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A survey of Iron Age sites  
on Grefswald 37 MS, Hamilton 41 MS and Den Staat 17 MS

Interim report

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# A survey of Iron Age sites on Greefswald 37 MS, Hamilton 41 MS and Den Staat 17 MS

## **Introduction**

This interim report consists of field notes that are prepared for publication. The notes refer to the current survey of selected Iron Age sites on the farms Greefswald 37 MS, Samaria 28 MS, Hamilton 41 MS and Den Staat 27 MS that is part of a study of the Iron Age cultural landscape, settlement patterns and architecture in and around the Mapungubwe Valley. This report refers to test excavations on Samaria 28 MS and Hamilton 41 MS (Permit No. 80/99/04/06/51) and a survey of a site recorded as Pon 5 (Permit No. 80/99/08/007/51). In accordance with permit specifications, the archive and collection of the project is the property of the University and is currently managed at the Mapungubwe museum.

## **Objective**

The objective of the current survey is to identify and date the sites that are related to Mapungubwe to reconstruct and interpret the settlement sequence and settlement patterns of the Iron Age complexes of the Mapungubwe Valley.

## **Method**

The sites are located, mapped and excavation grids laid out to position the test excavations (cf. Photo 2). The test pits are excavated according to full excavation standards (cf. Photo 3). Layers are determined with the aid of systematic excavation techniques and the use of mini trenches within the test pits (cf. Photo 4). The stratigraphic recording of the deposits include systematic descriptions, plan drawings, profile drawings and photographs (cf. Photo 5). The recovery of archaeological material includes sifting through fine and coarse mesh and sorting of all materials by hand (cf. Photo 6). A human skeleton was found in the test pit on Site Map 23 and was carefully recorded, removed, researched and already published by the Department of Anatomy at the University of Pretoria (cf. Photo 7). Site features are recorded for future site analysis (cf. Photo 8). (The human remains from the test pit on site Map 23 was carefully packed (cf. Photo 9). The field management of the archaeological collection from the site surface and test pit includes labeling, bagging and listing (cf. Photo 10). All the test pits are filled up directly after excavation (cf. Photo 11).

## **The sites**

### *Site Map 20*

Site Map 20 is situated on a flat hill-top on Samaria 28 MS (cf. Figure 1). The site consists of a fairly large kraal deposit that is surrounded by evidence of settlement. The site is marked with an iron peg and the site number that are embedded in a cement block.

The date of material collected on the site is Pta 8007,  $350 \pm 15$  BP, calibrated 1528-1554; 1633(1638)1643 AD.

#### ***Site Map 21***

Site Map 21 is situated on a flat hill-top on Samaria 28 MS (cf. Figure 1). The site consists of an enclosure formed by two stone walls (cf. Photo 12) and evidence of settlement. The site is marked with an iron peg. A test pit of 2mx2m was excavated (cf. Figure 2). The deposit consists of ash mixed with sandy soil (cf. Figure 3, 4; Photo 13). The date of the material collected from the test pit is Pta 8026,  $460 \pm 50$  BP, calibrated 1437 (1456)1497 AD.

#### ***Site Map 22***

Site Map 22 is situated on a flat landscape on Hamilton 41 MS (cf. Figure 1). The site consists of a kraal deposit that is surrounded by evidence of settlement. The site is marked with an iron peg. The deposit in the test pit consists of ash mixed with sandy soil (cf. Figure 6, 7; Photo 14). The date of the material collected on the site is Pta 8018,  $260 \pm 45$  BP, calibrated 1652 (1666)1678, 1763-1803 AD.

#### ***Site Map 23***

Site Map 23 is situated on a flat landscape on Hamilton 41 MS (cf. Figure 1). The site is marked with an iron peg B2. A test pit of 2mx2m (cf. Figure 8) showed that the deposit in the test pit consists of ashy midden material (cf. Figure 9, 10; Photo 15). A human skeleton was exposed and removed (cf. Photo 16, 17, 18). The date of the material collected from the skeleton on the site is Pta 8016,  $850 \pm 35$  BP, calibrated 1216(1244)1267 AD. The date of material collected from the test Pit is Pta 8023,  $855 \pm 20$  BP, 1223(1239)1265 AD.

#### ***Site Map 24***

Site Map 24 is situated on a flat landscape on Hamilton 41 MS (cf. Figure 1). The site consists of evidence of settlement and several stone structures on the surface (cf. Figure 11; Photo 19). The deposit in the test pit of 2mx2m consists of sandy soil (cf. Figure 12, 13; Photo 20). A stone structure and gravel floor was exposed and left intact (cf. Photo 21). The date of material collected on the site from the site is Pta 8014,  $850 \pm 60$  BP, calibrated 1192(1244)1276 AD.

#### ***Site Map 25***

Site Map 20 is situated on a flat landscape on Hamilton 41 MS (cf. Figure 1). The site consists of a kraal deposit, surrounded by evidence of settlement (cf. Photo 22) The site is presently not marked with an iron peg.

***Site Pon 5***

The site is located on Den Staat 27 MS (cf. Figure 1).

The site surface has been mapped in detail (cf. site map) by a surveyor. The map is currently being processed by a cartographer.

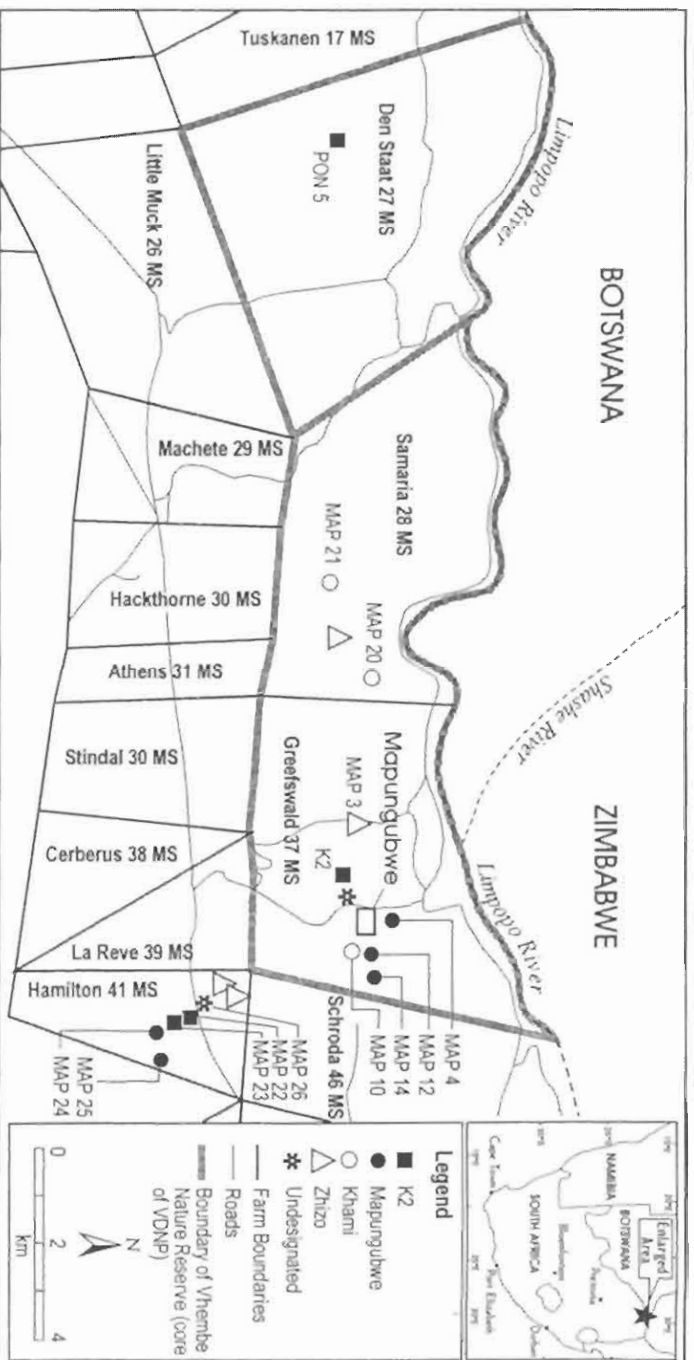
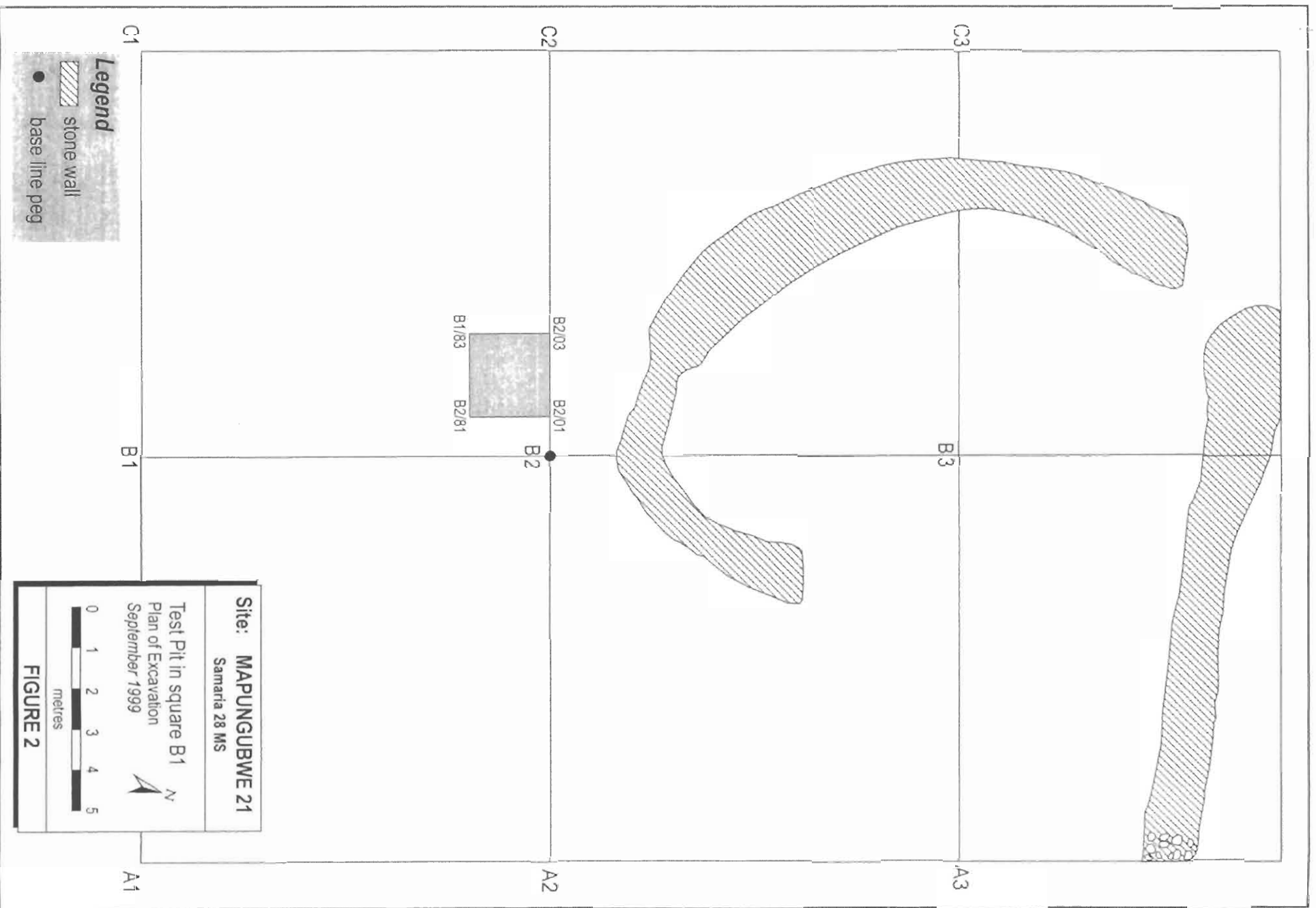


Figure 1



**Site: MAPUNGBWE 21**  
 Samaria 28 MS

Test Pit in square B1  
 Plan of Excavation  
 September 1999



**FIGURE 2**

B2/03

B2/01



B1/83

B1/81

Site: **MAPUNGUBWE 21**

Samaria 28 MS

Test Pit in Square B2






Plan of Layer 2

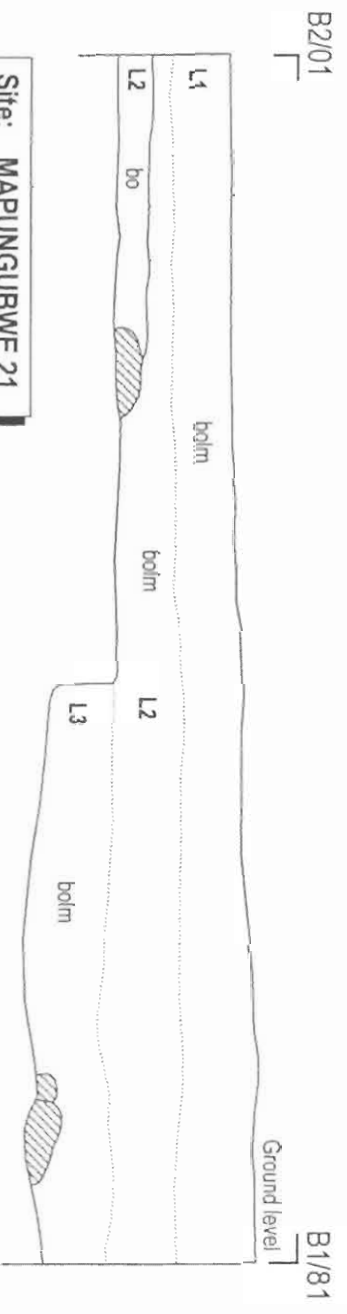
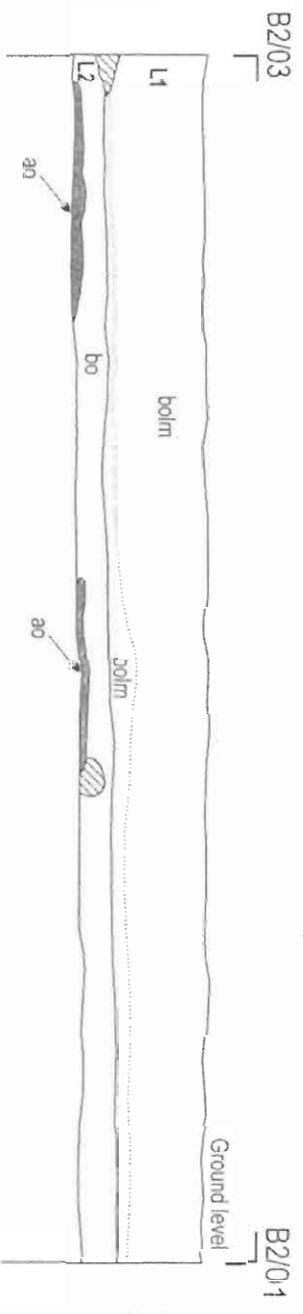
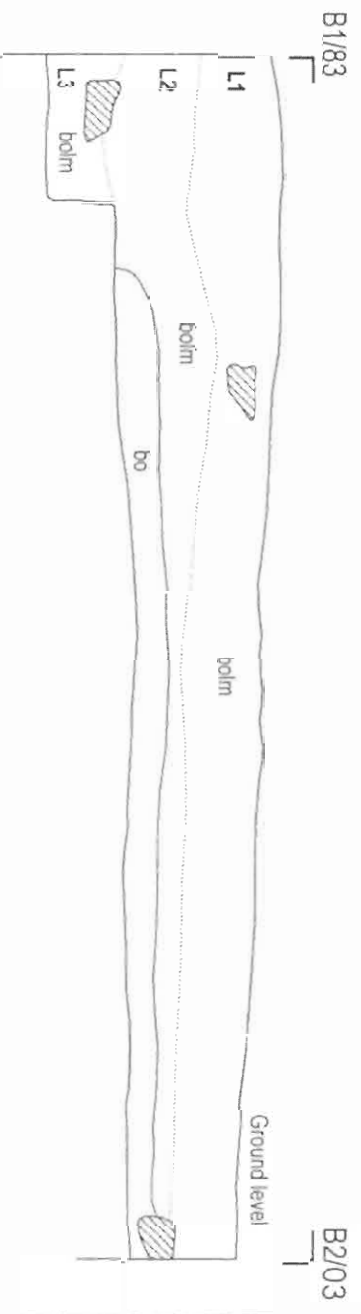
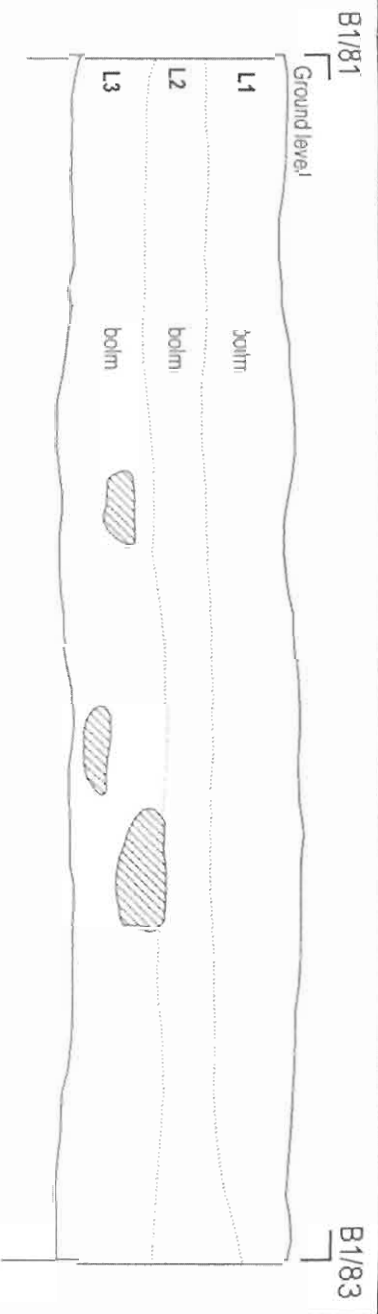
September 1999



**FIGURE 3**

**Legend**

-  bone
-  stone
-  white ash
-  bo light grey ash
-  bolm light grey ash mixed with sandy soil and gravel



Site: **MAPUNGU BWE 21**  
Samaria 28 MS

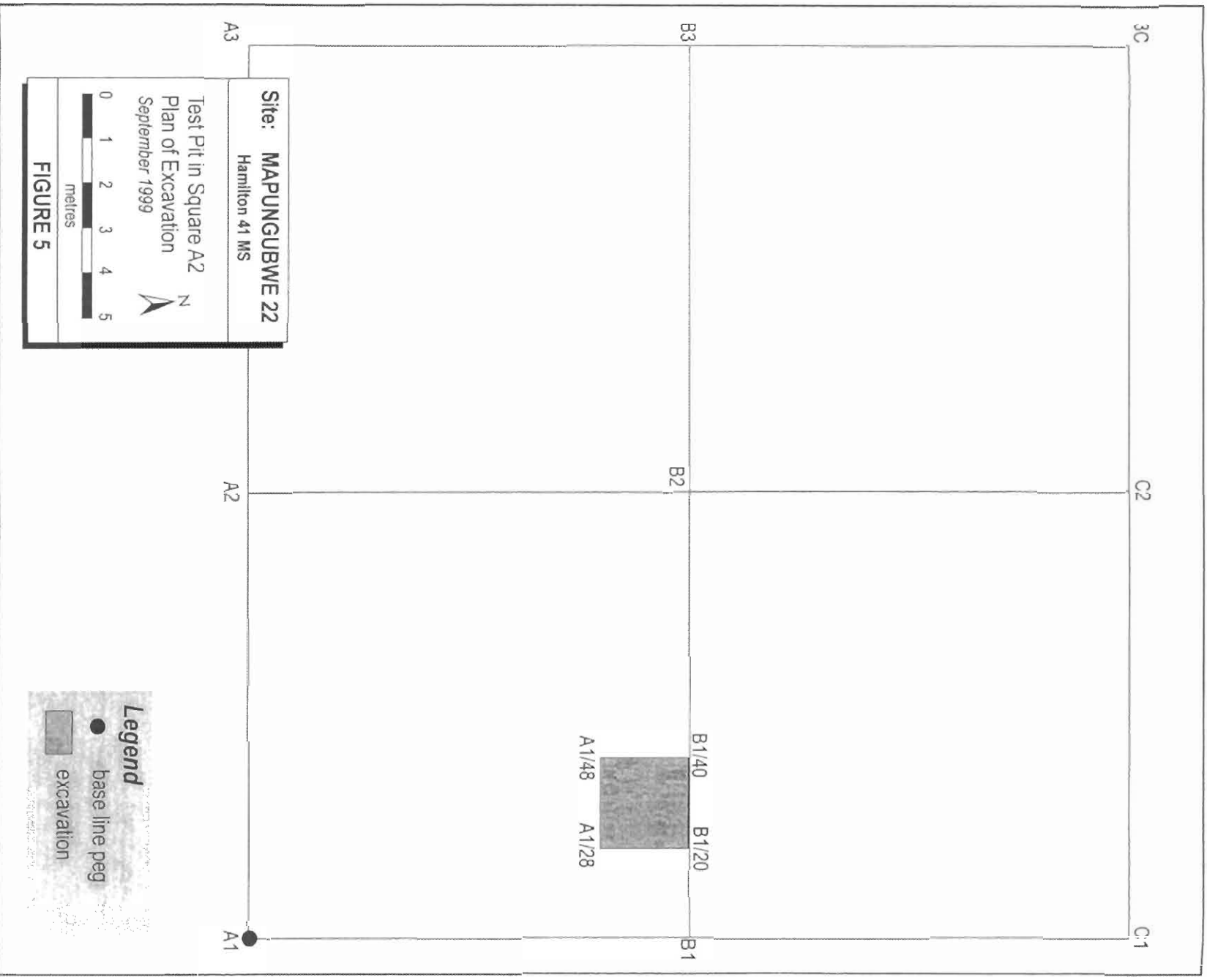
Profiles of Test Pit in  
Square 1  
September 1999



**FIGURE 4**

Legend	
	arbitrary distinction between layers
	ao white ash
	bo light grey ash
	bolm light grey ash mixed with sandy soil
	stone



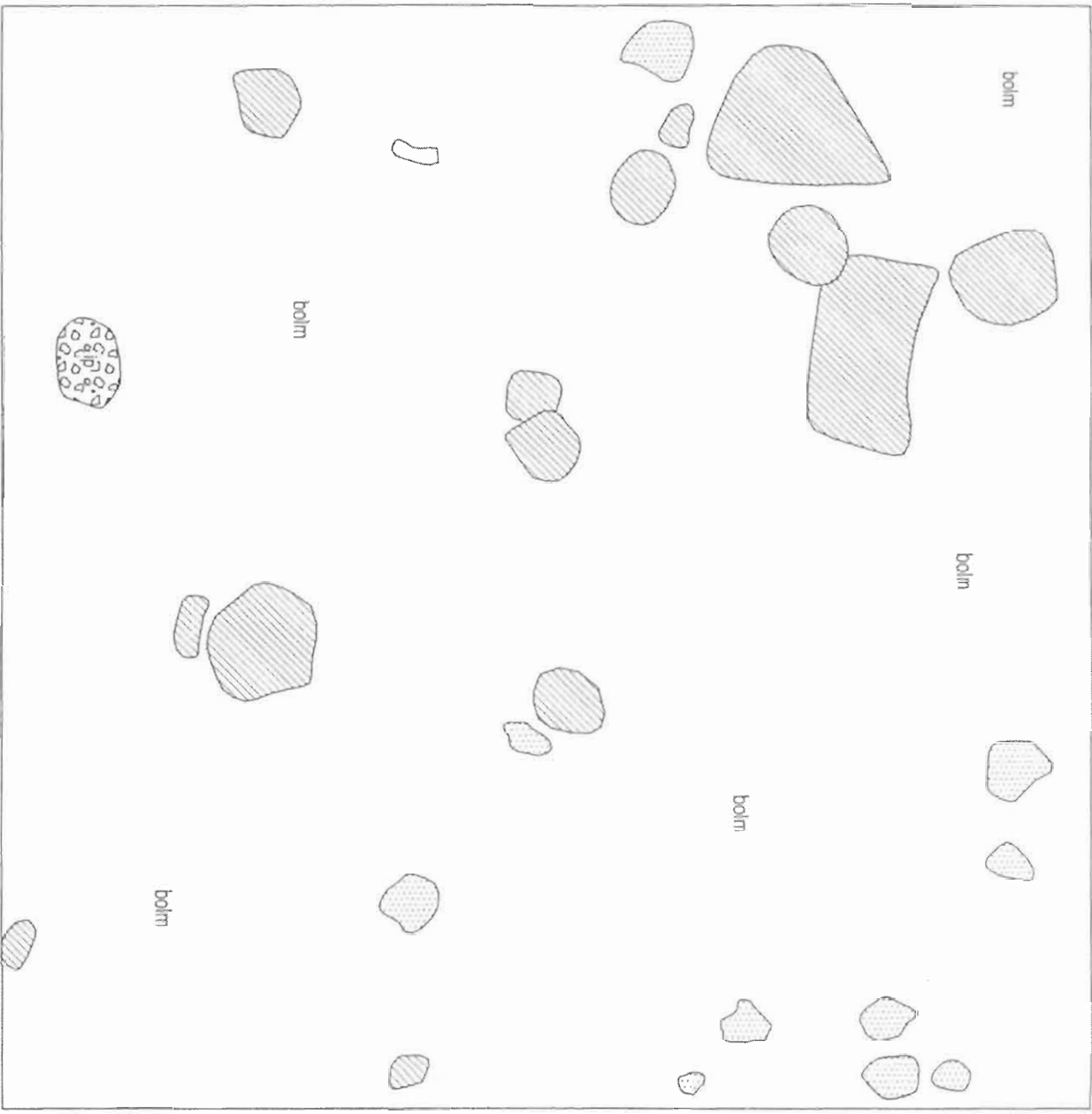


**FIGURE 5**

B1/40

Profile B1/40 - B1/20

B1/20








A1/48

Profile A1/28 - A1/48

A1/28

**Legend**

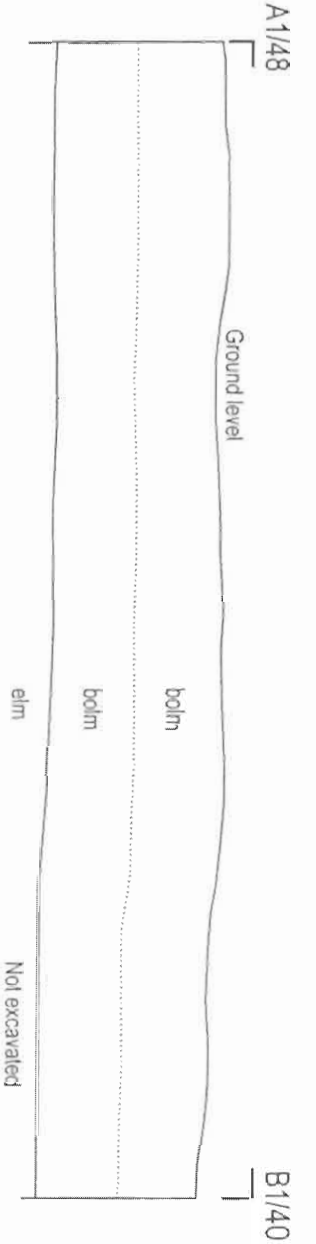
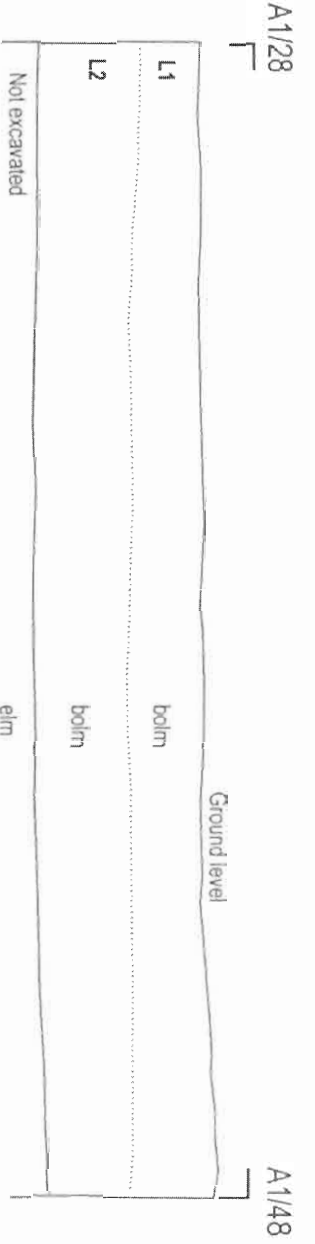
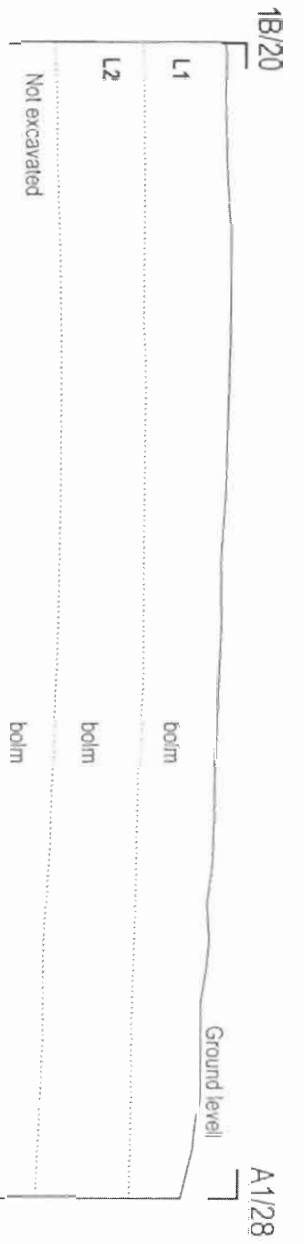
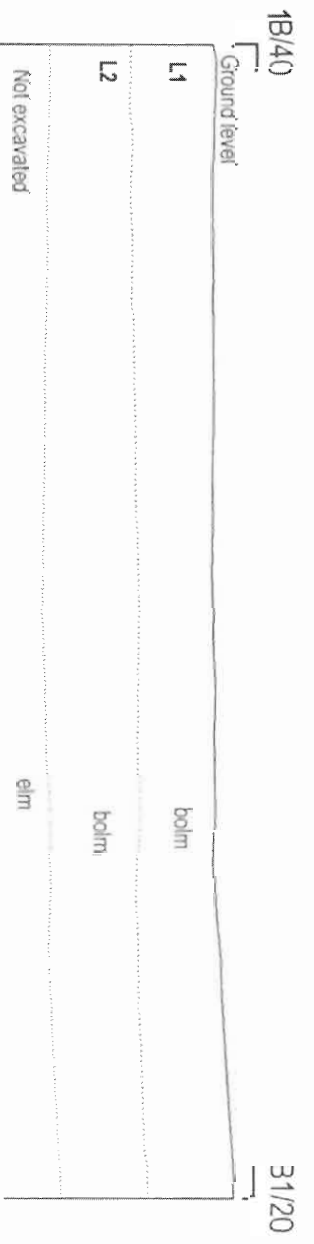
-  stone
-  polisher
-  ip
-  bolm
-  light grey ash mixed with sandy soil and gravel

**Site: MAPUNGBWE 22**  
 Hamilton 41 MS

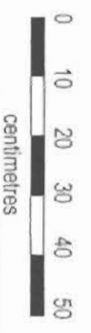
Test Pit in Square A1  
 Plan of Layer 1  
 September 1999



**FIGURE 6**



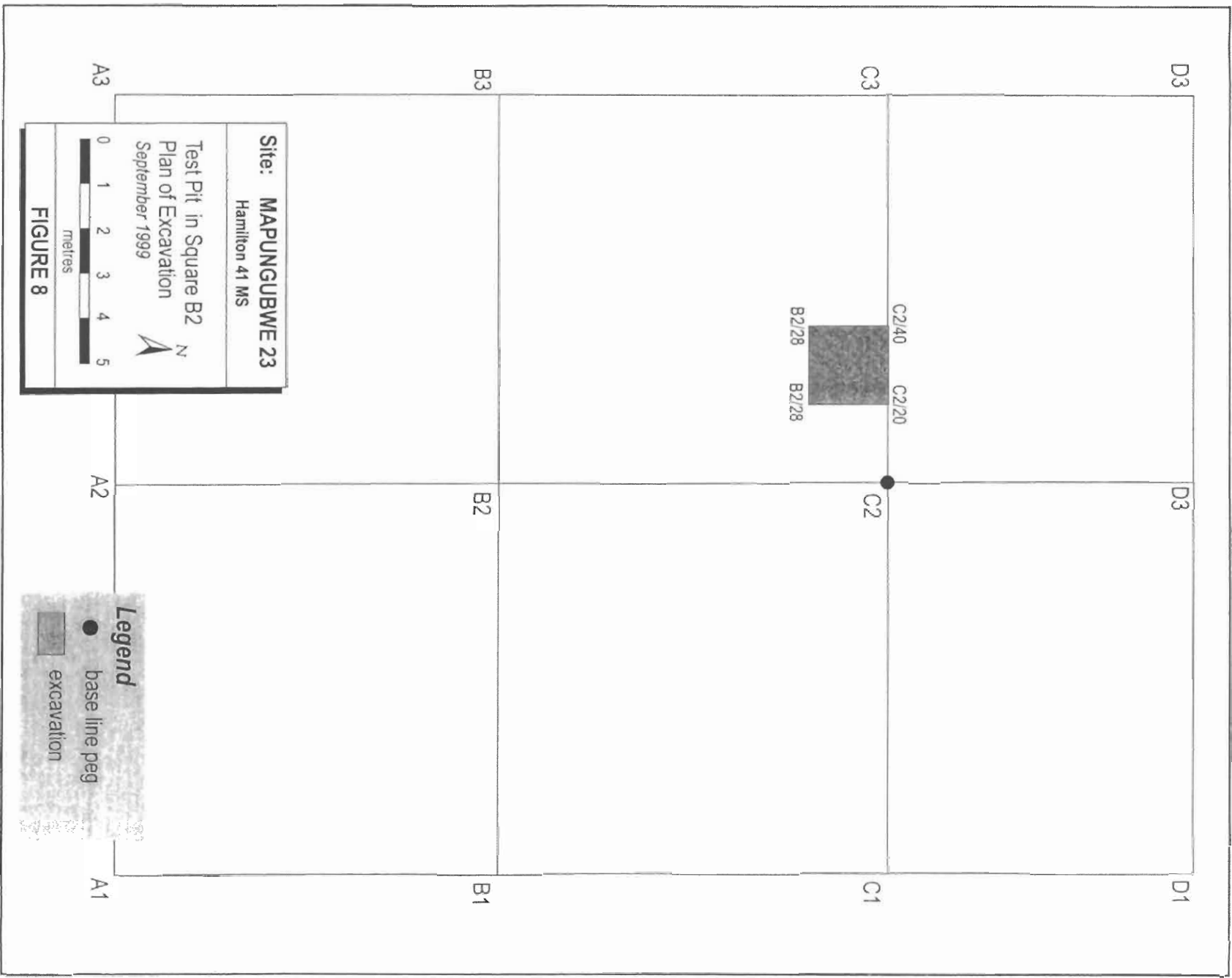
**Site: MAPUNGUBWE 21**  
 Hamilton 41 MS  
**Test Pit in Square A1**  
 Profiles 1  
 September 1999



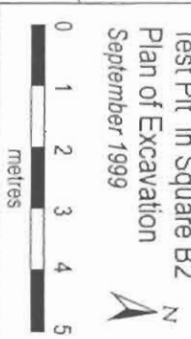
**FIGURE 7**

**Legend**

elm light brown sandy soil  
 bolm light grey ash mixed with sandy soil and gravel

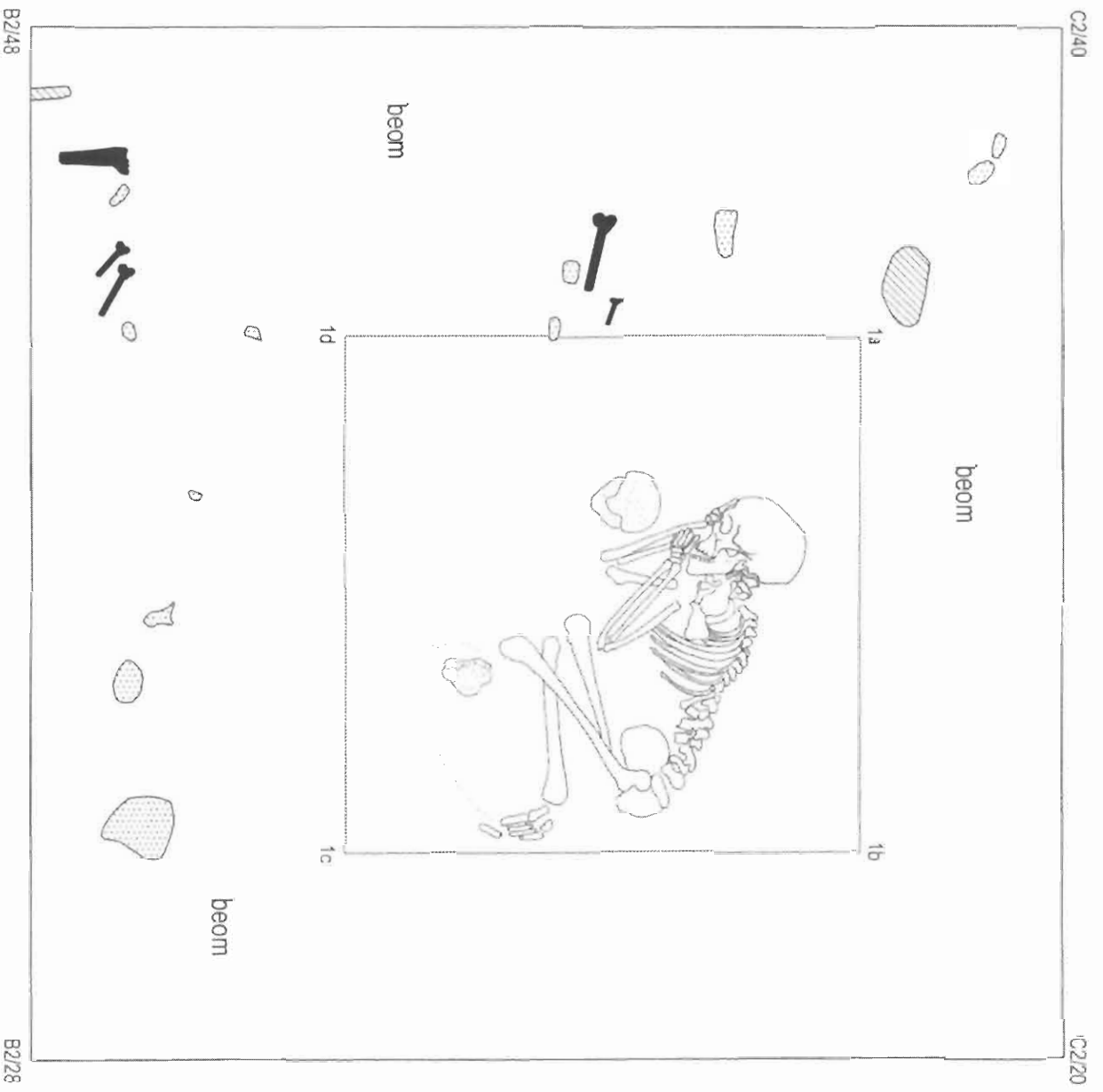


**Site: MAPUNGBWE 23**  
 Hamilton 41 MS  
 Test Pit in Square B2  
 Plan of Excavation  
 September 1999



**FIGURE 8**

**Legend**  
 ● base line peg  
 ■ excavation

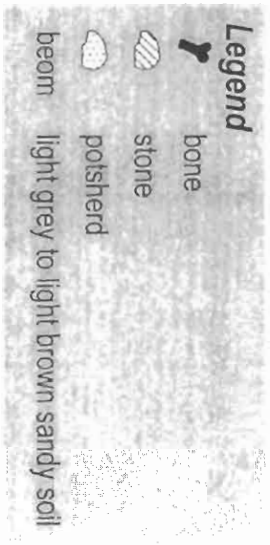


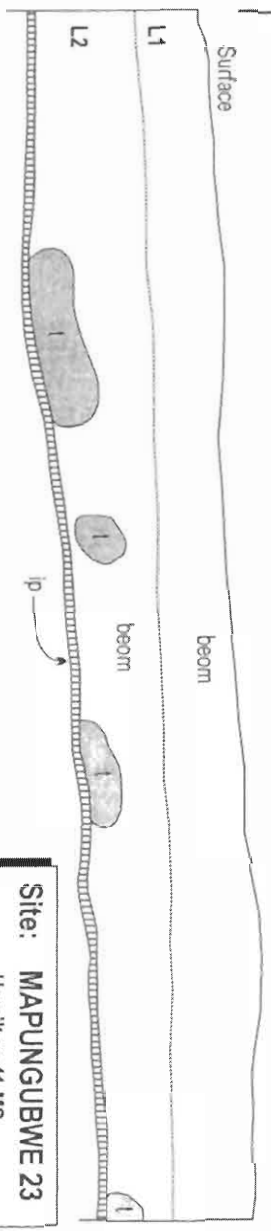
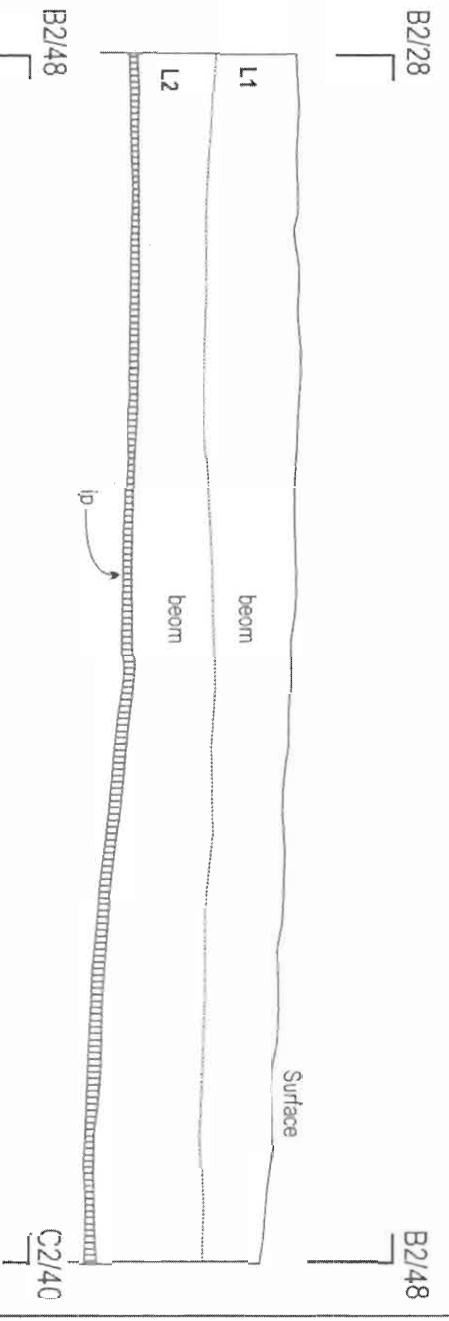
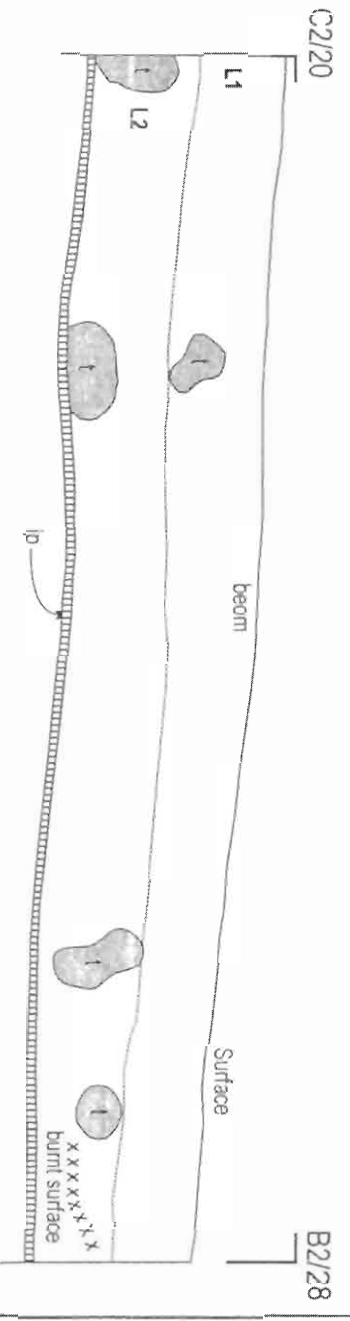
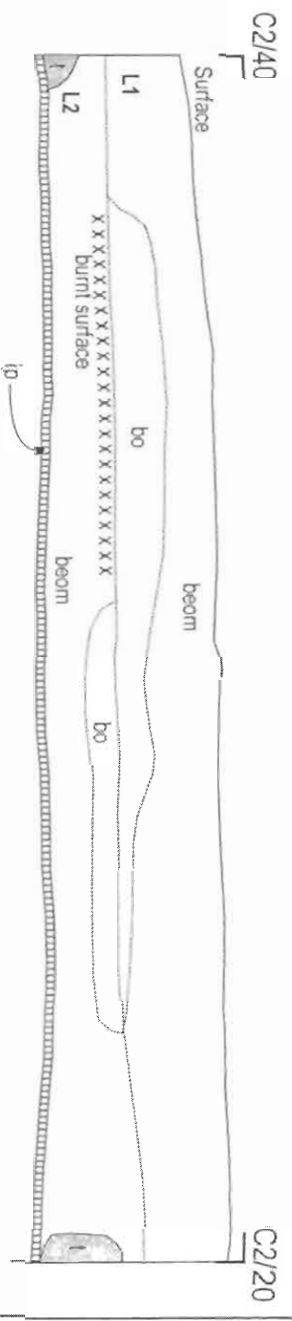
Site: **MAPUNGU BWE 23**  
 Hamilton 41 MS

Test Pit in Square B2  
 Plan of Layer 2  
 September 1999



**FIGURE 9**





**Legend**

beam light grey to light brown sandy soil

bo grey ash

ip red gravel

t disturbance (animal burrow)

**Site: MAPUNGBWE 23**  
Hamilton 41 MS

Test Pit in square B2  
Profiles  
September 1999

0 10 20 30 40 50  
cm

**FIGURE 10**

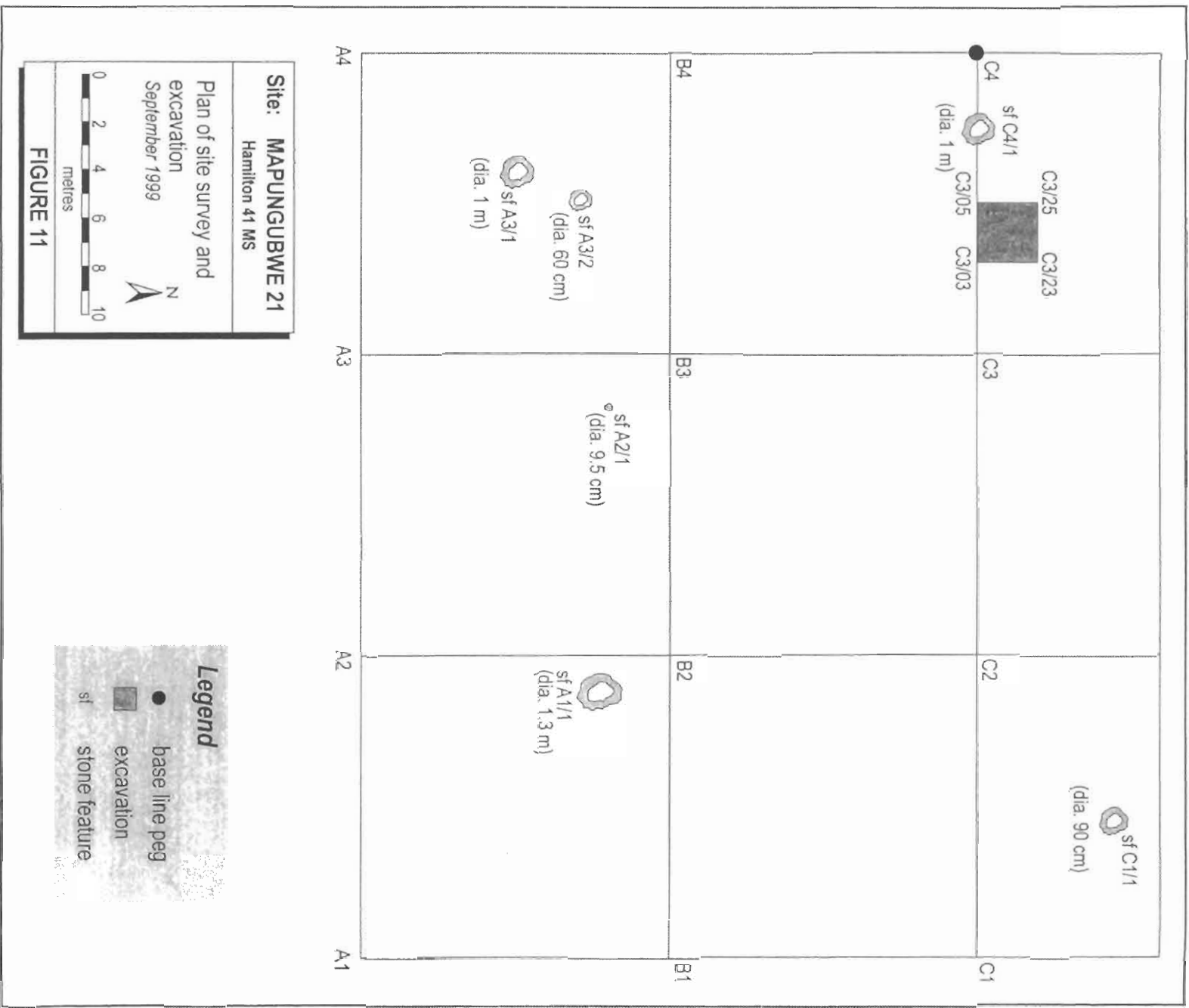
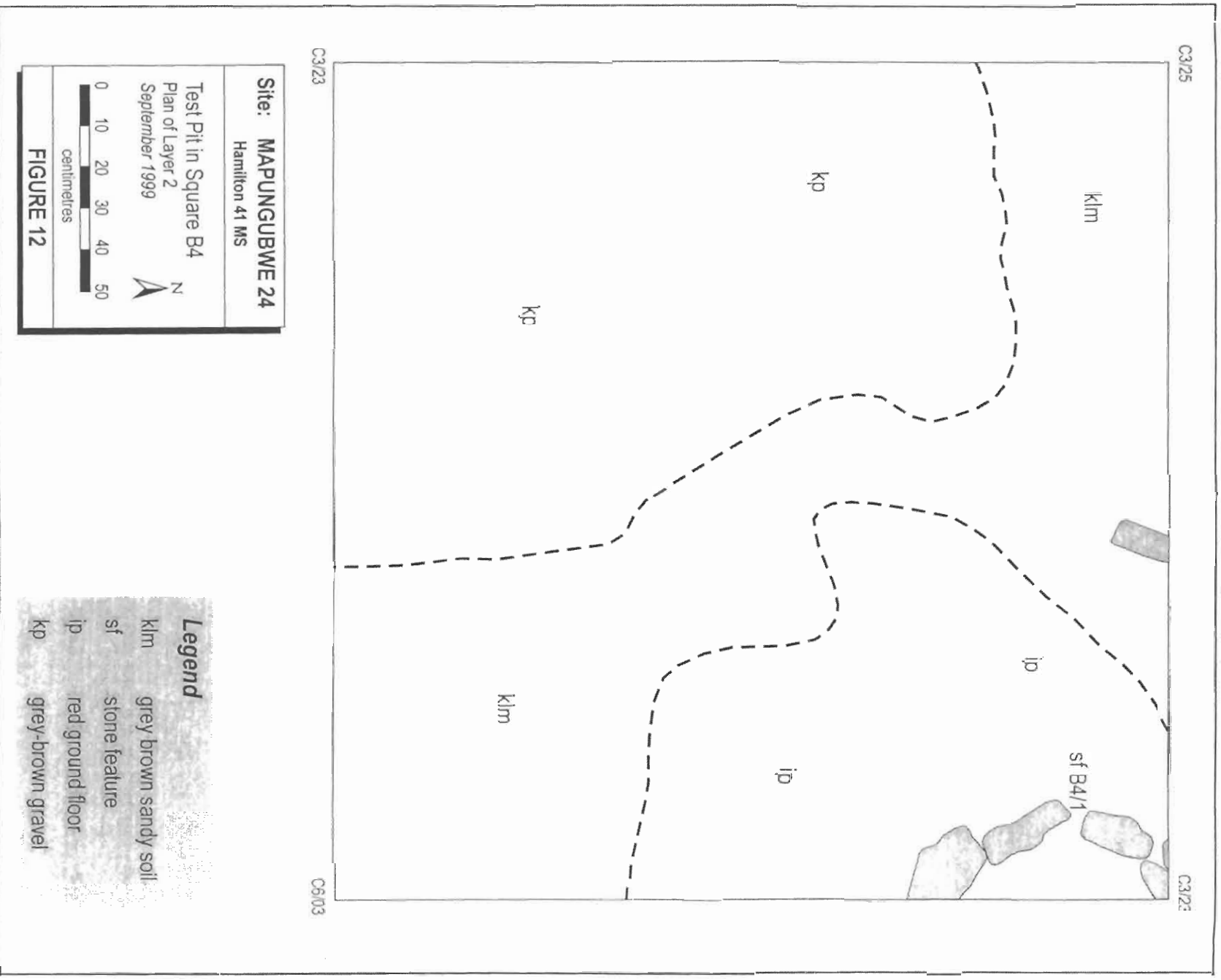
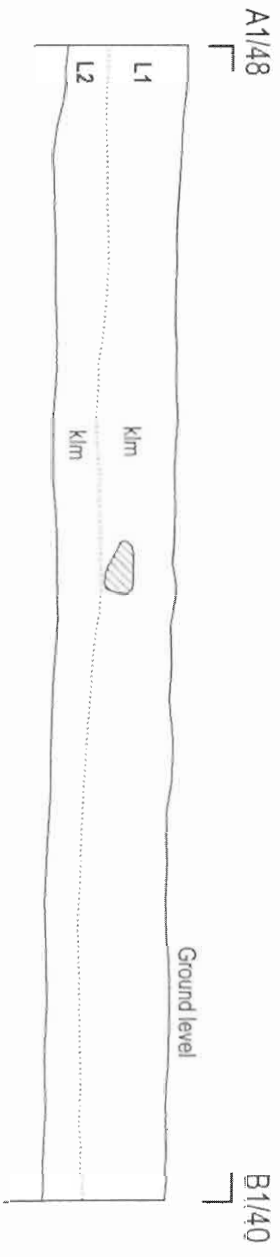
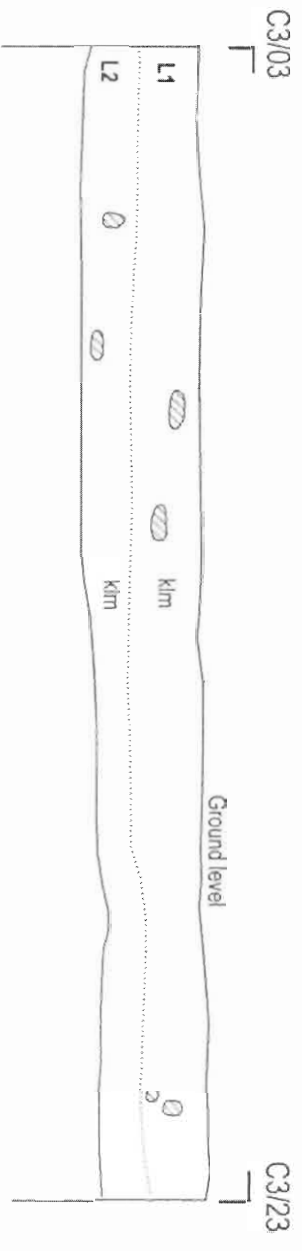
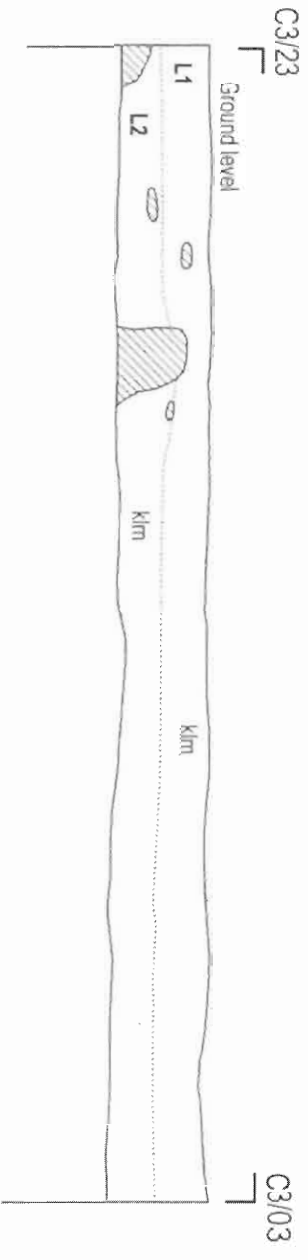
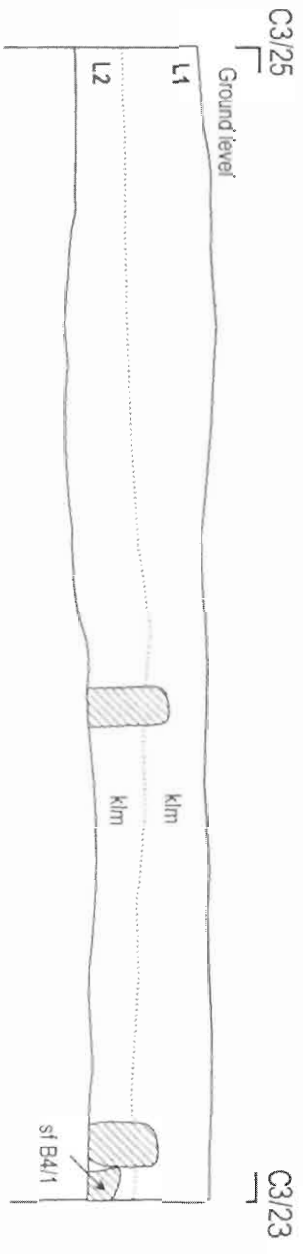


FIGURE 11







**Site: MAPUNGBWE 24**  
Hamilton 41 MS

Test Pit in Square B4  
Profiles  
September 1999

0 10 20 30 40 50  
centimetres

**FIGURE 13**

**Legend**

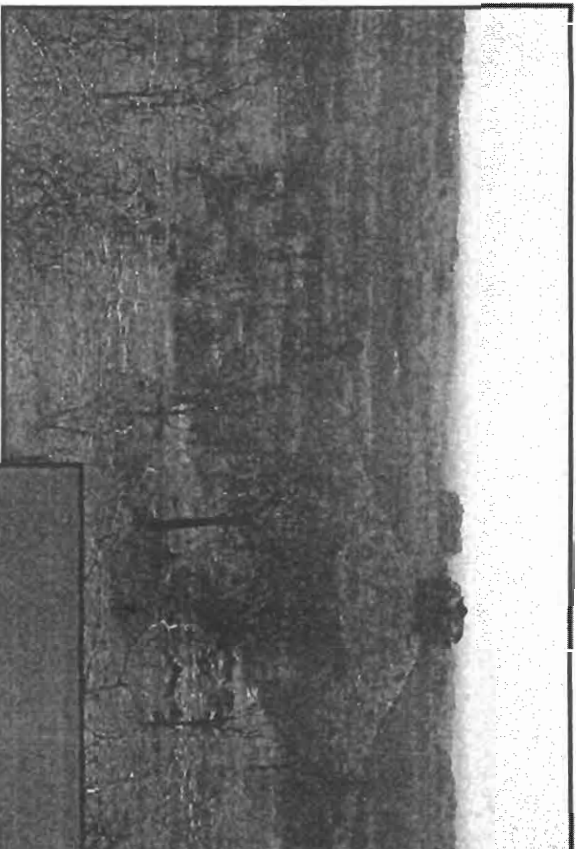
stone

grey-brown sandy soil

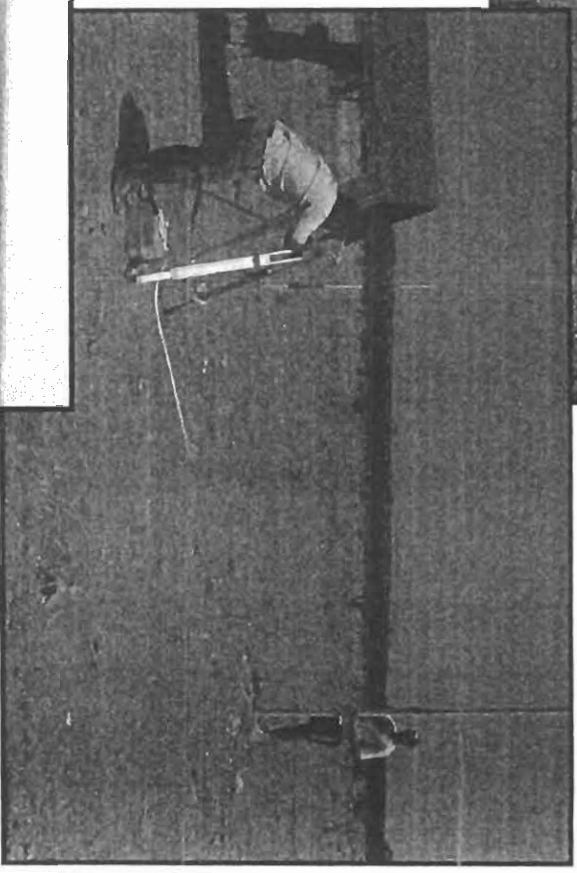
stone feature

klm

sf



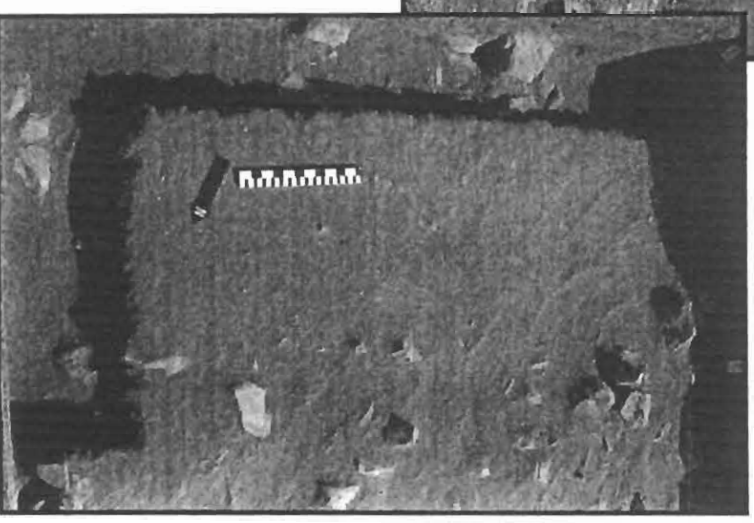
**Photo 1.**  
A view of the Mapungubwe Valley



**Photo 2.**  
A survey of site surface features and grid lay-out, in this case on Site Map 23.



**Photo 3.**  
A test pit excavation (Test Pit TP1/Map21/99) by the field research team on site Map 21.



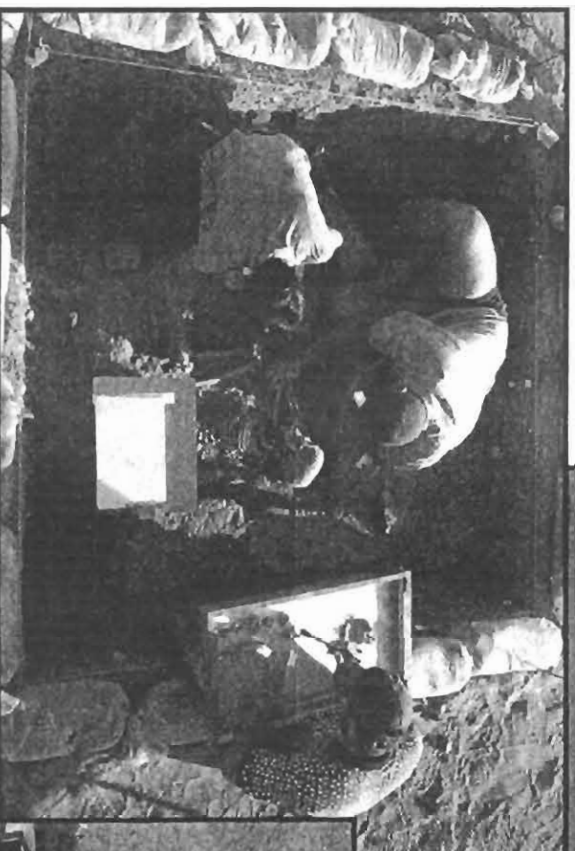
**Photo 4.**  
A mini test trench in the test pit (TP1/Map21/99) on site Map 21.



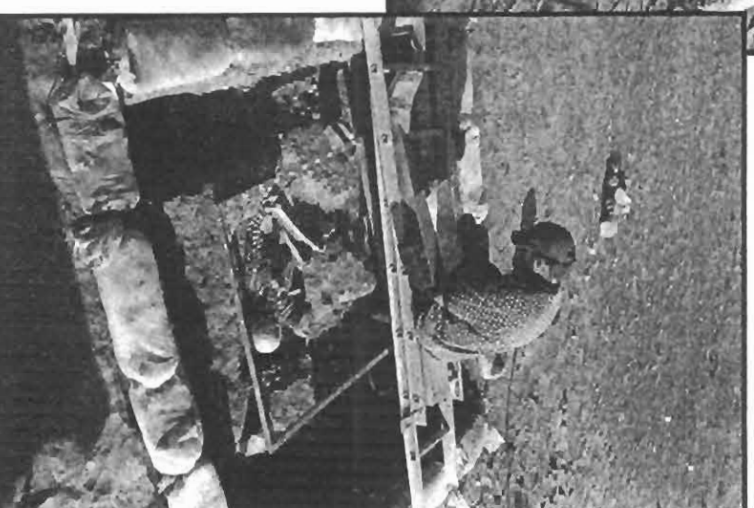
**Photo 5.**  
Stratigraphic recording during the excavation process, in this case on site Map 21 (Test Pit TP1/Map21/99).



**Photo 6.**  
Sifting and sorting of material, in this case by a school study group on site Map 23.



**Photo 7.**  
Excavating a human skeleton in a grave in the test pit (TP1/Map23/99) on Site Map 23.



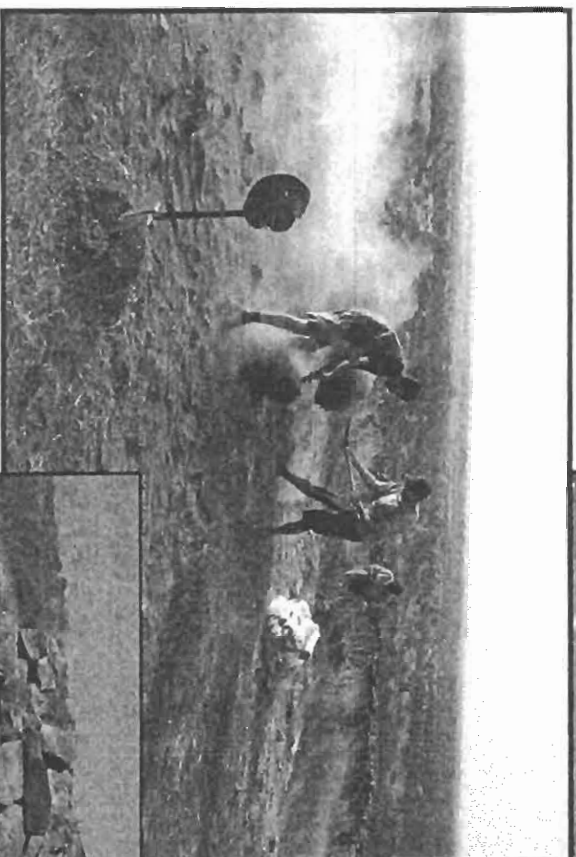
**Photo 8.**  
Recording of site features, in this case the human grave in the test pit (TP1/Map23/99) on Site Map 23.



**Photo 9.**  
On-site collection management, in this case of the material from the test pit (TP1/Map23/99) on site Map 23.



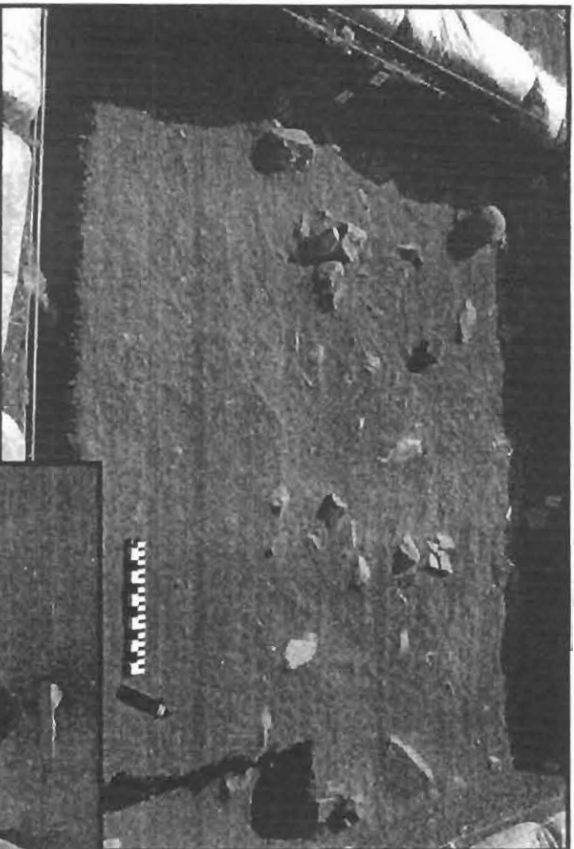
**Photo 10.**  
Bagging and labeling of excavated material, in this case from the test pit (TP1/Map23/99) on site Map 23.



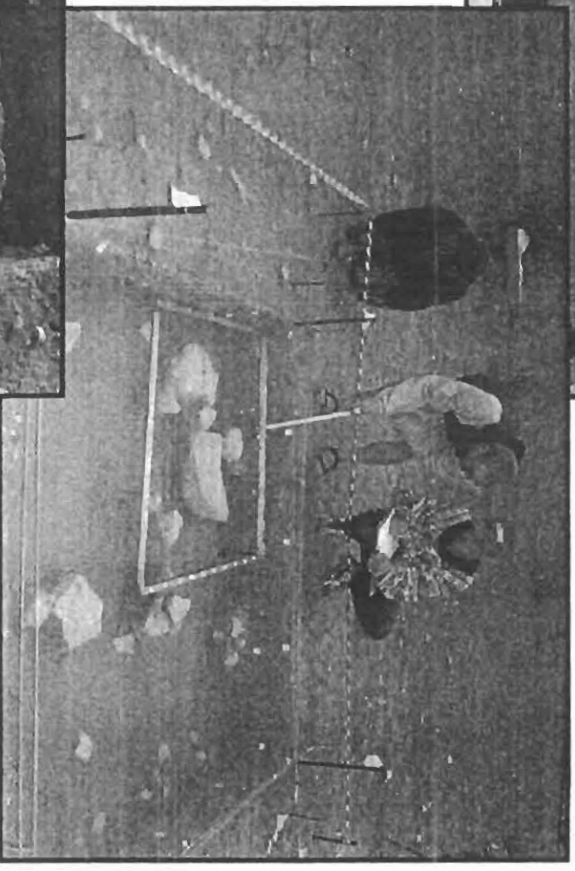
**Photo 11.**  
Filling up the test pit (TP1/Map21/99) on site Map 21.



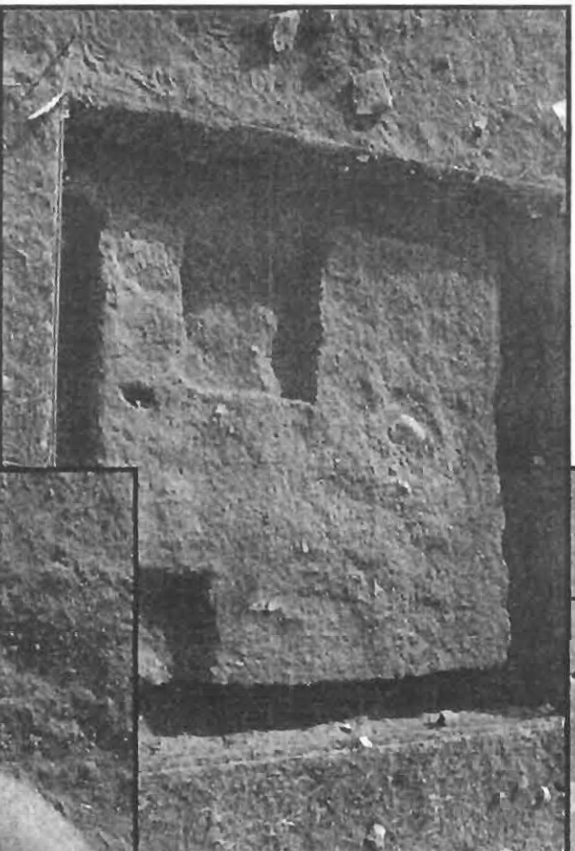
**Photo 12.**  
Stone Wall 1 on site Map 21.



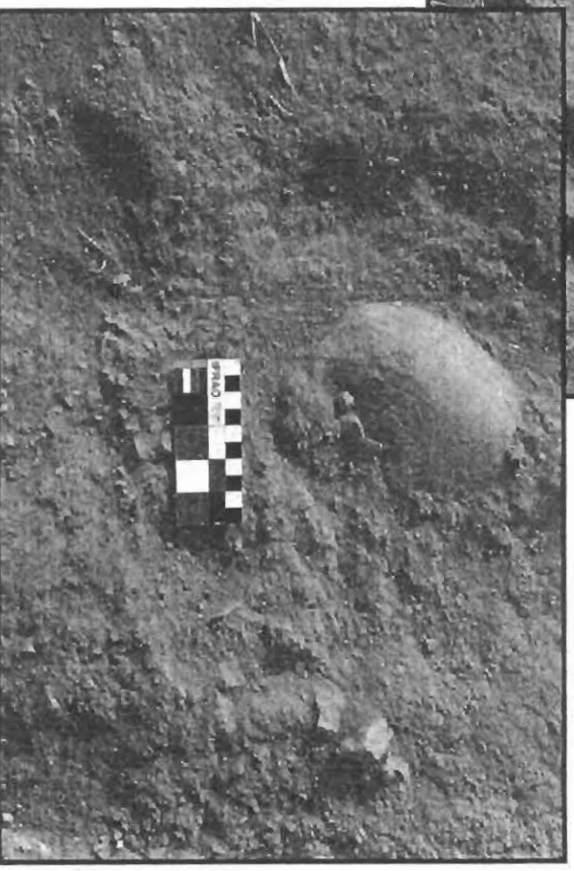
**Photo 13.**  
The surface of Layer 3 in the test pit (TP1/Map21/99) on site Map 21.



**Photo 14.**  
The surface of Layer 3 in the test pit (TP1/Map22/99) on Site Map 22.



**Photo 15.**  
The excavation of Layer 2 in the test pit (TP1/Map23/99) on site Map 23.



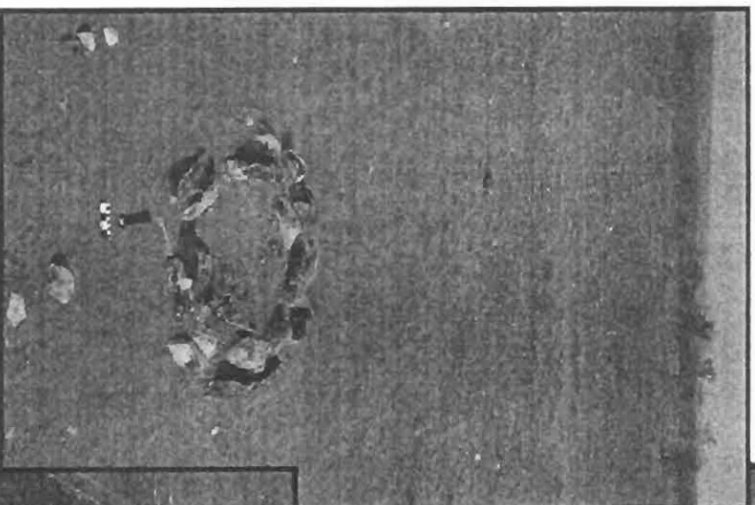
**Photo 16.**  
A human skull visible in Layer 2 in the test pit (TP1/Map23/99) on Site Map 23.



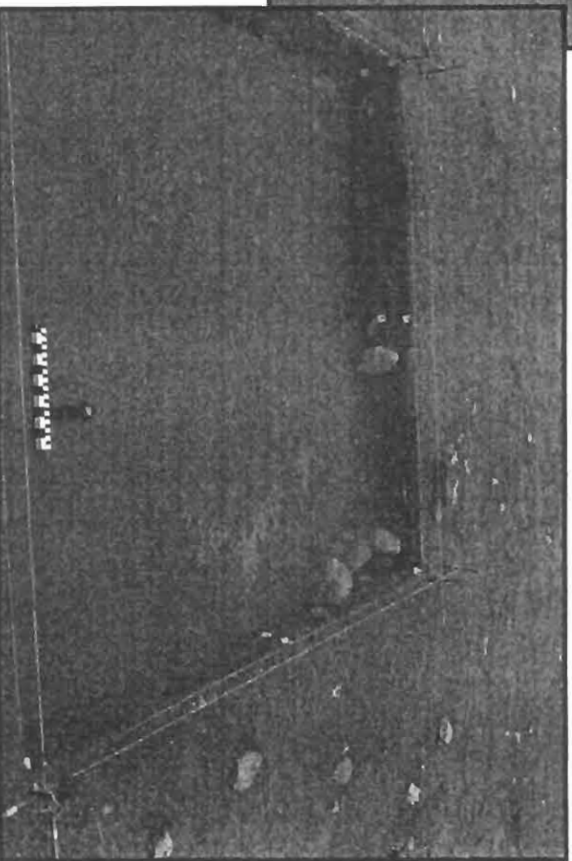
**Photo 17.**  
Layer 2 partially excavated in the test pit (TP1/Map23/99) on site Map 23.



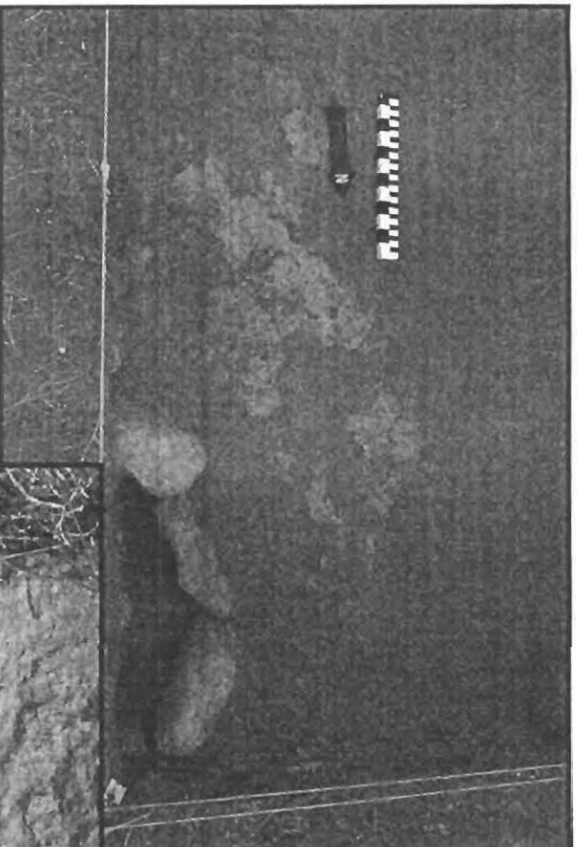
**Photo 18.**  
The human skeleton in a grave in Layer 2 in the test pit (TP1/Map23/99) on Site Map 23.



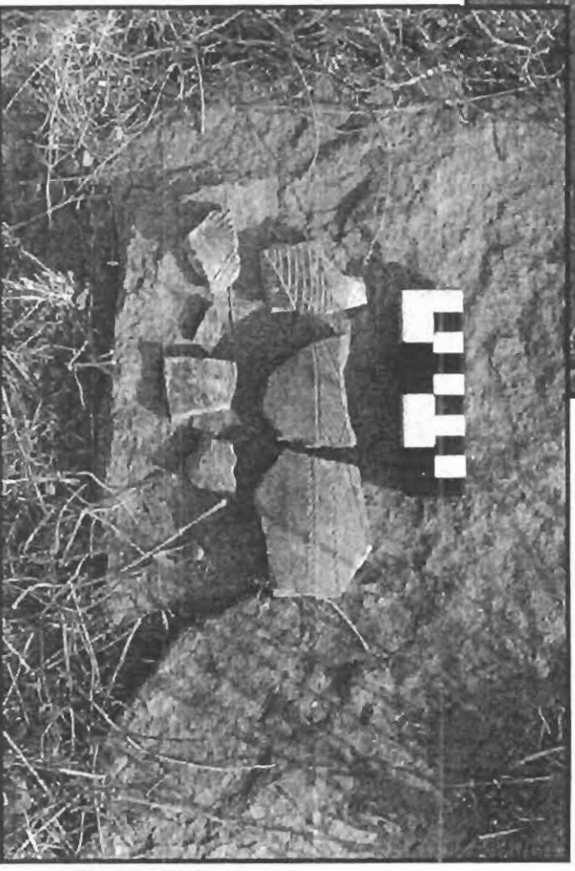
**Photo 20.**  
The deposit in the test pit (TP1/Map24/99) on Site Map 24 after the removal of Layer 2.



**Photo 19.**  
A stone feature on the surface of site Map 24.



**Photo 21.**  
The stone feature (sFB4/1) and  
gravel floor in Layer 2 in the  
test pit (TP 1/Map24/99)  
on site Map 24.



**Photo 22.**  
Potsherds on Site Map 25.