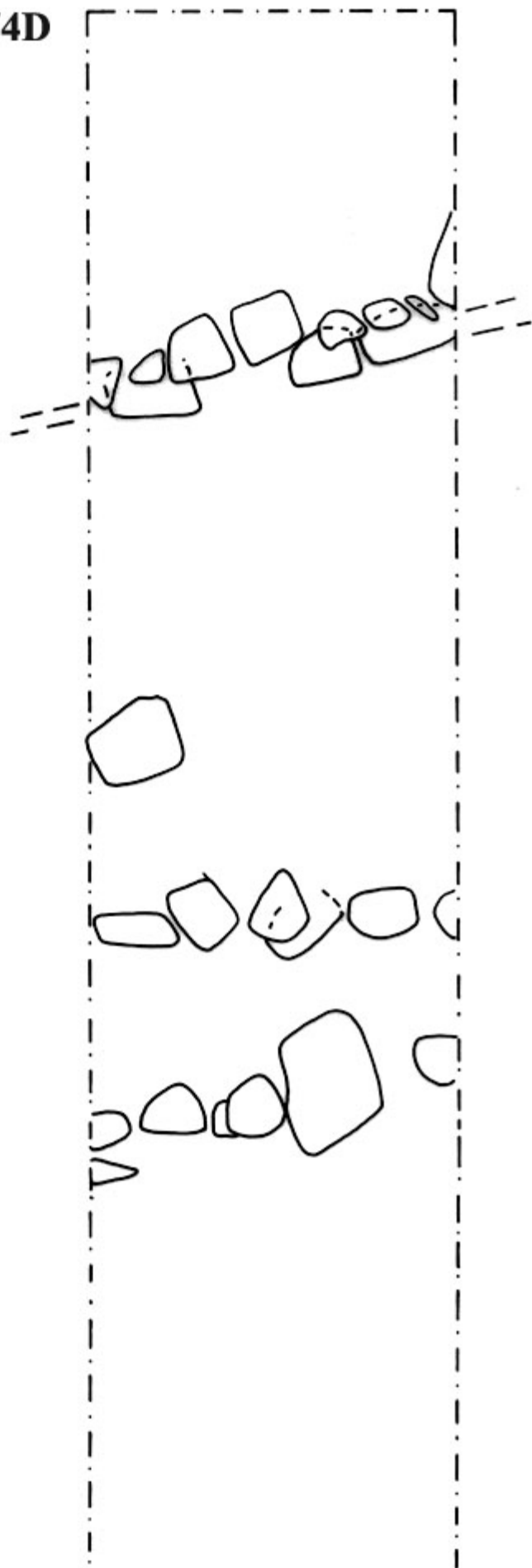


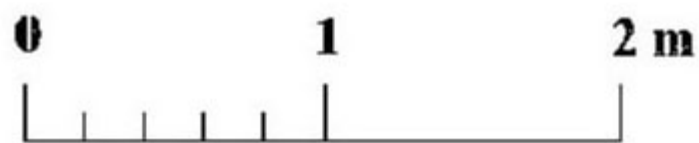
0 1 2 m

S

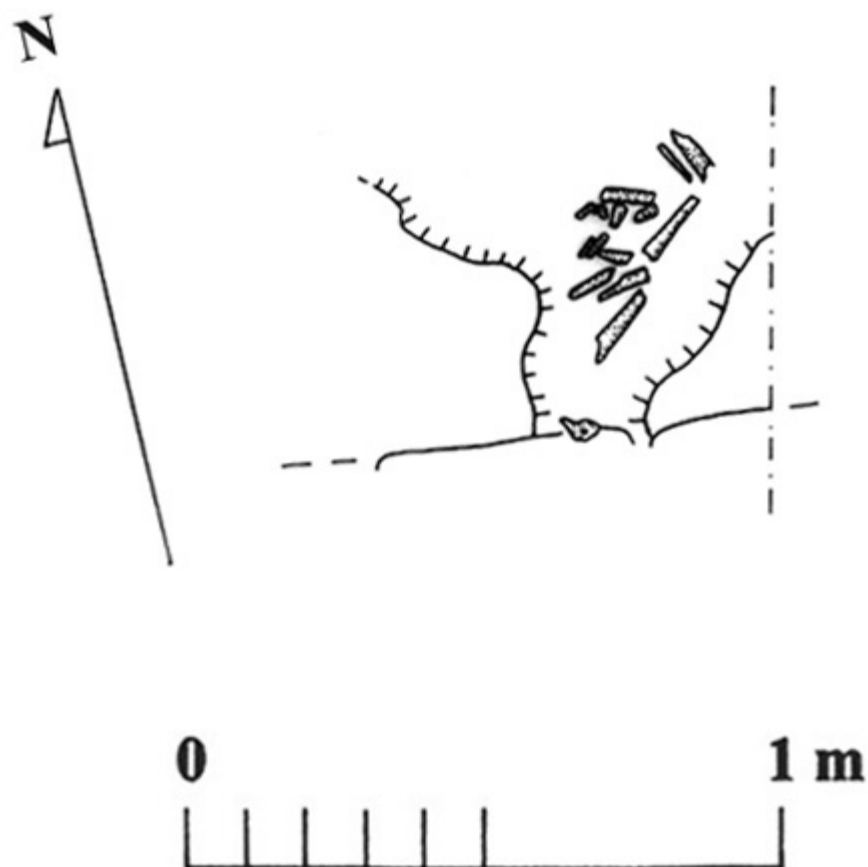


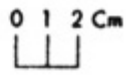
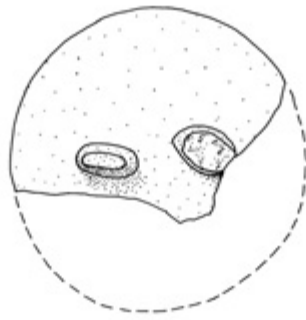
excv. C174D



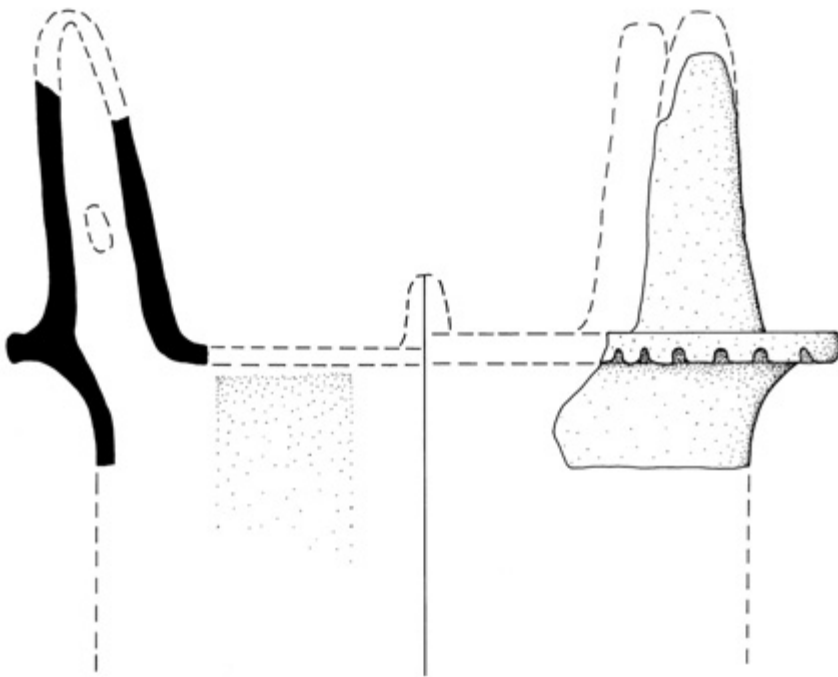


**S.D. C174D-1**



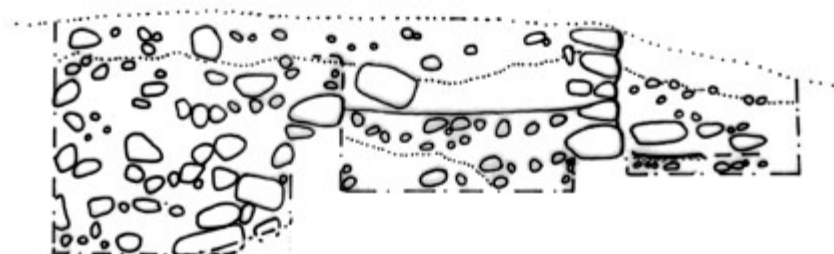


a



b

**excav. C174E**

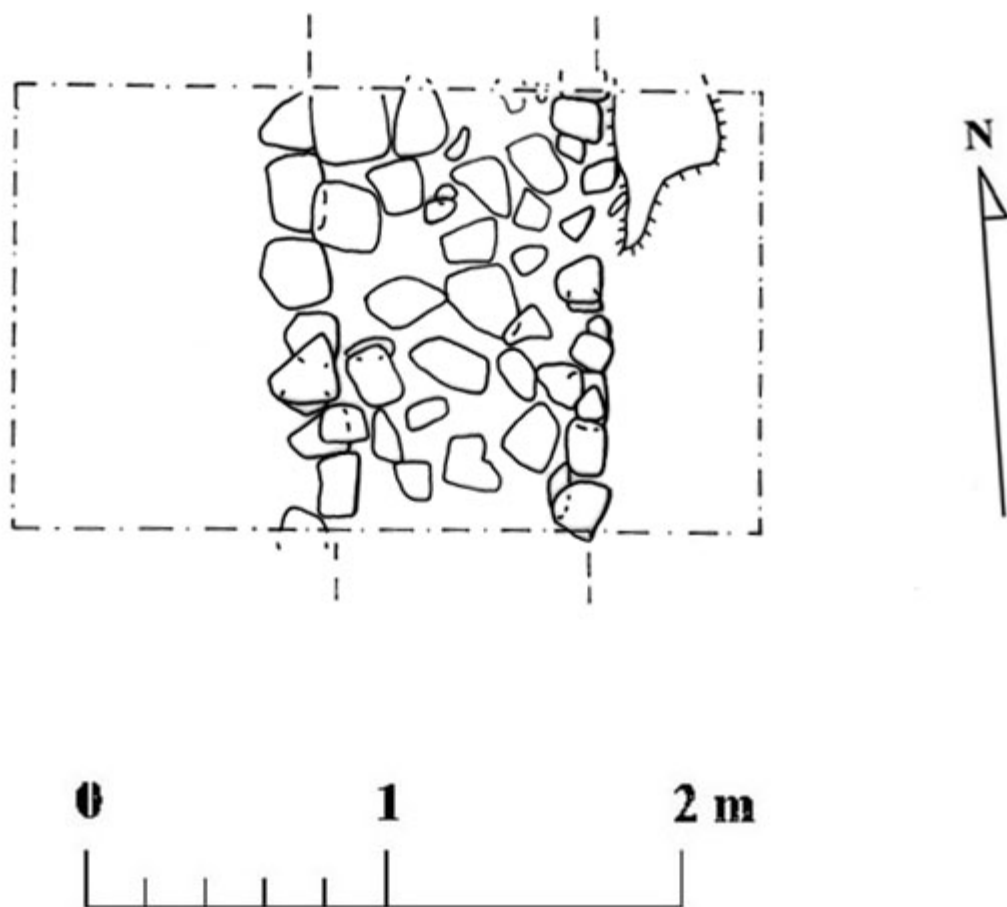


**0 1 2 m**

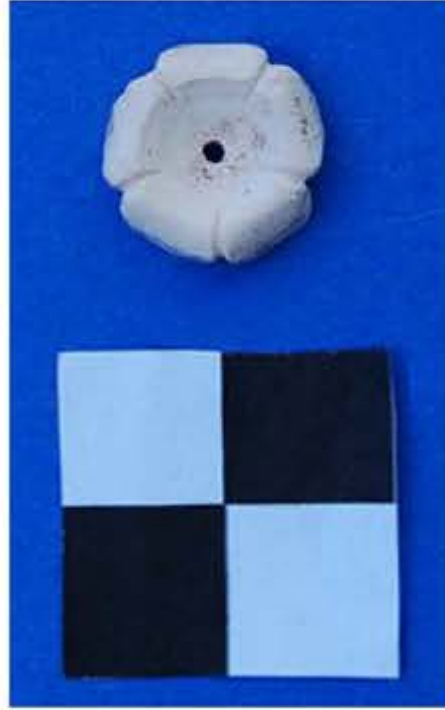


**W** 

**excv. C174E**







**a**



**b**





**c**

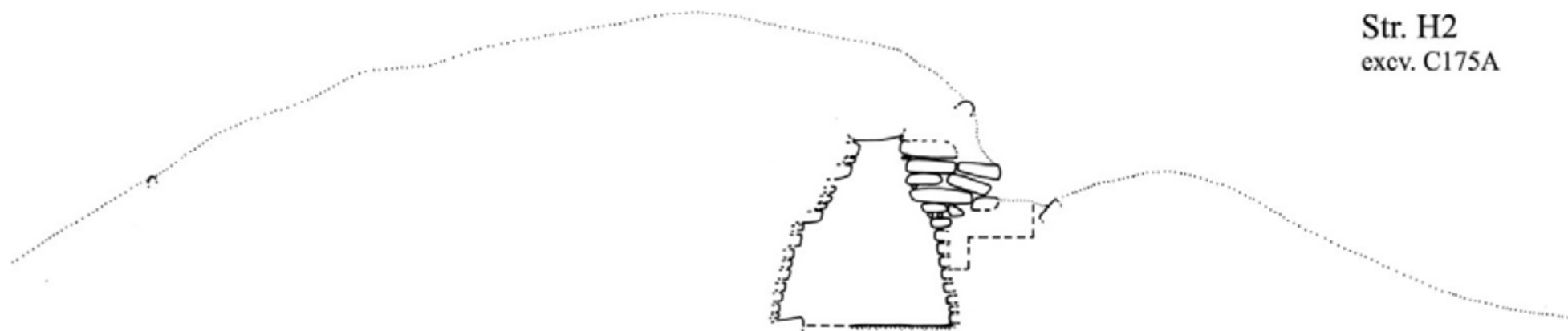









Str. H2  
excav. C175A

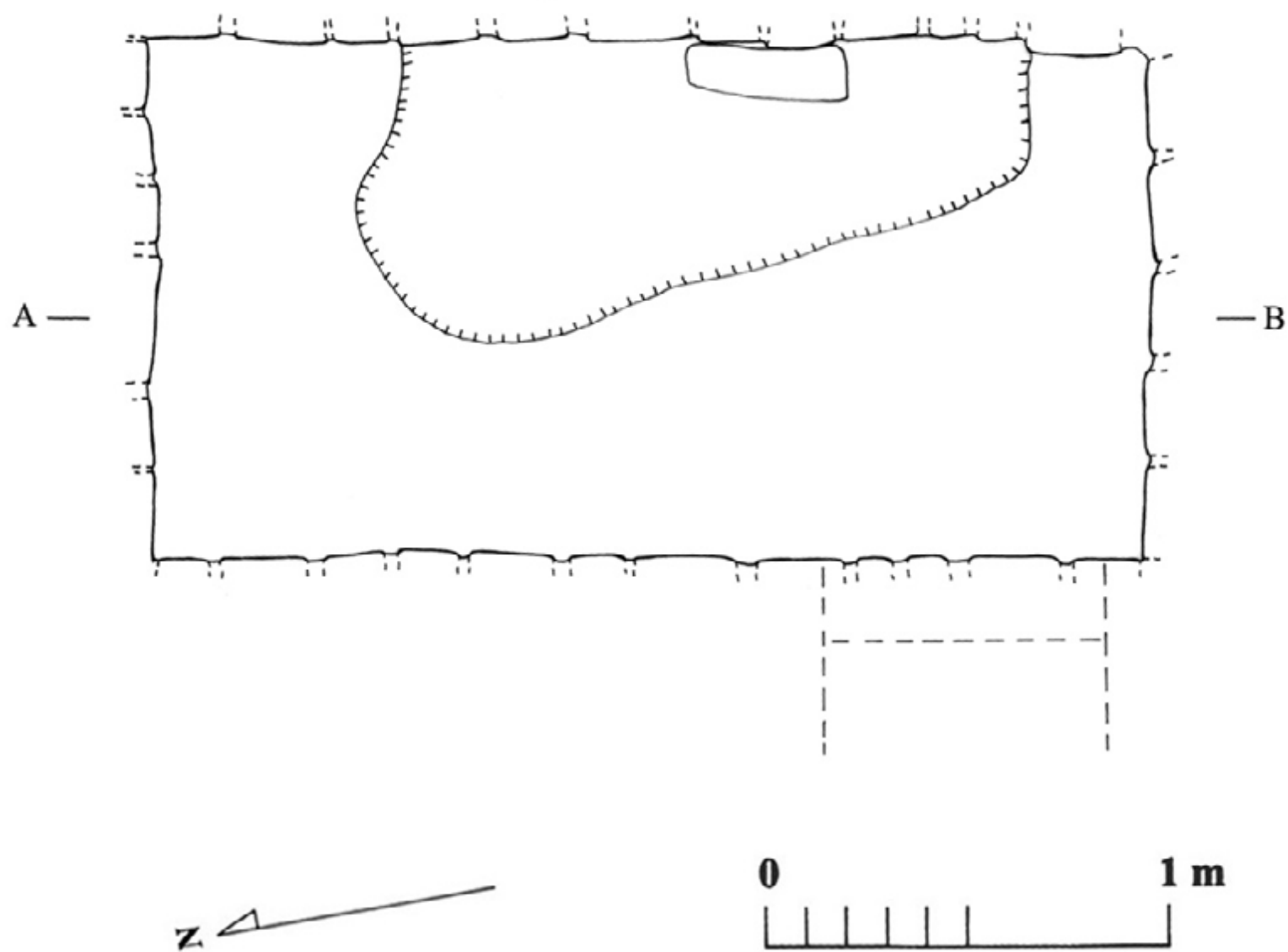


E 

0 1 2 m

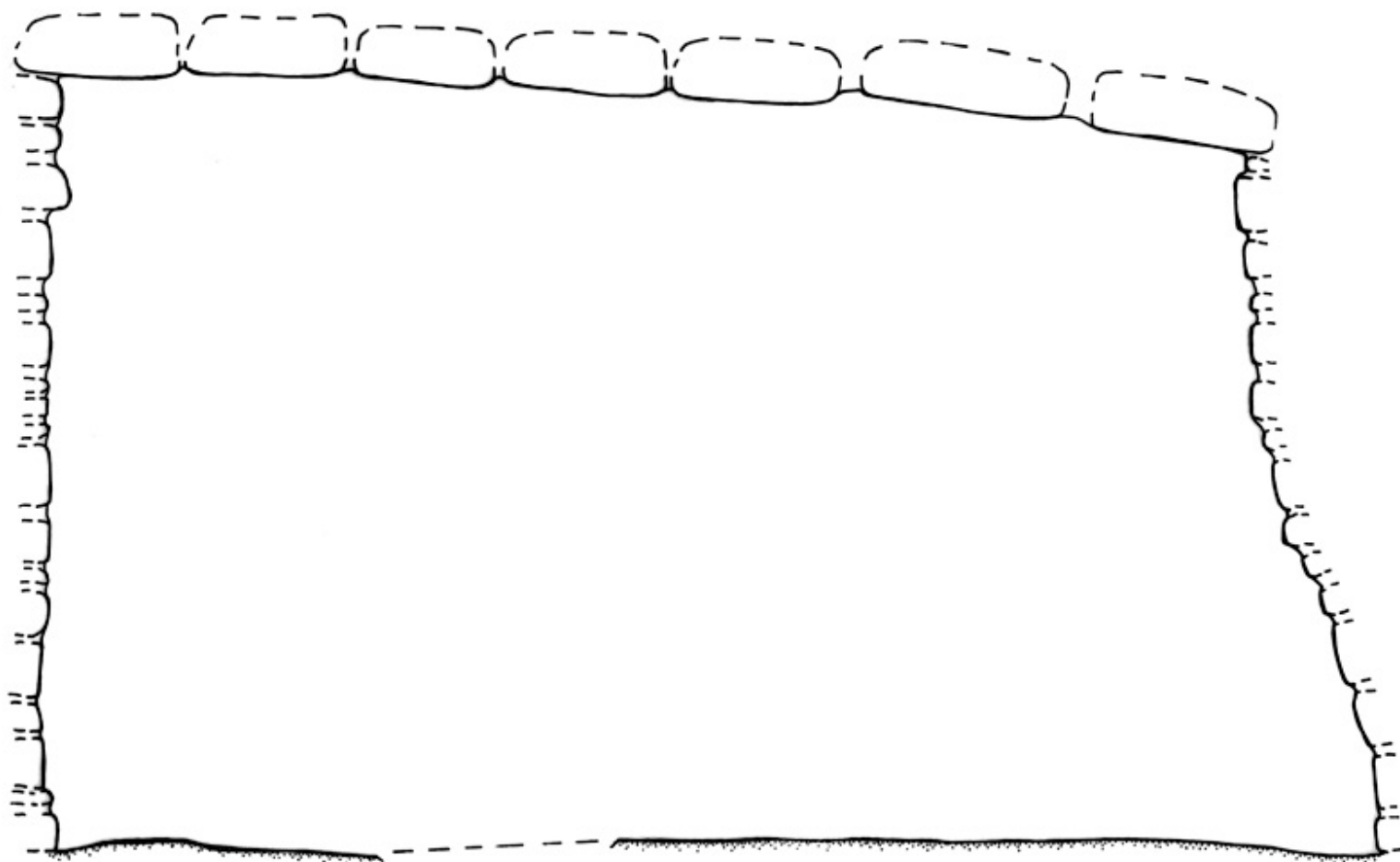


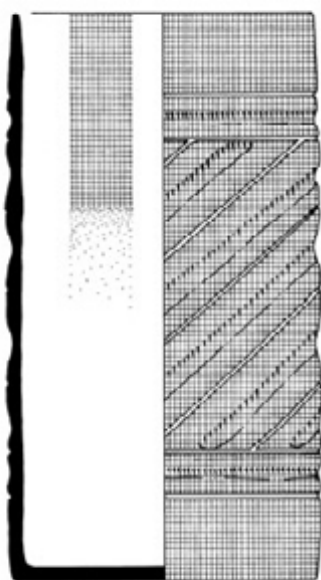
S.D. C175A-1



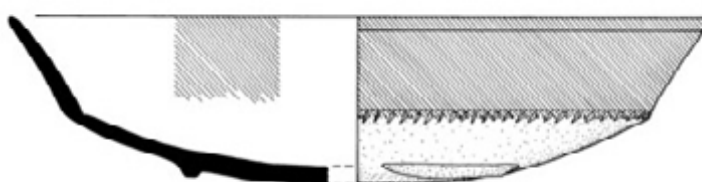


S.D. C175A-1

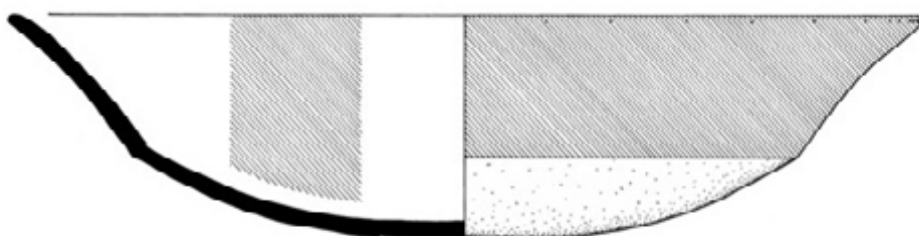




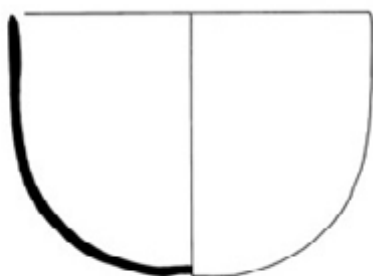
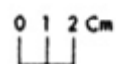
a



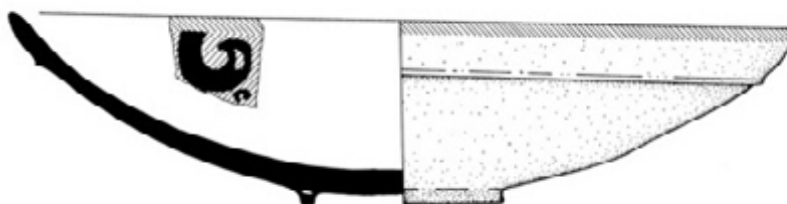
b



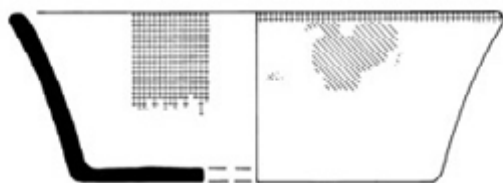
c



d



e



f



g



**a**





**b**

