

912/237/1



ARCHEO - INFEO cc

Archaeological Contract Work and Tourism Development

OK 56 55923/12

P.O. Box 7296
Thohoyandou
0950
7 October 1999

Ref. no: 991007/1

Dr. J. Deacon
National Monuments Council
P.O. Box 4637
Cape Town
8000

Dear Janet

Please find enclosed the report on the exhumation and re-interment of two graves in the Xikundu area, Northern Province as required by the permit issued by the NMC, permit number 80/99/06/05/51.

We trust that you will find this report in good order. Do not hesitate to contact us on any issue that may be unclear.

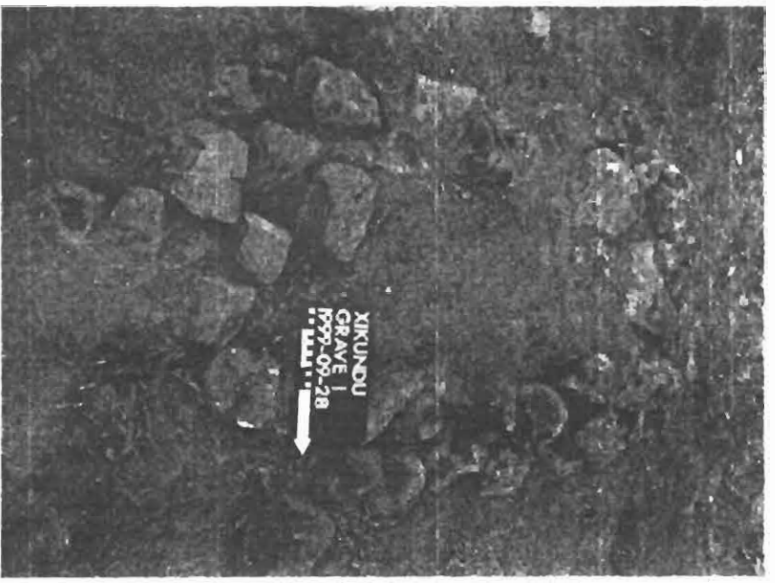
Kind regards


.....

STEPHAN GAIGHER (for Archaeo-Info)

9/2/232/1

REPORT ON EXCAVATION
AND REMEDIATION OF TREE
CARPENTER BEES AT XIKUNDU



Compiled by Archaeo-Info
For THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER AFFAIRS AND
FORESTRY
1999-10-07

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	2
2. AIM	2
3. MITIGATION	2
3.1 THE RELEVANT FAMILY MEMBERS.....	3
3.2 THE PAYING CLIENT	4
3.3 THE LANDOWNER.....	4
3.4 THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.....	4
3.5 THE PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.....	5
3.6 THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS.....	5
3.7 THE NATIONAL MONUMENTS COUNCIL	5
3.8 THE LOCAL POLICING AUTHORITY	5
3.9 THE CULTURAL AND GRAVES COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE.....	5
4. METHODOLOGY	6
5. GRAVE DESCRIPTIONS	6
5.1 XIKUNDU GRAVE 001	7
5.2 XIKUNDU GRAVE 002	8
5.3. XIKUNDU GRAVE 003	9
6. CONCLUSION.....	11

ADDENDUM A: FIGURE SKETCHES
ADDENDUM B: PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Introduction

Archaeo-Info was contracted by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) to perform the exhumation and re-interment of three graves at the Xikundu Weir construction area. The three graves were identified during an Archaeological Impact Assessment in February 1999, which formed part of the Preliminary Environmental Impact Assessment.

The family requested the exhumation of the three graves and the re-interment of the skeletal remains in the Xikundu cemetery in order to have free visitation to their ancestral family members.

The removal of the two archaeological graves was performed under permit No. 80/06/05/51 of the *National Monuments Council*.

2. Aim

The three graves were exhumed and re-interred according to all legal procedures and the installed grave policy of the Levhuvhu River Government Water Scheme in order to move them from the fenced-off Xikundu Weir and Water purification Plant to the Xikundu cemetery. This procedure enabled the family free access to the graves to pay respect and honor their deceased relatives.

3. Mitigation

The process of relocating graves involves the participation and approval of the following parties:

- The relevant family members.
- The paying client.

- The landowner of the area where the graves are located, as well as the area where they are to be re-interred.
- The National Department of Health.
- The Provincial Department of Health.
- The relevant Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs.
- In cases of war-graves or graves older than 60 years, the National Monuments Council.
- The local policing authority.
- The project Cultural and Graves Committee and the Community Action Committee.

The process of mediation with these parties was the following.

3.1 *The relevant family members*

The relevant family of the three deceased was identified as the Rihlampfu family during a meeting held on 3 May 1999. Hasani Wilson Rihlampfu was identified as the senior family representative and was to represent the interest of the Rihlampfu family. Through interviews with Mr. Rihlampfu the three deceased individuals were identified as Hlamalani Rihlampfu, Miyomo Rihlampfu and Nwatsanwisi Rihlampfu. Mr. H.W. Rihlampfu indicated the family's willingness to repatriate the three graves and completed the relevant forms requesting their removal on 26 May 1999. Due to the absence of a death certificate, Mr. Rihlampfu declared on an affidavit completed at the Malamulele Police Station the time and cause of death of the three individuals. The family representative was informed that further liaison would be through the Cultural and Graves Committee. The family requested to perform the manual labour themselves and this issue was taken up by the social consultant and approved by the C.A.C.

3.2 *The Paying Client*

The work was performed under contract for the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF). The Department requested the removal of the three graves from the construction area of the Xikundu Weir. Archaeo-Info undertook to handle all aspects of the removal and reburial of the three graves from the site, exempting the Department from any further responsibility. DWAF also undertook to pay the relevant family a compensatory amount of R600 as stipulated in the Grave Relocation Policy of the Cultural and Graves Committee

3.3 *The Landowner*

The landowner of both the areas where the graves were located and the area where they were to be reburied, was Chief Xikundu of the Xikundu tribal area. A letter of permission for the exhumation and reburial of the three graves were received from Chief Xikundu on 25 May 1999. At this stage the tribal council was also provided with a copy of the Grave Relocation Policy.

3.4 *The National Department of Health*

A request for permission for the exhumation and re-interment of the three graves at Xikundu was submitted to the National Department of Health on 15 June 1999. This application followed the notification of the intended repatriation in the Mirror Newspaper on 11 June 1999 and the stipulated three weeks given for objections. No objections were received during this time. A letter giving permission for the exhumation was received on 5 July 1999 from the National Department of Health (ref. J2X/60/03).

3.5 *The Provincial Department of Health*

On 21 July 1999 the Provincial Department of Health was notified of the proposed exhumation. The Department was given three weeks to respond to this matter and during this time no objections were received from them.

3.6 *The Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs*

The relevant documentation and letters of approval was sent to the Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs on 30 July 1999. Approval was received from the Department in September 1999 (ref. 17/67/1/2 - 529).

3.7 *The National Monuments Council*

Two of the graves identified were older than 60 years. This placed them under the protection of the National Monuments Council. Archaeo-Info applied for a permit for the grave exhumation and received this on 9 June 1999 (Permit No. 80/06/05/51).

3.8 *The Local Policing Authority*

Legally the local Police should be notified at least seven days in advance of the intended exhumation of graves. A letter notifying them was mailed on the 13th of September 1999.

3.9 *The Cultural and Graves Committee of the Community Action Committee*

Hasani Wilson Rihlampfu was appointed as the local chairman of the Xikundu Graves Committee on a meeting at the tribal offices. All further liaison was performed through him.

4. Methodology

All the graves were cleaned of surface vegetation and the surface features were documented by means of a measured drawing, colour print photography and field note descriptions. Following this the grave covering was removed. The surface features were then archaeologically excavated down to the level of the surrounding soil. All features exposed during the excavation were recorded and all cultural remains present were recovered and recorded.

The deposit underlying the surface features was tested by means of a test trench of approximately 35 cm in depth dug in the middle of the area that was covered by the surface features. If no evidence indicating the presence of human remains was found in the test excavation the deposit was further removed with picks and shovels. This process was repeated until the skeletal remains were found.

Human remains found, together with any associated cultural materials, were exposed *in situ* and documented by means of a measured drawing, colour print photography and field note description of the burial position.

After documentation the human remains and cultural materials were removed and placed in coffins for reburial.

5. Grave descriptions

The three graves were situated at GPS reading 22°48'34"S, 30°48'13"E (Magellan 2000 XL) in a corn field next to a Maroela tree. The graves were positioned next to each other and they were numbered Xikundu Grave 001, 002 and 003 from north to south. Each grave will be discussed and described individually in the following sections.

5.1 *Xikundu Grave 001*

This was the grave of Hlamalani Rihlampfu who died of child disease in 1960 at the estimated age of 4 years.

The dressing of the grave consisted of packed stones, which formed an elongated oval that was orientated east/west. The stones were packed on the outside and the inside was filled up with soil. The grave dressing measured approximately 175 cm in length and approximately 100 cm in width on the eastern side (Fig 1 & Photo 1). Several potsherds (17) and a few glass fragments (4) were recovered from between the grave dressing rocks. After the grave dressing was removed, the grave pit was identified. It was not clearly visible due to wet soil conditions, but could be identified by the different grades of compaction. The grave pit was oval shaped and measured approximately 115 cm in length and 60 cm in width. It seemed to be a small pit, although sufficient in size for a 4 year old. The excavators were informed that it was possible that this could be a shallow grave due to its small size.

At the depth of 110 cm a discoloration of soil was found and this was indicative of the presence of skeletal material. At this depth the grave pit only measured 75 cm in length and 40 cm across. The soil turned a shade darker and a few small pieces of rotten material were exposed. At a depth of approximately 115 cm all of the remains were exposed. The remains comprised of a fragment of femoral shaft, small fragments of upper body limbs, cranial fragments and teeth (4 x incisor, 8 x molar). No other remains from the lower limbs, pelvic and thoracic regions could be found (Fig 4 & Photo 4).

From the position of the teeth, cranial fragments and the few limbs fragments it was possible to say that the child was most probably buried on its left side, orientated east/west and with its head on the western extend, facing north.

The pieces of material, which were exposed and recovered, seemed to be part of a blanket in which the child was wrapped up before burial. More material was recovered from the lower limbs and it could be that the blanket was folded double over the legs of the child. No grave goods were found with the remains. The soil underneath the remains was tested and it was found to be archaeologically sterile.

5.2 Xikundu Grave 002

This was the grave of Nwatsanwisi Rihlampfu who died of natural causes before 1939 at an estimated age of 60 or even older.

The grave dressing/markings consisted of a line of stones packed in a large rectangular shape. It was orientated east/west and measured approximately 2.35 cm in length and 145 cm across (Fig 2 & Photo 2). A large amount of fragmented earthenware (88 potsherds), 12 glass fragments and 6 metal bracelets were recovered from the grave covering.

After the grave dressing/markings was removed it was possible to distinguish the grave pit. The pit was positioned directly underneath the grave dressing and was also orientated from east to west. Although the grave pit was not clearly visible (due to the wet soil conditions caused by overnight rain), it was identified by different grades of compaction and texture. The pit was also rectangular in shape with rounded corners and measured approximately 220 cm in length and 120 cm across.

At a depth of approximately 1 m various rocks were found on the southern side of the original pit. The excavators removed these rocks and assumed to find the skeletal remains directly underneath. Only at a depth of 135 cm cranial fragments were exposed on the extreme western side of the grave pit. Upper body remains were exposed at a depth of 142 cm and lower limb remains at a depth of 155 cm.

The remains were in a poor state of preservation, very brittle and easily fragmented when handled. The remains were exposed to be photographed and sketched, but the cranium collapsed when it was exposed. Both the humerus shafts were preserved but the proximal and distal ends were disintegrated. Only small fragments from the radius and ulna were recovered, as was the case with the vertebrae and ribs. The pelvic bones were totally disintegrated and only small fragments from the proximal ends of both the femurs indicated its position and orientation. The femur shafts were relatively well preserved, although the distal ends were disintegrated. Both the shafts of the tibiae were recovered, but only small fragments from the fibulae could be found. No feet or hand bones could be found (Fig 5 & Photo 5).

The cranium was in a very bad state of preservation and collapsed when it was exposed. The cranium was totally fragmented and could not be recovered as a whole. The mandible was also badly preserved but most of the teeth were recovered.

The body was buried on its back, stretched out, with its left side lying lower than its right side. The head was positioned at the far western end of the pit, tilted to the left and facing north. No grave goods were found with the remains and the soil underneath the remains was found to be archaeologically sterile.

5.3. *Xikundu Grave 003*

This was the grave of Miyomo Rihlampfu, who died at the circumcision school in 1939 at the estimated age of twenty six years.

The grave and grave dressing were damaged by ploughing activities and most of the rocks used as dressing on the eastern side were removed. The rocks that formed the grave dressing, which were still intact, measured approximately 75cm

east to west and approximately 100cm north to south (Fig 3 & Photo 3). No grave goods were found.

After the rocks were removed in an effort to identify the grave pit, it was curious to note that the pit was orientated northeast to southwest, which differed from the other two graves that were orientated east to west. The pit measured approximately 100cm across, but it was difficult to establish the length because of the damage caused by the ploughing. An arbitrary length of two metres was excavated in an effort to cover the whole of the original pit.

At a depth of 155cm a slight change (darker) in soil colour was indicative of the presence of human remains. The cranium was exposed at a depth of 157 cm and the rest of the remains were found at a depth of approximately 160cm.

The remains were in a poor state of preservation and especially the cranium was very fragmented. The cranium collapsed most probably due to the pressure of the backfill. It was still possible to identify certain landmarks on the cranium and from this it was derived that the skull was lying on its left side facing northeast. Most of the teeth were still well preserved and were all recovered.

Both the humerus shafts were exposed although the proximal and distal ends were disintegrated. The radius and ulna of both arms were also found although they were badly fragmented. The arms were stretched out alongside the body, which were almost totally disintegrated. Only a few small fragments of bone from the shoulder girdle, vertebrae, ribs and pelvic region were recovered. The femur shafts were the best preserved remains recovered, although the proximal and distal ends were very brittle and fragmented. Both the tibia shafts were rather well preserved, but only small fragments of the fibulae were left to be re-interred. No hand or feet bones were found.

The body was buried flat on its back with its arms stretched out alongside it and with its legs alongside each other. The head was tilted to left facing northeast (Fig 6 & Photo 6).

No grave goods were recovered from the grave.

6. Conclusion

The three graves at Xikundu weir and purification plant were successfully exhumed and re-interred. Although the legal procedures and permission/permits obtained from the various governmental departments took a long time, no obstacles were encountered during the process.

The information provided by the family, corresponded with that derived from the remains exhumed. The effected family was present and assisted during the whole process of exhumation and witnessed the remains that were recovered. The family had a reburial service at the Xikundu cemetery where the three deceased were re-interred. All grave goods recovered were handed to the family and were placed on the new graves as originally found.

The finalization of this process full-filled the obligations of the Department (DWAF) towards the families and construction can now continue unhindered in this area.

ADDENDUM A

GRAVE: Nkundu Grave 001
FEATURE: Grave Dressing
SCALE: 1:20
DATE: 1999-09-28

LEGEND



Stones (Forming grave dressing)

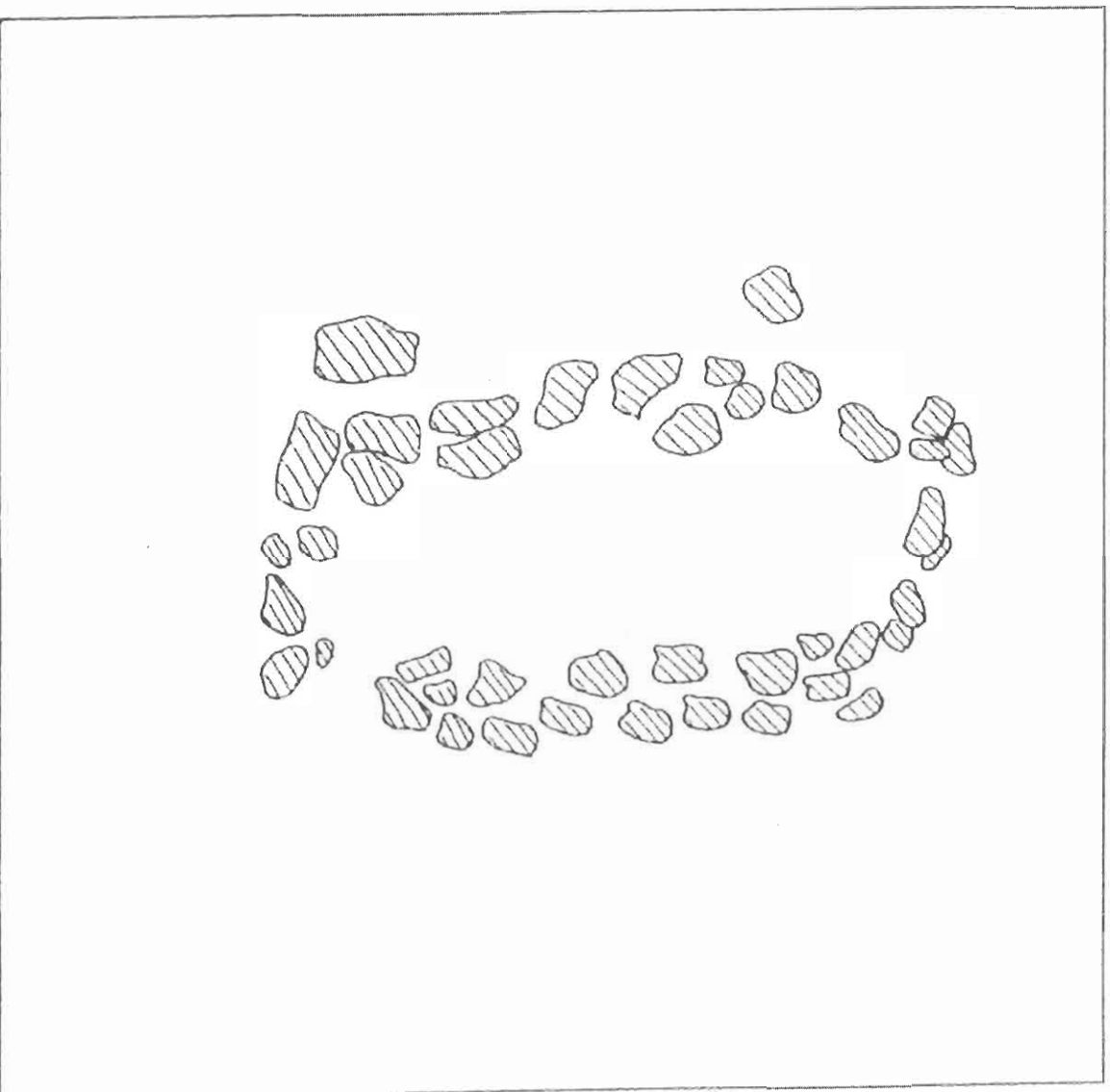


Fig. 1

GRAVE: Xikundu Grave 002
FEATURE: Grave Dressing
SCALE: 1:20
DATE: 1999-09-28

LEGEND



Stones (Forming grave dressing)

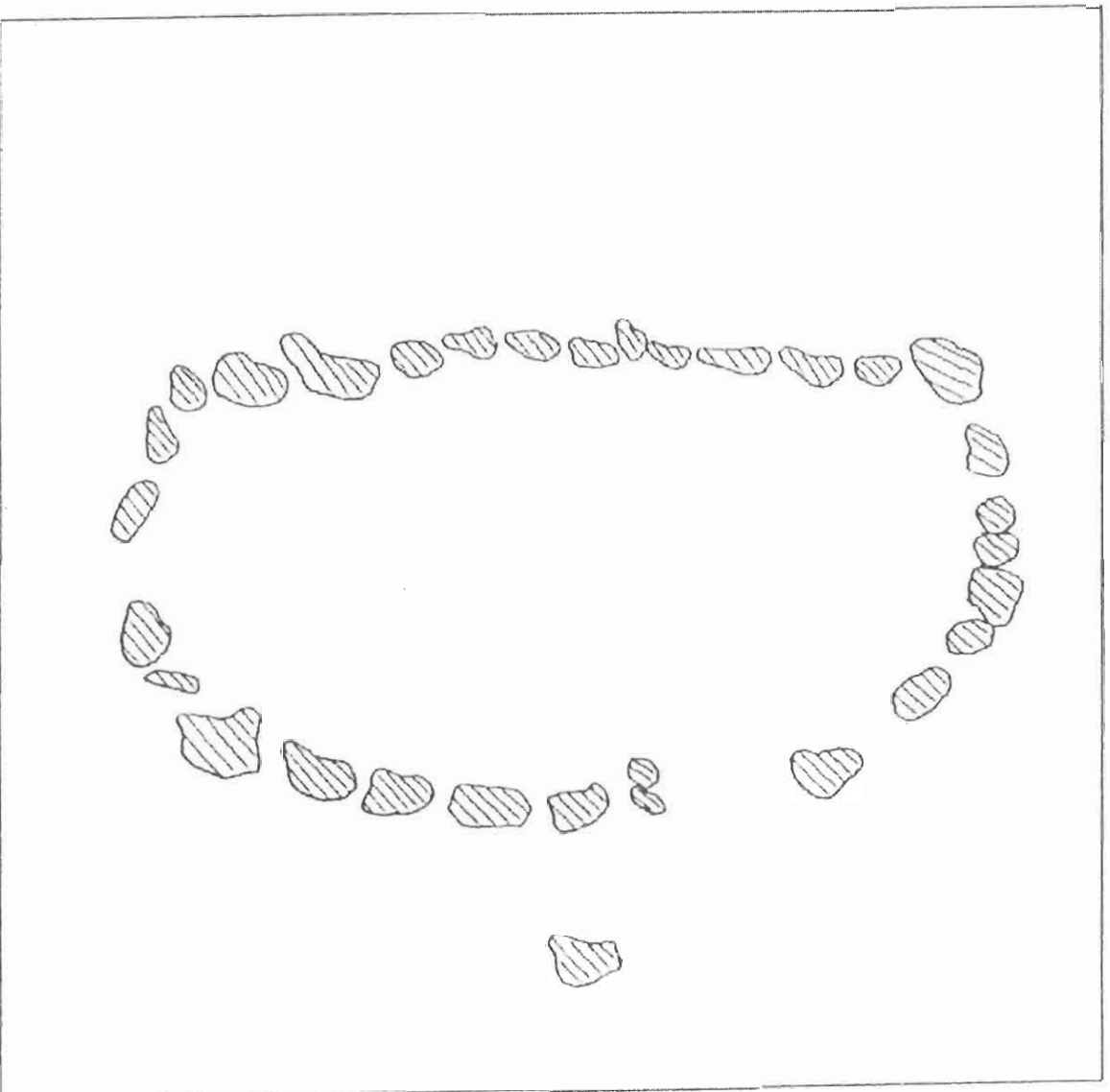


Fig. 2

GRAVE: Nkundu Grave 003
FEATURE: Grave Dressing
SCALE: 1:20
DATE: 1999-09-28



LEGEND



Stones (Forming grave dressing)



Grave Pit Outline

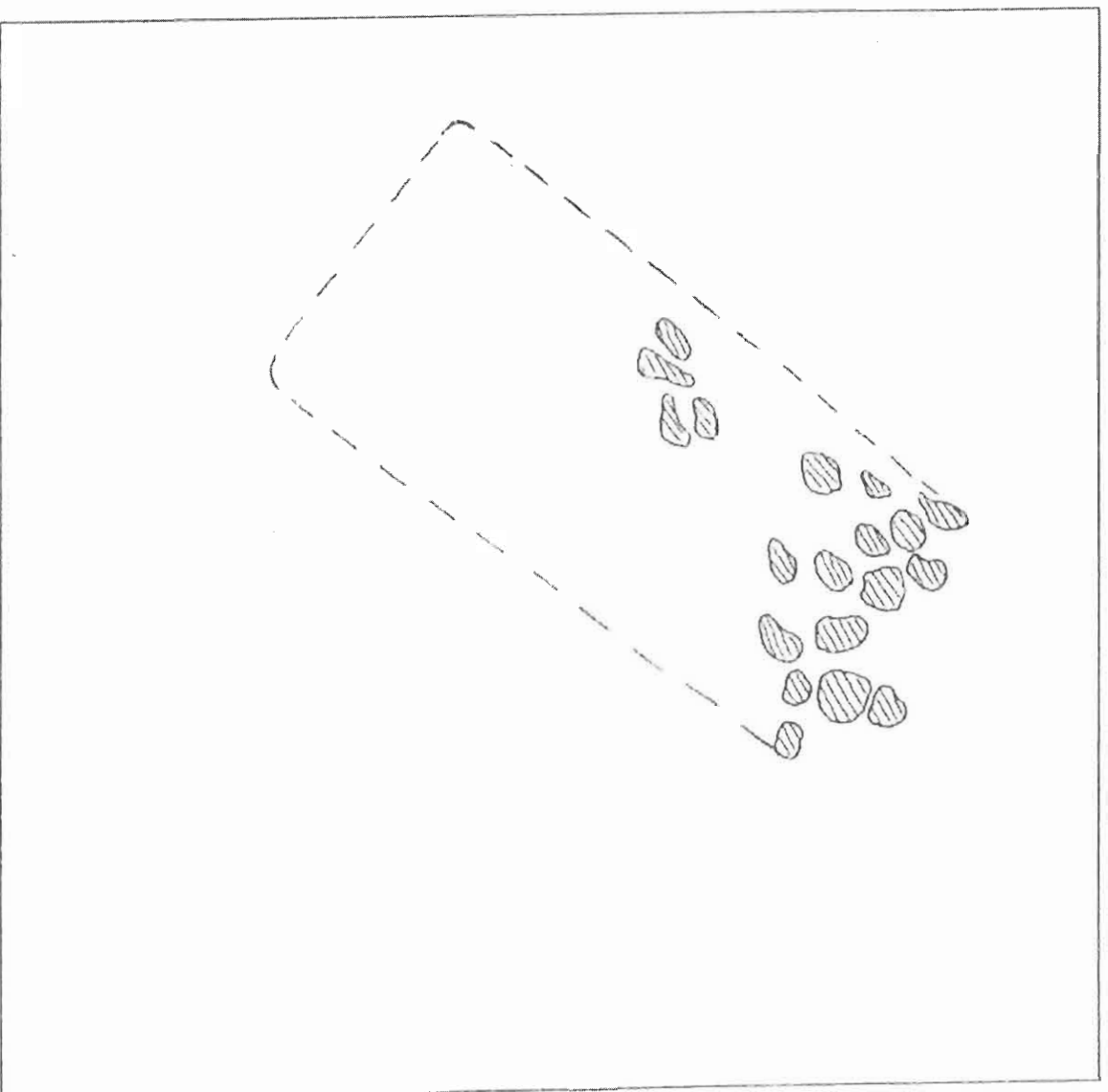


Fig. 3

GRAVE: Xikundu Grave 001
FEATURE: Skeletal Remains
SCALE: 1:20
DATE: 1999-09-28



LEGEND



Skeletal Remains



Grave Pit Outline



Remains of cloth covering

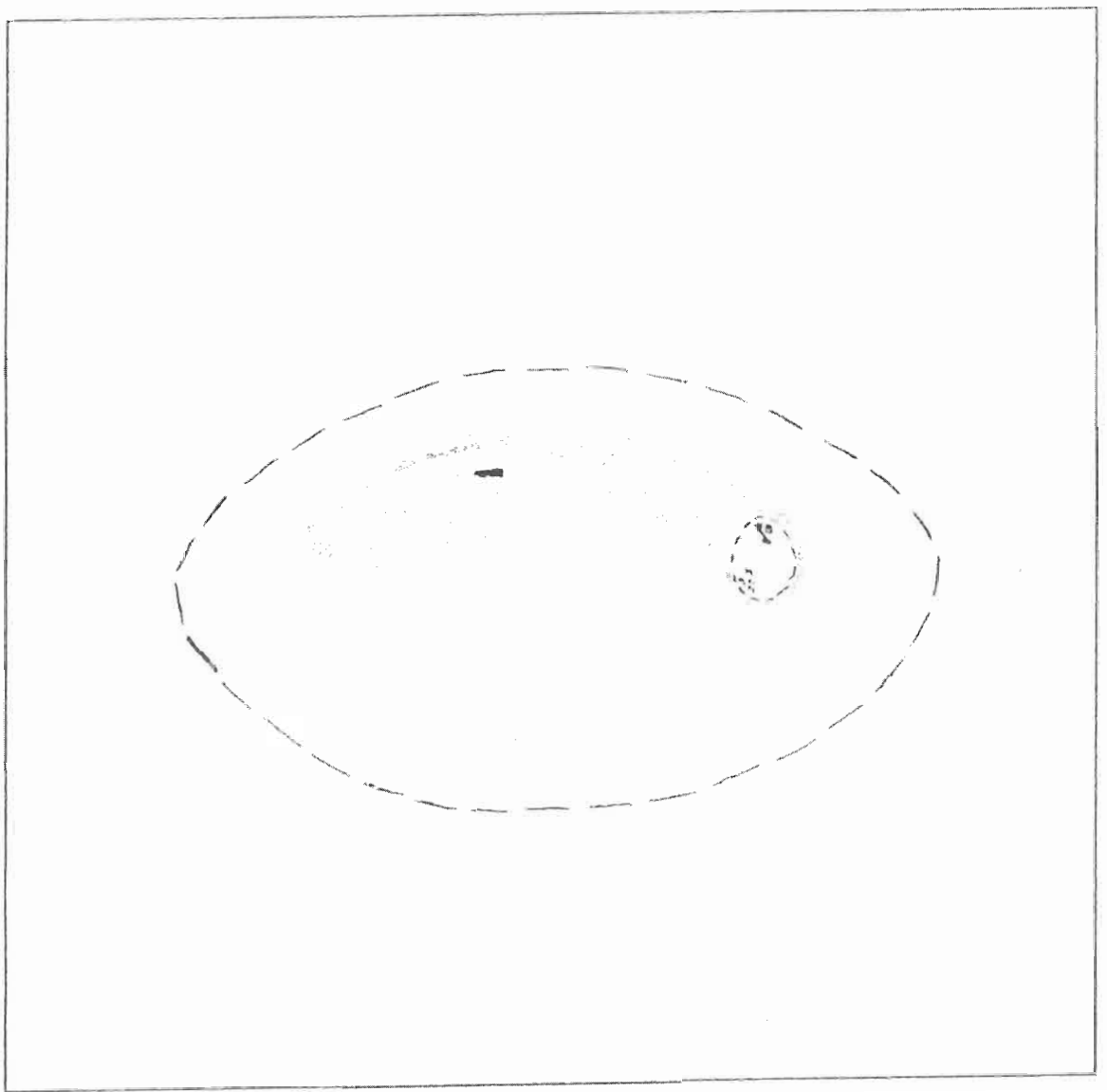


Fig. 4

GRAVE: Nikundu Grave 002
FEATURE: Skeletal Remains
SCALE: 1:20
DATE: 1999-09-28

LEGEND



Skeletal Remains



Grave Pit Outline

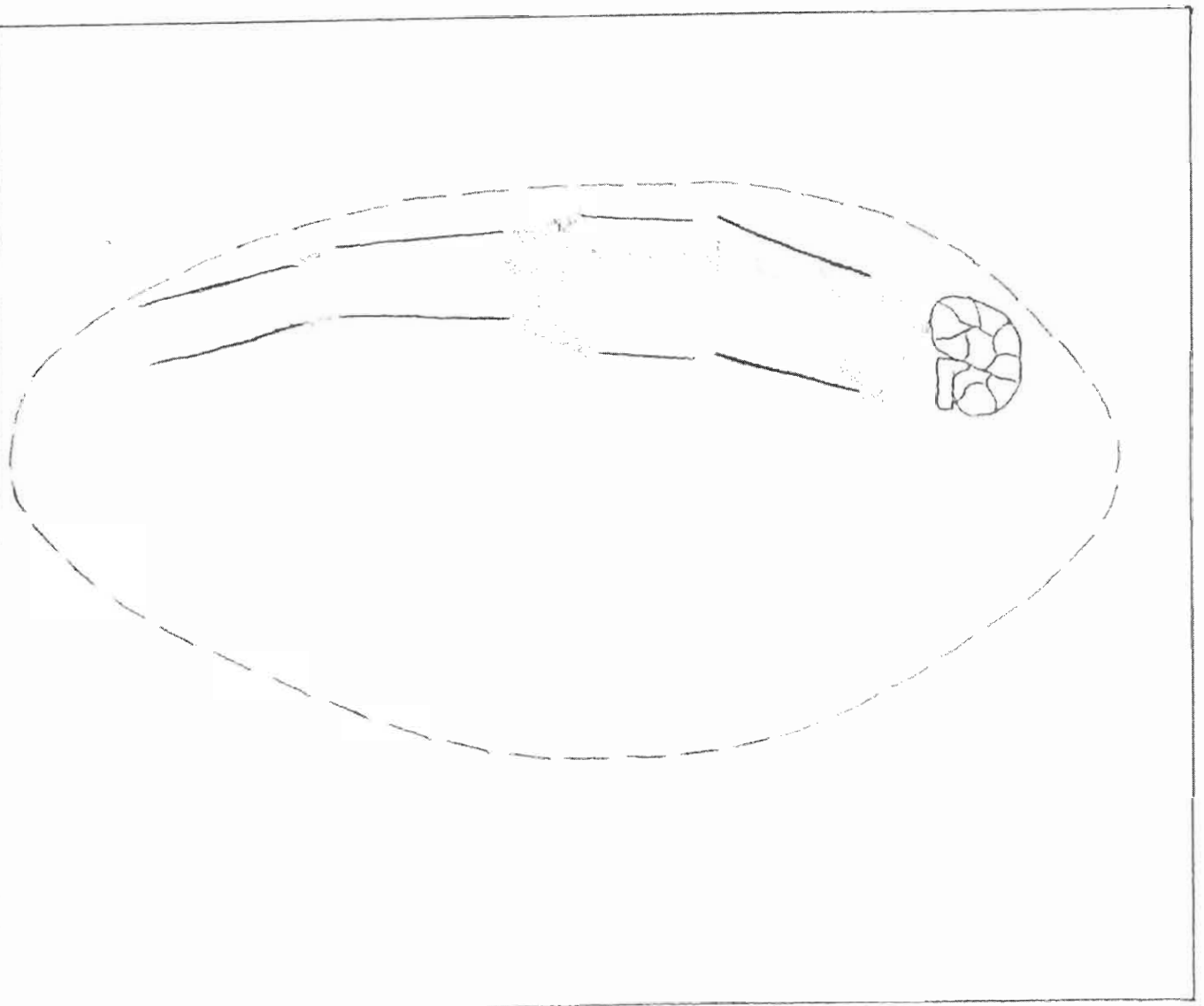


Fig. 5

GRAVE: Nkundu Grave 003
FEATURE: Skeletal Remains
SCALE: 1:20
DATE: 1999-09-28

LEGEND



Skeletal Remains



Grave Pit Outline

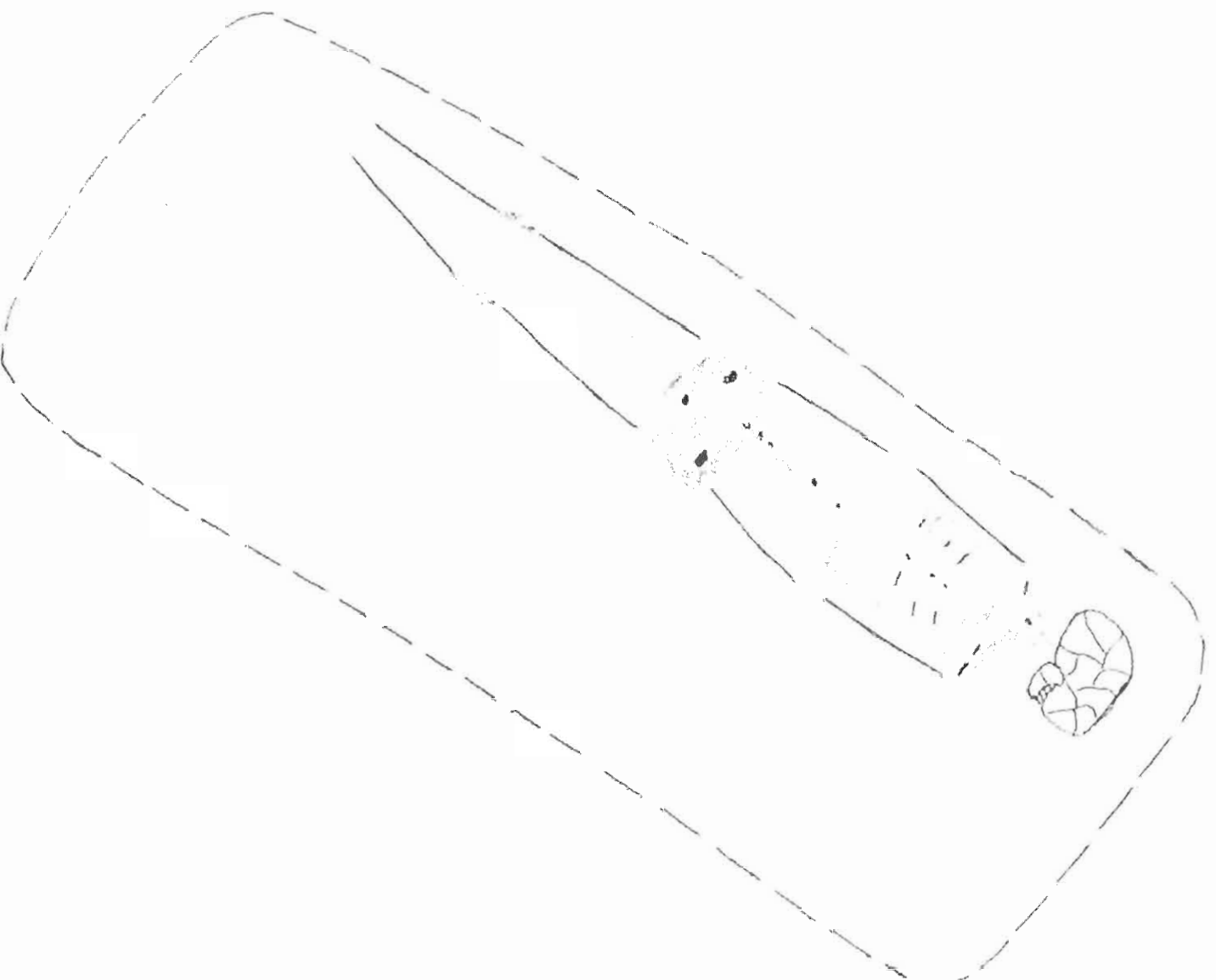


Fig. 6

ADDENDUM B

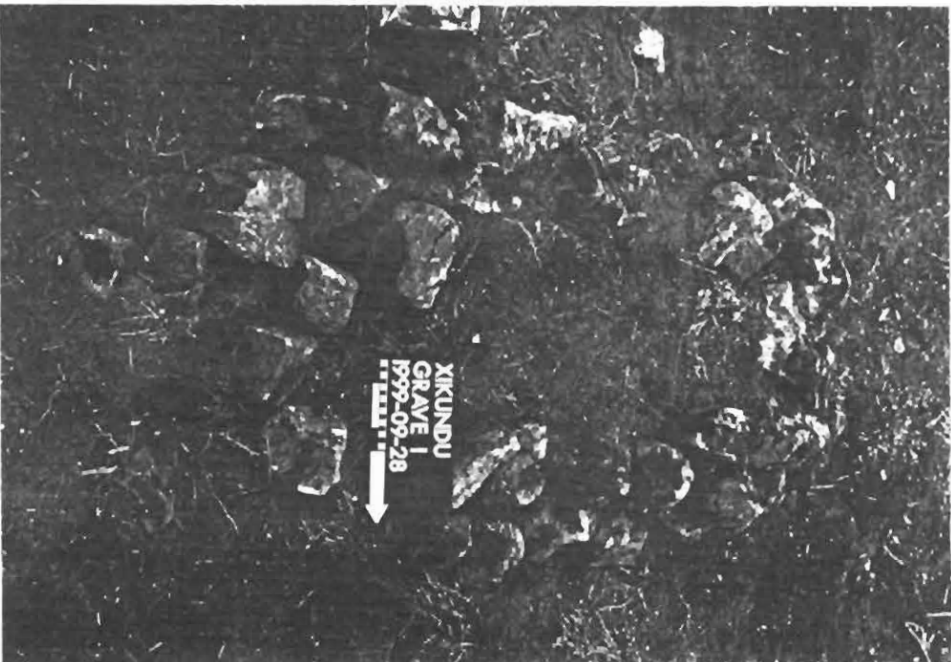


Photo 1: Xikundu Grave 001 Grave dressing

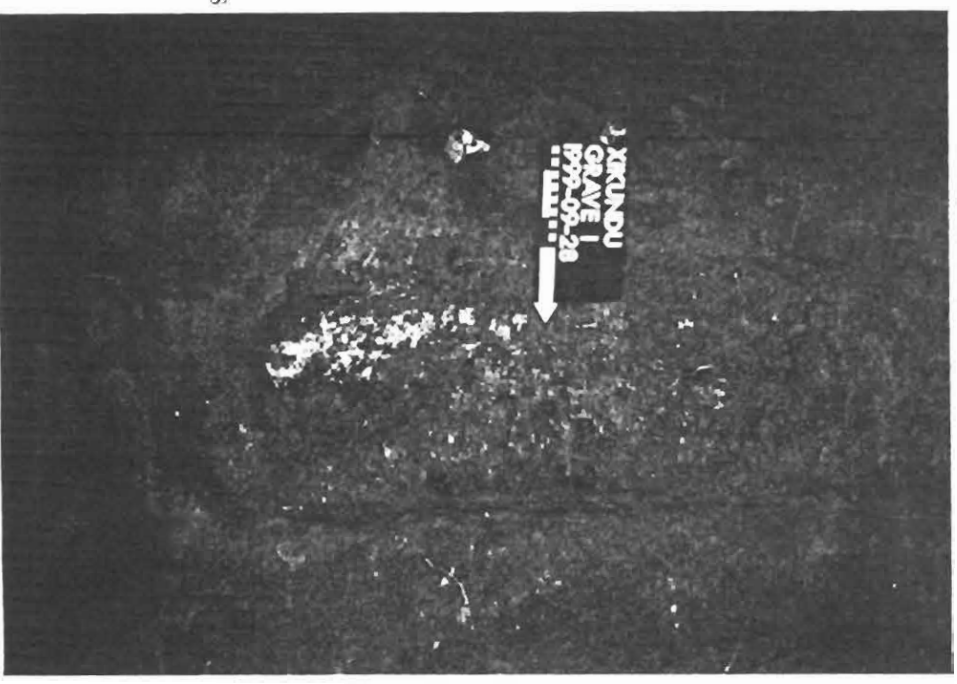


Photo 2: Xikundu Grave 001 Skeletal remains

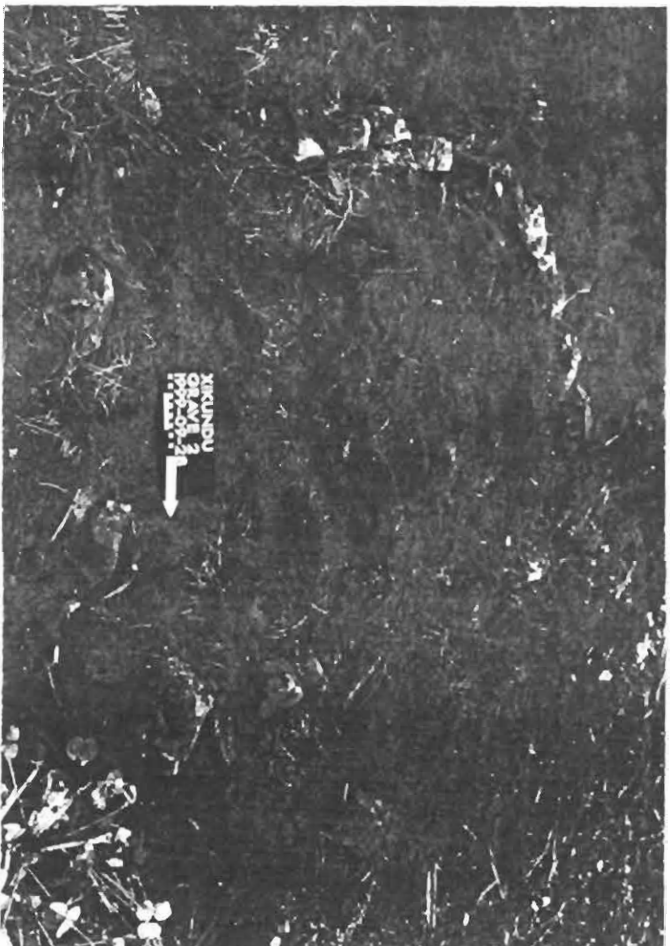


Photo 3: Xikundu Grave 002 Grave dressing

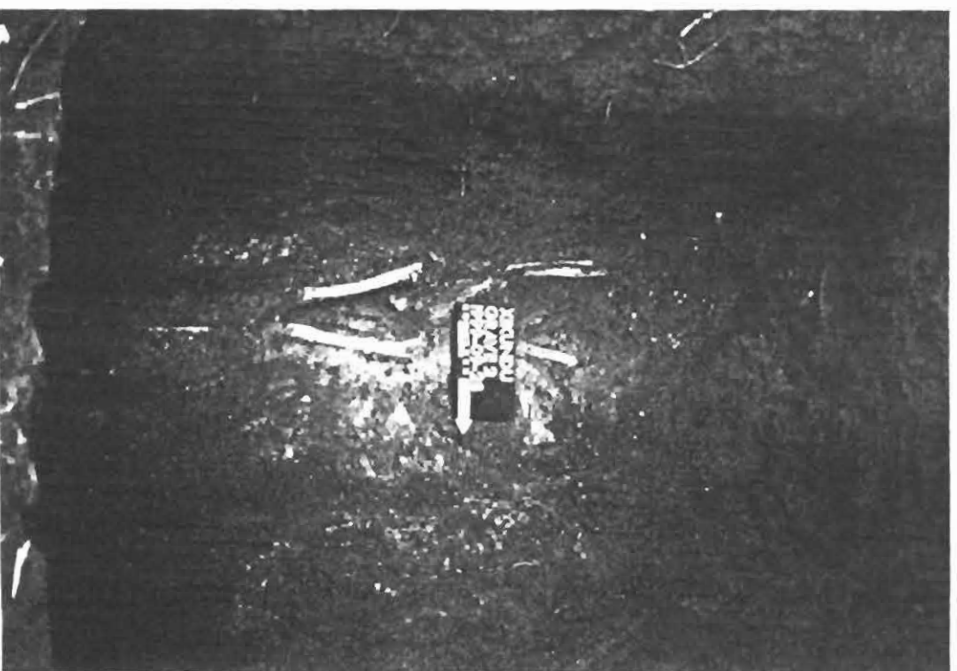


Photo 4: Xikundu Grave 002 Skeletal remains

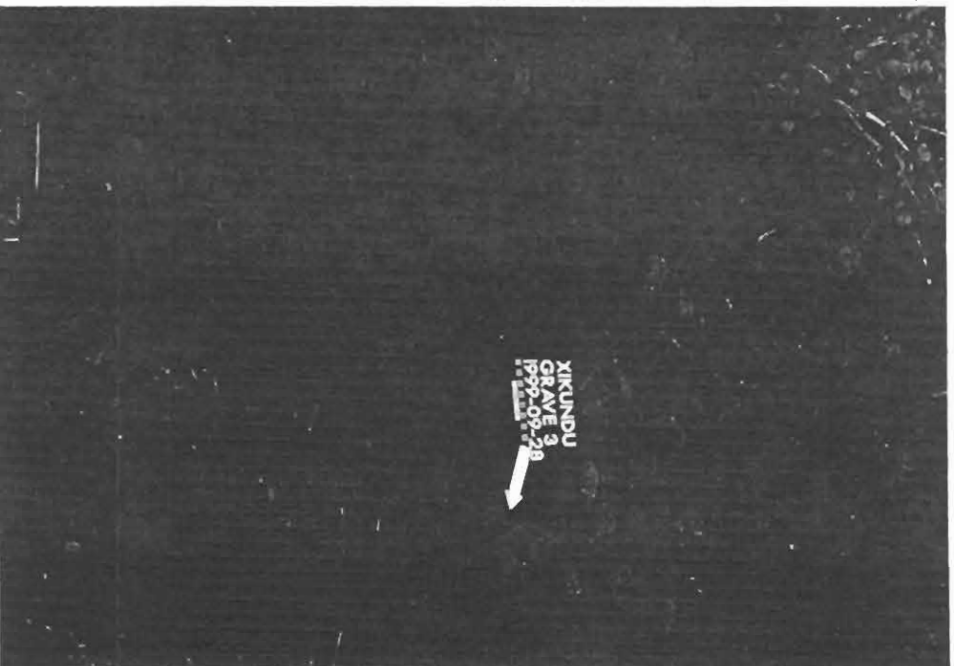


Photo 5: Xikundu Grave 003 Grave dressing



Photo 6: Xikundu Grave 003 Skeletal remains