

KCC 20. 2. 04.

Permitting P.
80/99/04/06/51

on Parks
1st of 1st of 1st
2nd of 1st of 1st

**A survey of Iron Age sites
on Samaria 28 MS and Hamilton 41 MS**

A Meyer

Field notes in preparation for publication
December 2003
Copyright reserved

A survey of Iron Age sites on Samaria 28 MS and Hamilton 41 MS

Introduction

This interim report consists of field notes that are prepared for publication. The notes refer to a survey of selected Iron Age sites on the farms Samaria 28 MS and Hamilton 41 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). In accordance with permit specifications, the archive and archaeological collection of the project is managed at the Mapungubwe Museum at the University of Pretoria.

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 material from the sites and the research archive is managed at the Mapungubwe Museum of the University of Pretoria.

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 ± 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 ± 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 ± 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 ± 35 BP, calibrated 1216(1244)1267 AD. The date of material collected from the test Pit is Pta 8023, 855 ± 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 ± 60 BP, calibrated 1192(1244)1276 AD.

Site Map 25

Site Map 25 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 not yet marked with an iron peg.

Site Map 26

Site Map 26 is situated on a flat-topped ridge on Hamilton 41 MS to the west of the present farm-house, to the north of the tar road and overlooking the Mapungubwe valley (cf. Figure 1). The site consists of a kraal deposit and burnt hut rubble that is exposed in modern building foundation trenches. The site has been identified for future research.

Preliminary conclusions and recommendations

The sites Map 20 and Map 21 on Samaria 28 MS are hill-top settlements that are dated to a post-Mapungubwe settlement period between AD 1400 and 1700. These sites appear to be key settlement sites during the Khami Iron Age period in the area. Further research on these sites should be considered as part of a study of this period.

On Hamilton 41 MS the cluster of sites that are situated on the flat landscape near the rim of the Mapungubwe valley to the south-east of Mapungubwe appear to belong to the K2-Mapungubwe Iron Age complex. Of these sites, Map 23 and Map 24 are contemporary to K2 and Mapungubwe. The date for Map 22 is unexpectedly late and the material for this site must be carefully examined and probably re-dated. Site Map 25 is not closely examined and dated yet. These sites must be further investigated to determine aspects such as settlement, dry-land farming and herding patterns.

Little is known of Site Map 26. It is recommended that the modern trenches through the sites be cleared to study the site stratification and a test trench excavated to collect material for dating and identification.

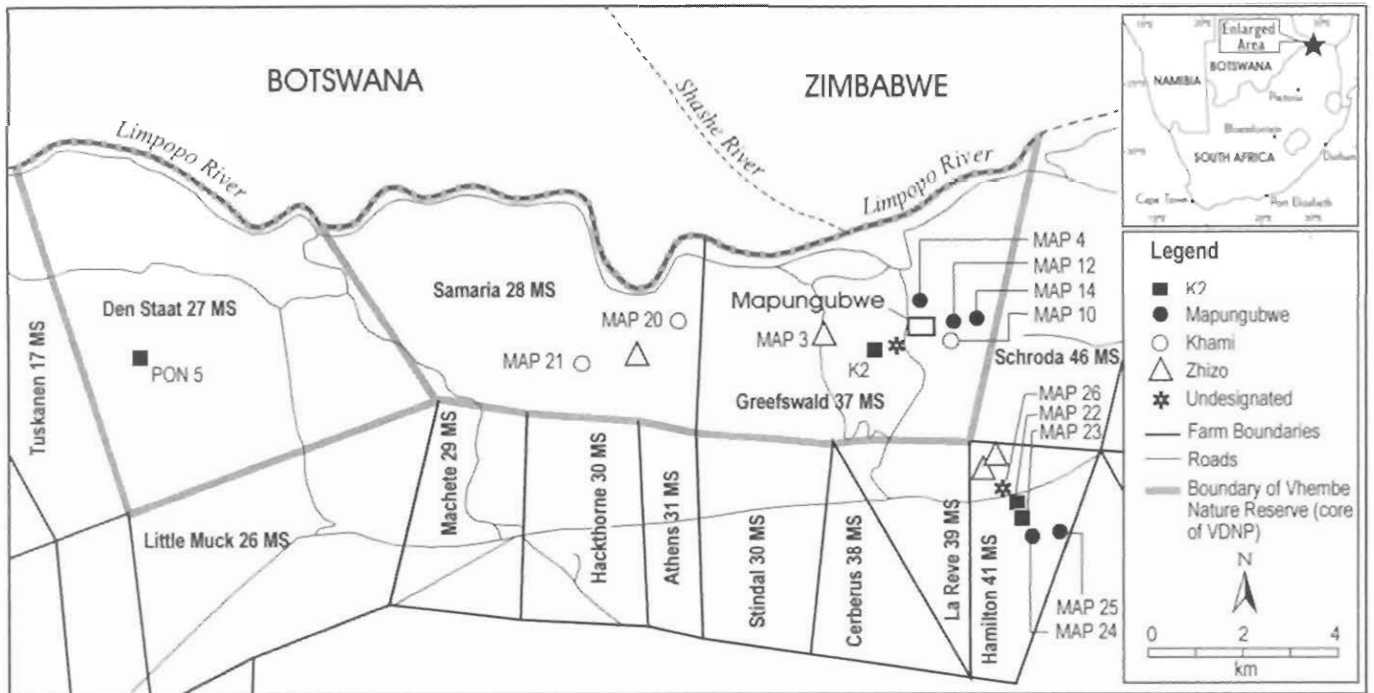
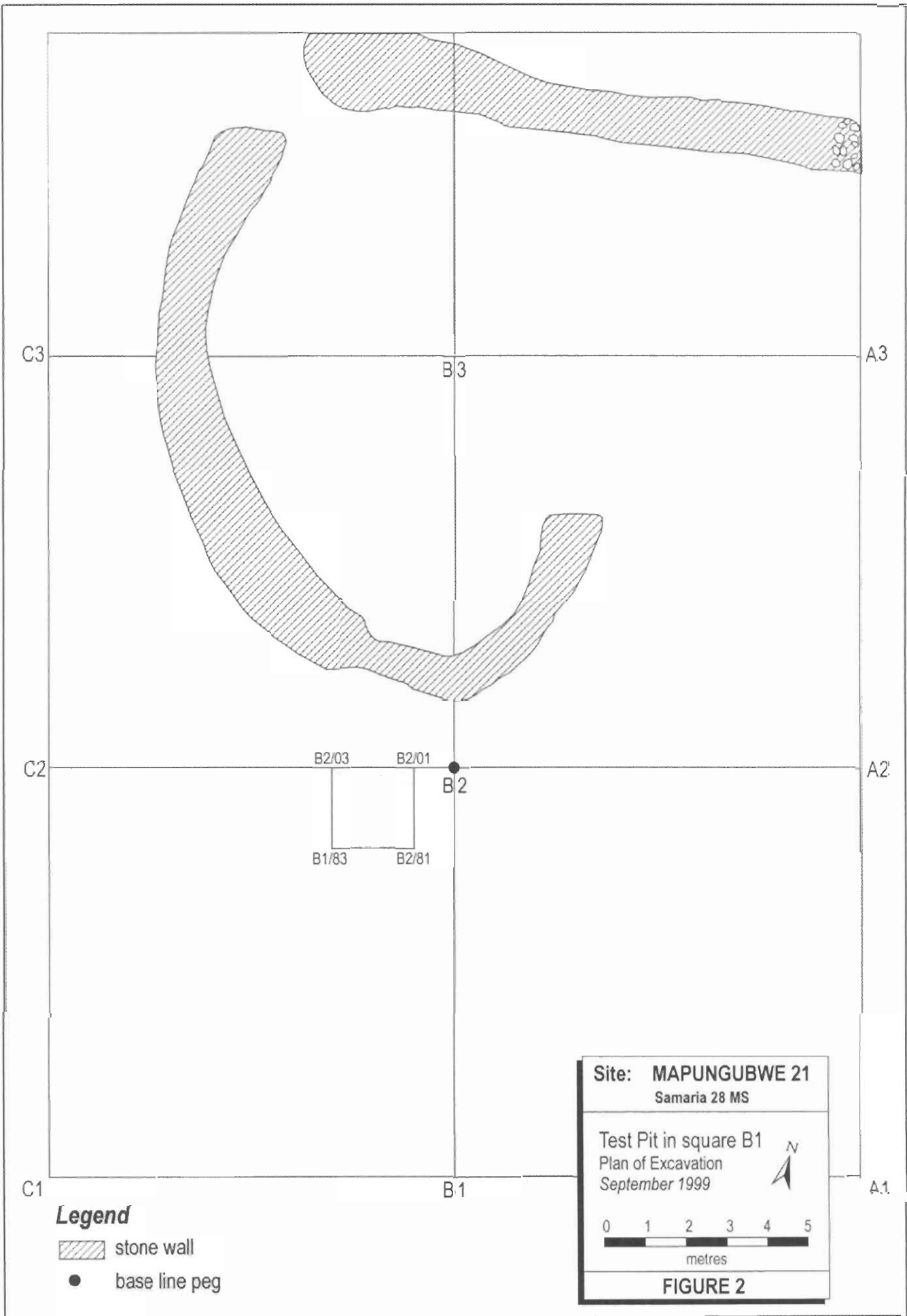
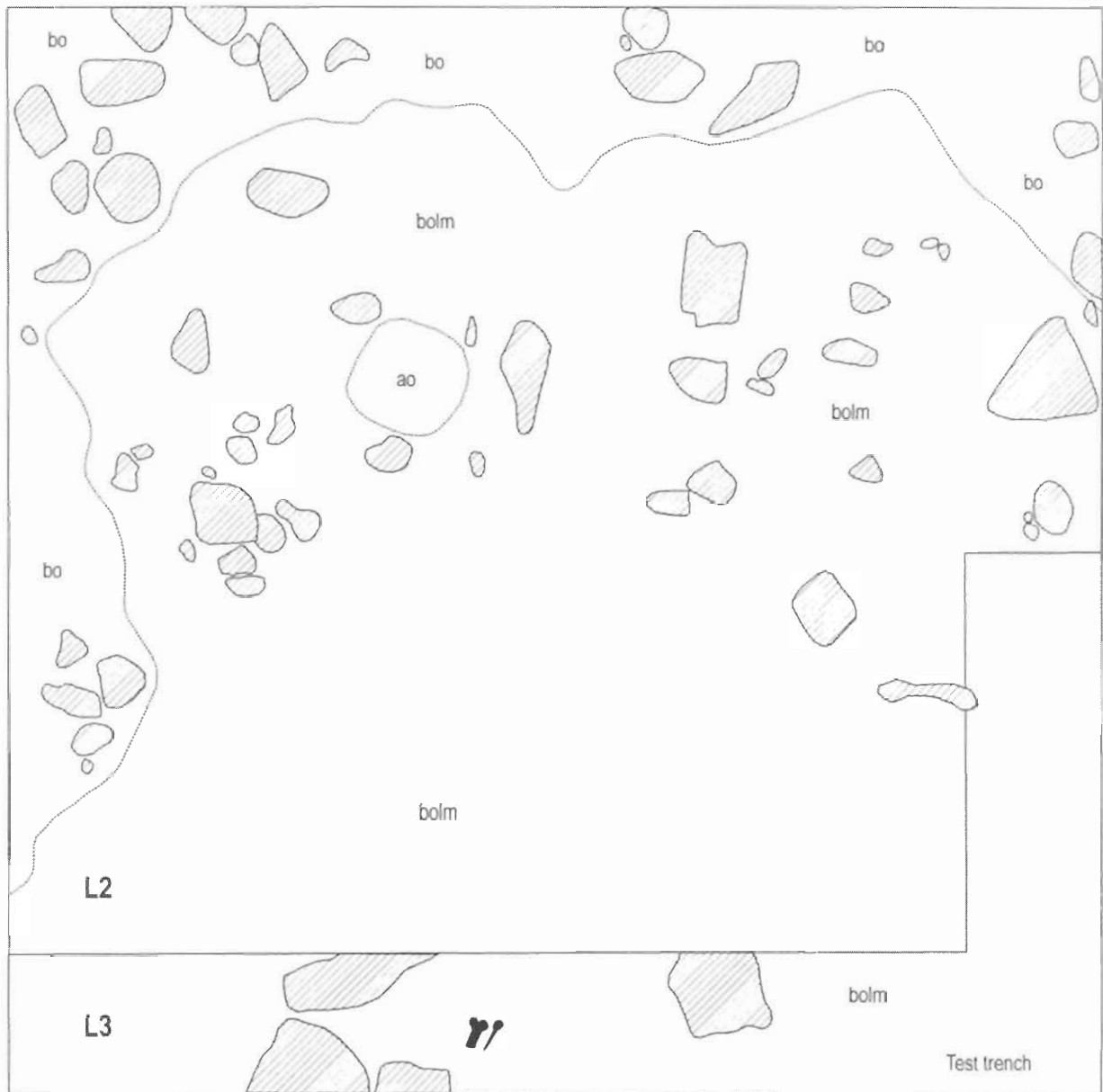


Figure 1



B2/03

B2/01



B1/83

B1/81



Site: MAPUNGUBWE 21
 Samaria 28 MS

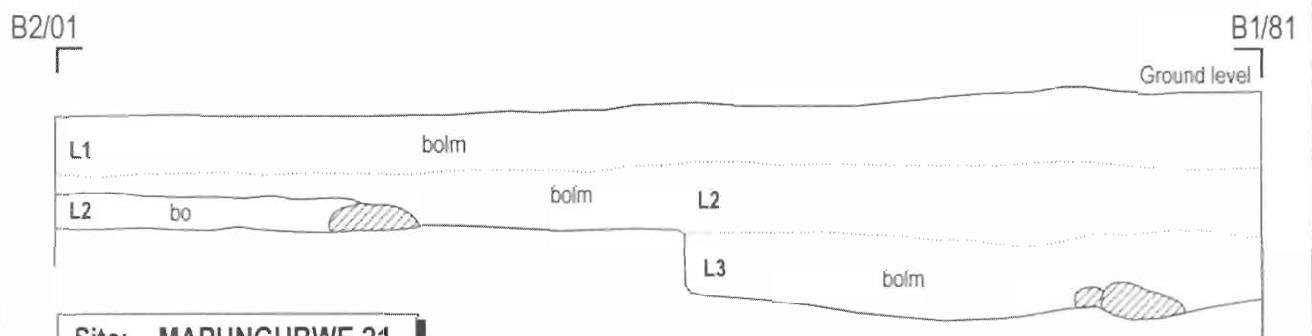
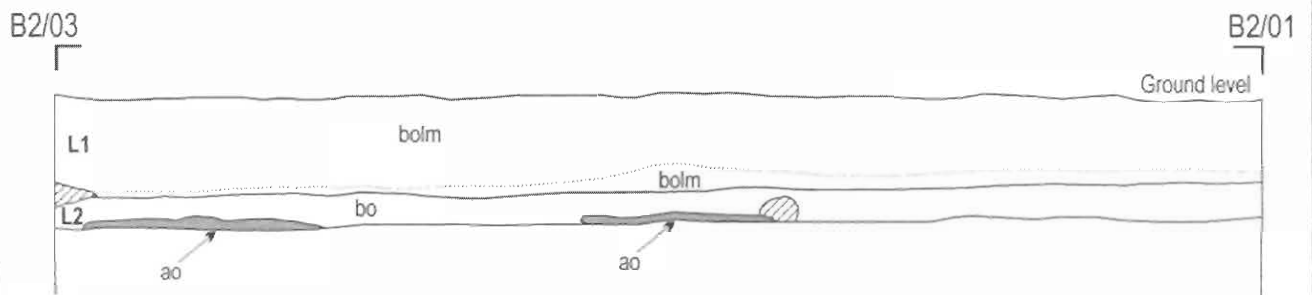
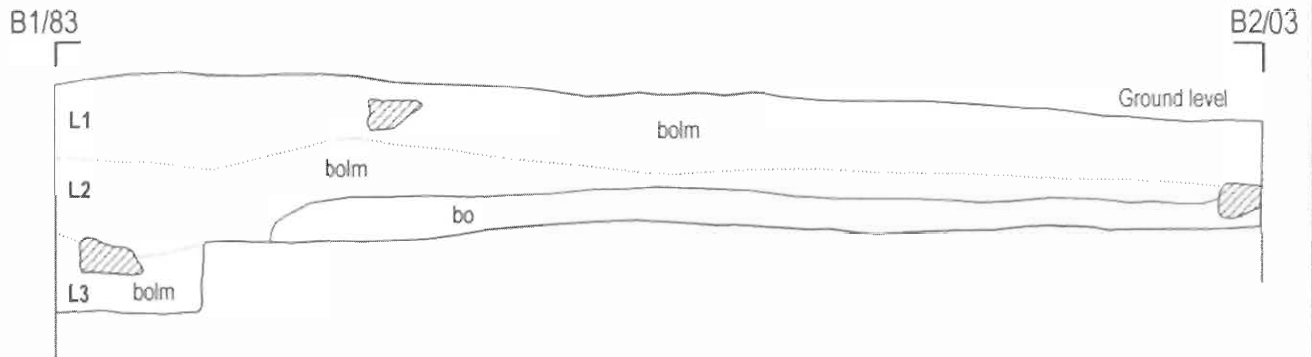
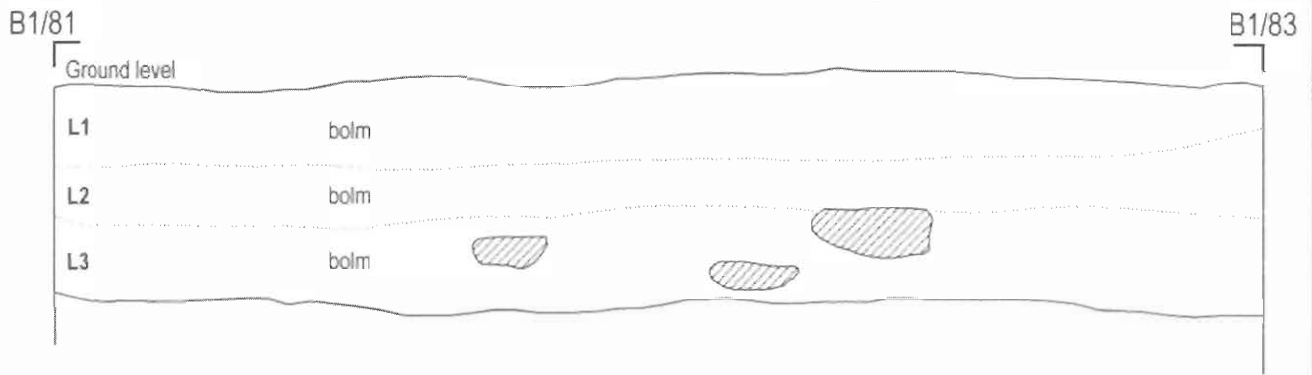
Test Pit in Square B2
 Plan of Layer 2
 September 1999



FIGURE 3

Legend

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



Site: **MAPUNGUBWE 21**
Samaria 28 MS

Profiles of Test Pit in
Square 1
September 1999

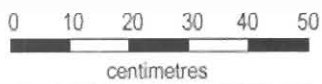
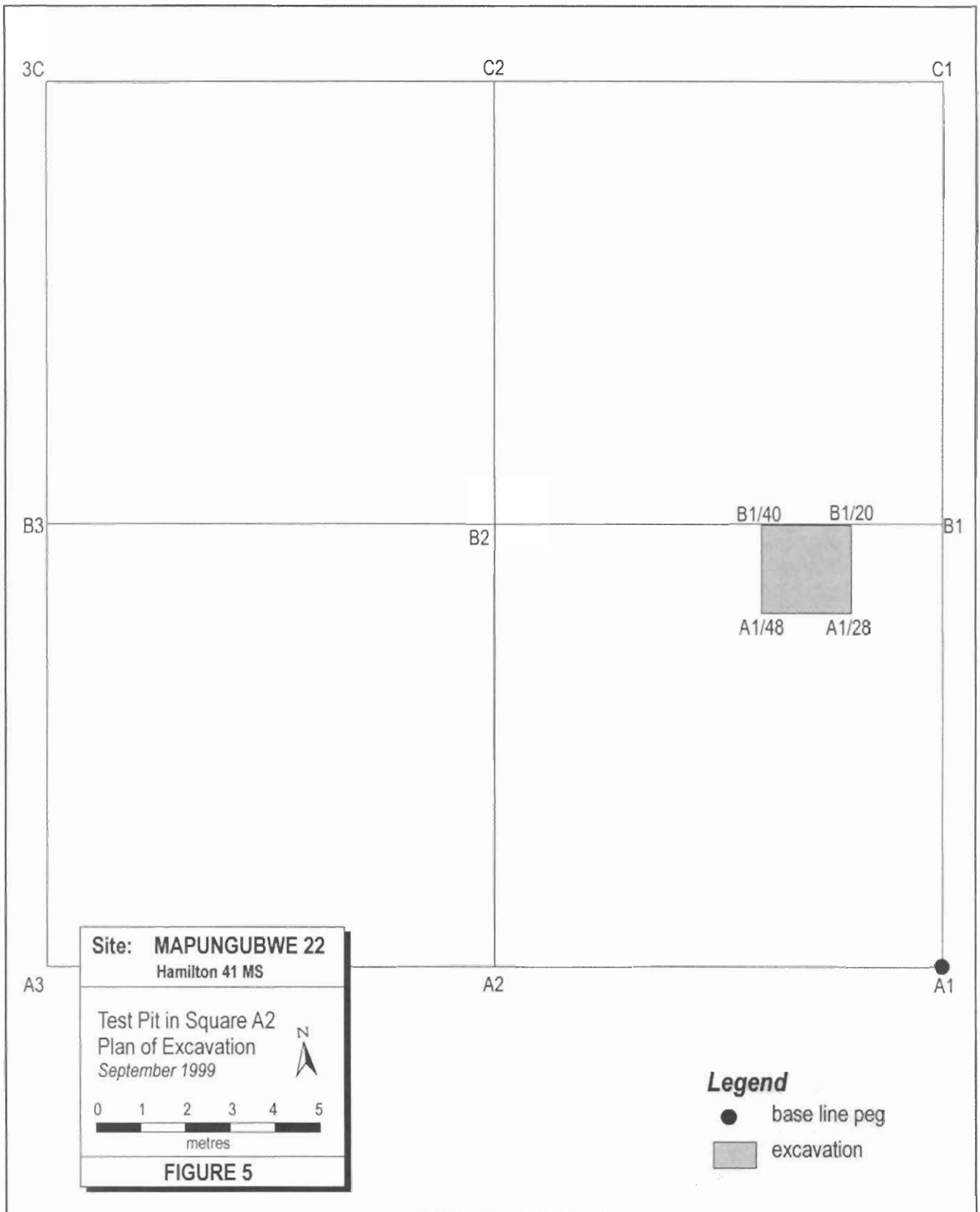
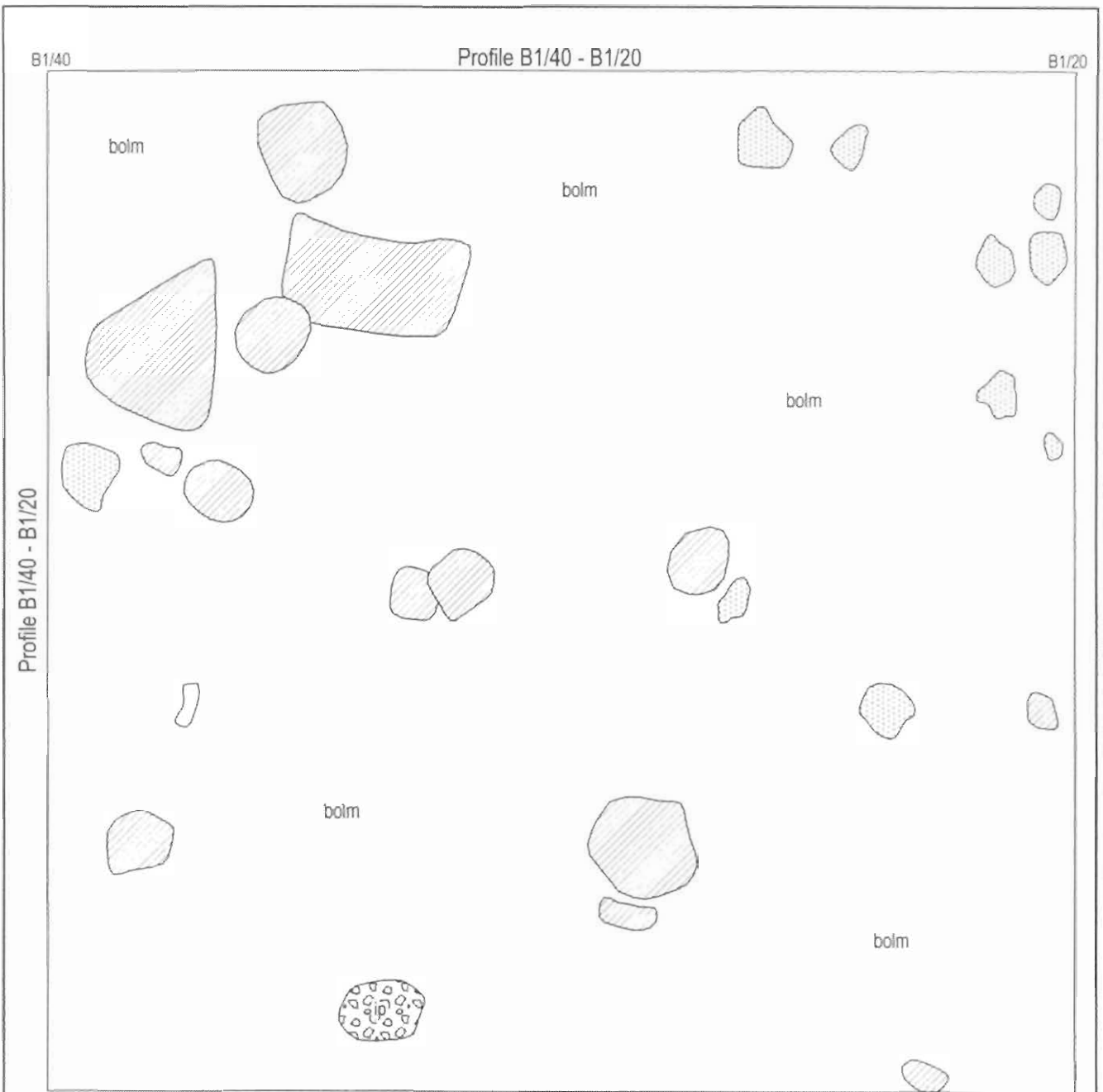


FIGURE 4

Legend

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









A1/48

Profile A1/28 - A1/48

A1/28

Legend

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

Site: MAPUNGUBWE 22
Hamilton 41 MS

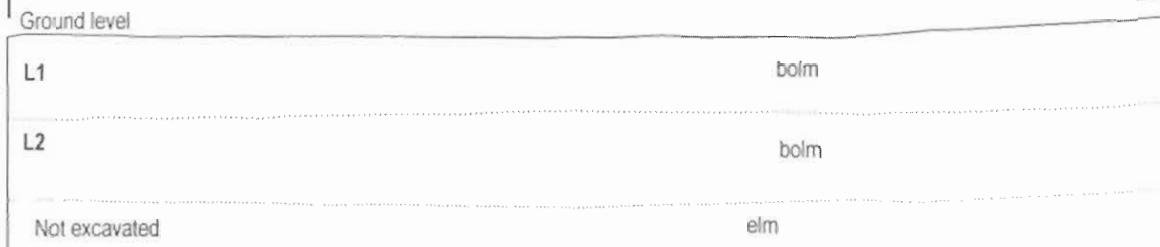
Test Pit in Square A1
Plan of Layer 1
September 1999

0 1 2 3 4 5
centimetres

FIGURE 6

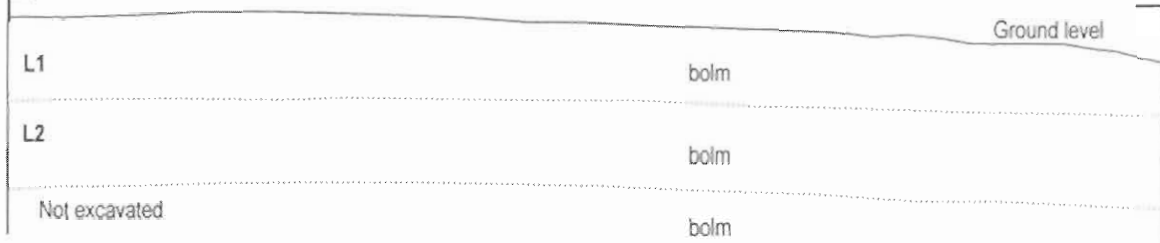
1B/40

B1/20



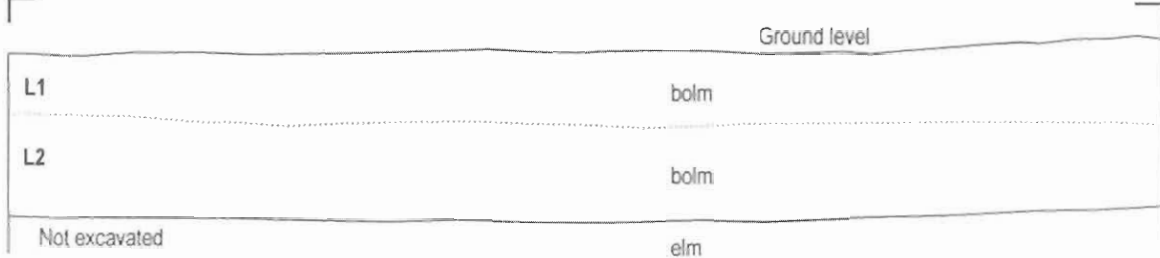
1B/20

A1/28



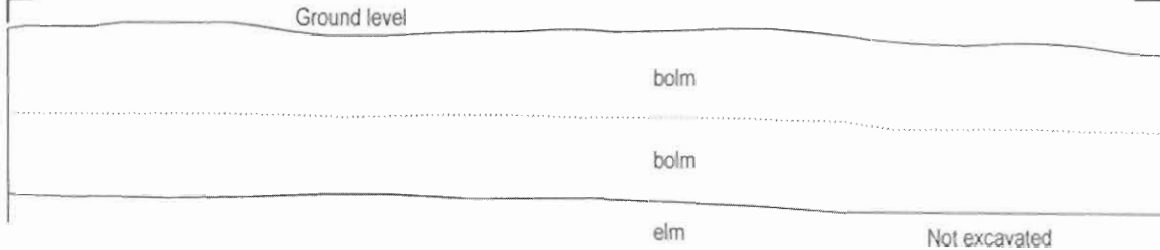
A1/28

A1/48



A1/48

B1/40



Site: **MAPUNGUBWE 21**
Hamilton 41 MS

Test Pit in Square A1
Profiles 1
September 1999

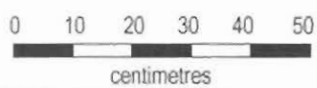
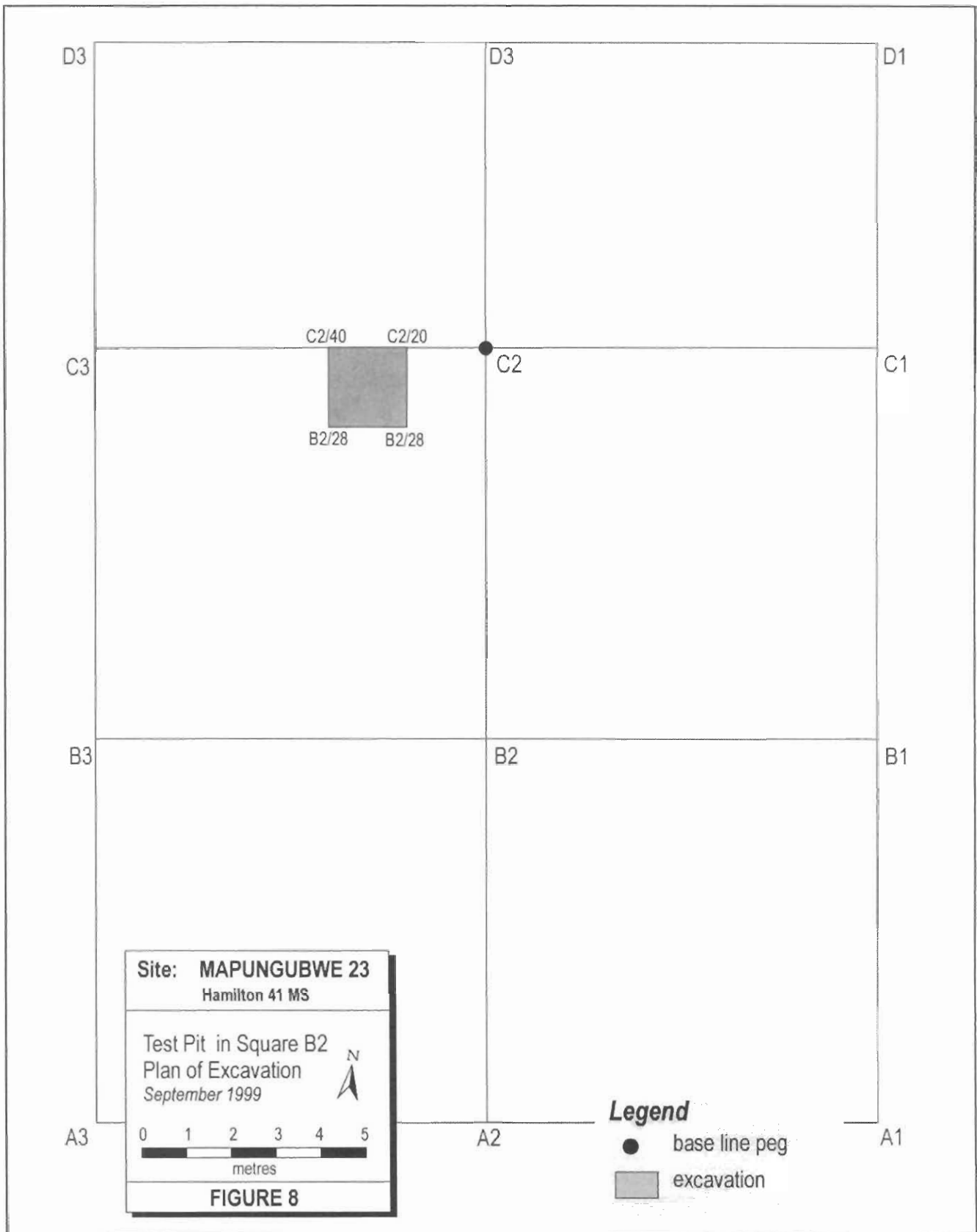


FIGURE 7

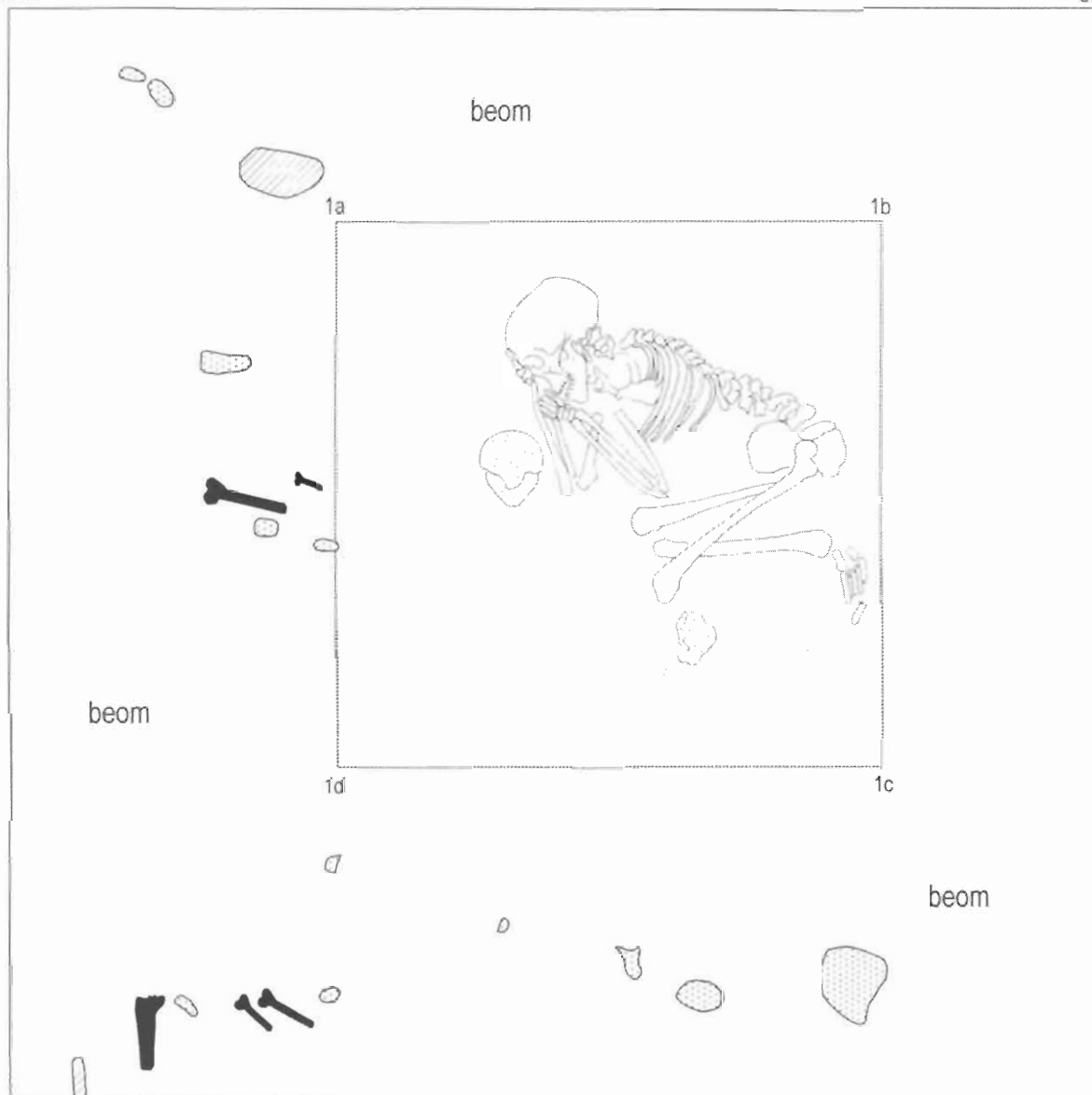
Legend

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



C2/40

C2/20



B2/48

B2/28

Site: MAPUNGUBWE 23
Hamilton 41 MS




Test Pit in Square B2
Plan of Layer 2
September 1999

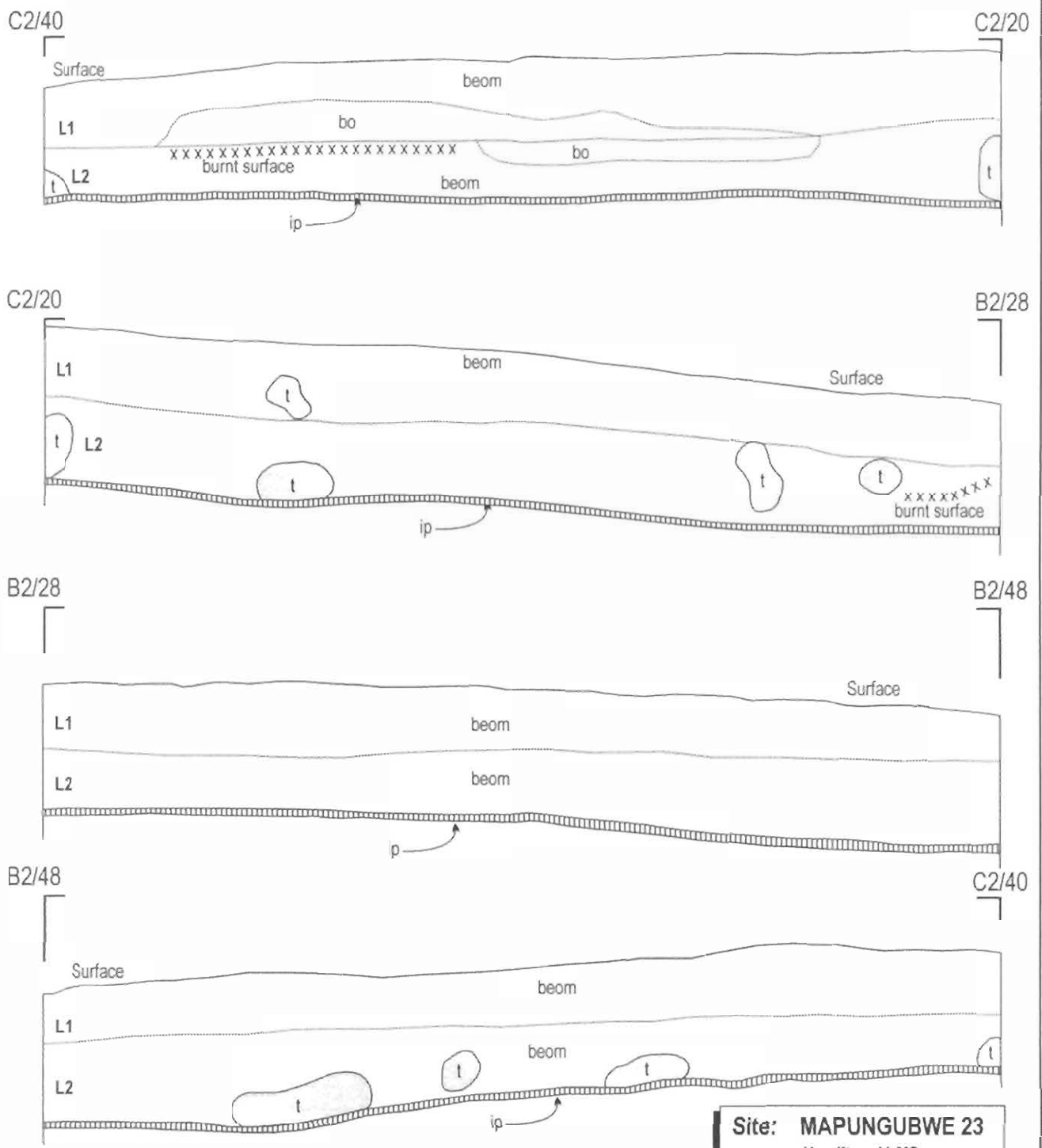


0 5 10 15 20 25
centimetres

FIGURE 9

Legend

-  bone
-  stone
-  potsherd
- beom light grey to light brown sandy soil



Legend

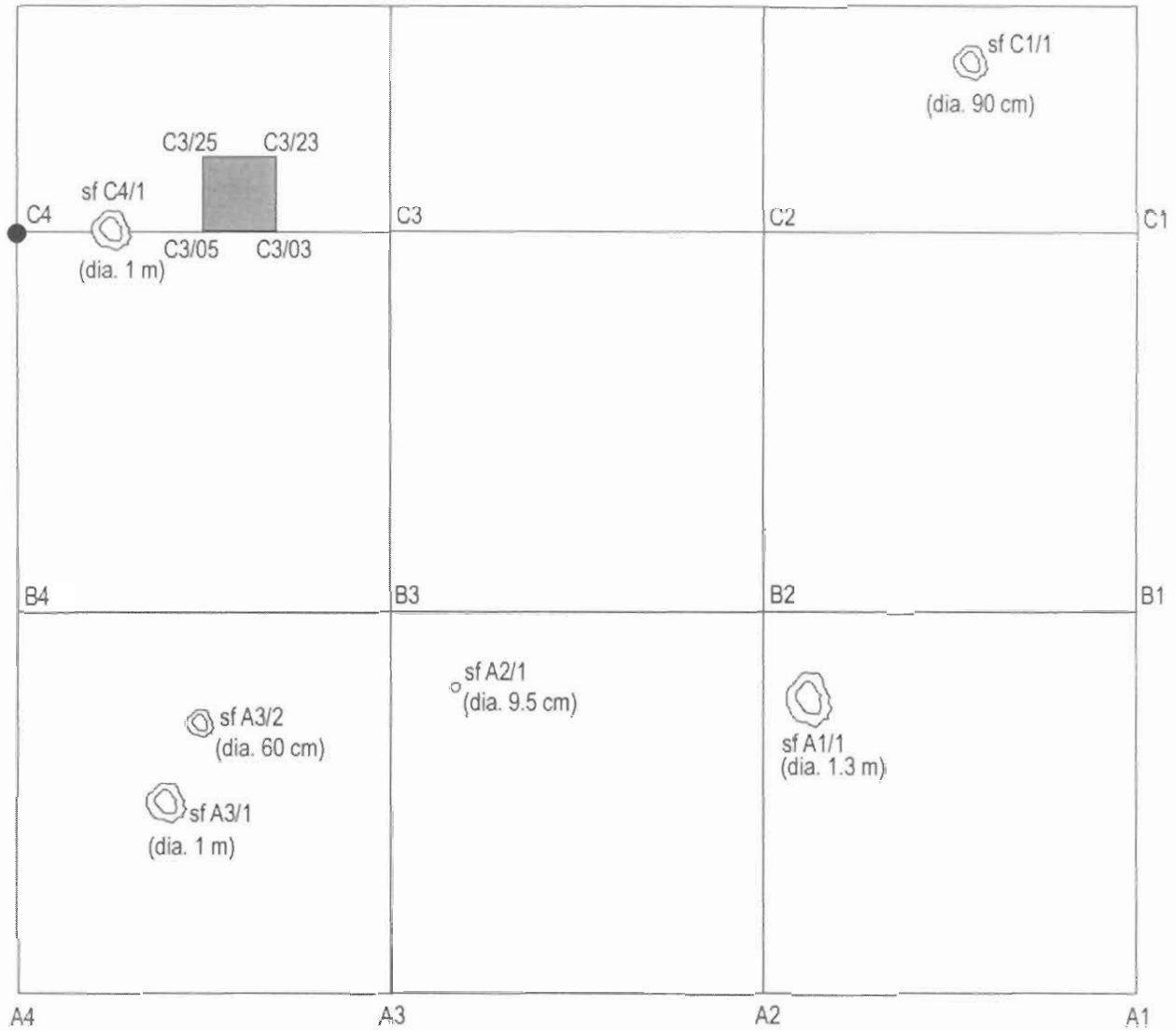
- beom light grey to light brown sandy soil
- bo grey ash
- ip red gravel
- t disturbance (animal burrow)

Site: MAPUNGUBWE 23
Hamilton 41 MS

Test Pit in square B2
Profiles
September 1999

0 10 20 30 40 50
cm

FIGURE 10



Site: MAPUNGUBWE 21
Hamilton 41 MS

Plan of site survey and
excavation
September 1999



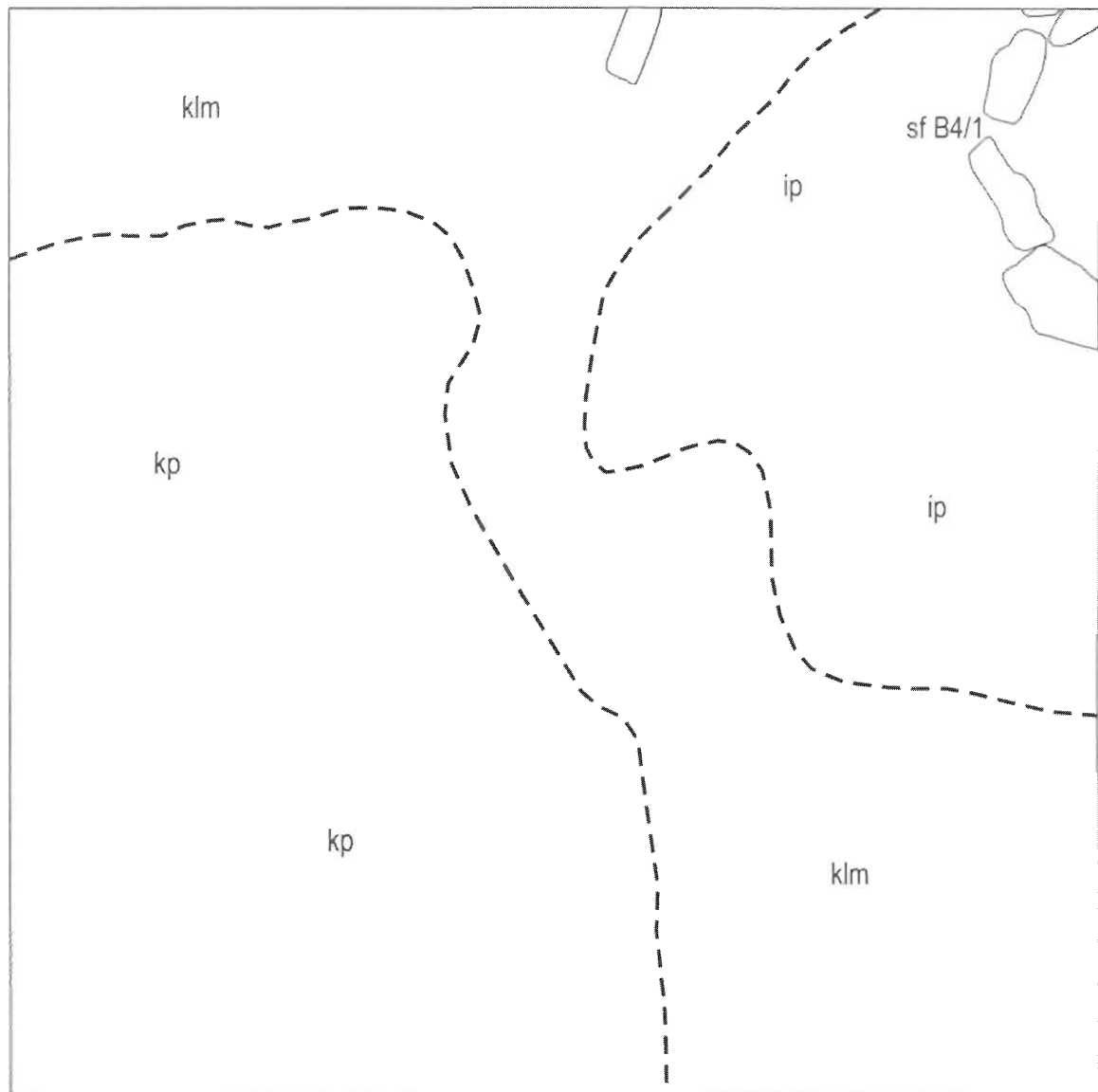
FIGURE 11

Legend

- base line peg
- excavation
- sf stone feature

C3/25

C3/23



C3/23

C6/03

Site: MAPUNGUBWE 24
Hamilton 41 MS

Test Pit in Square B4
Plan of Layer 2
September 1999

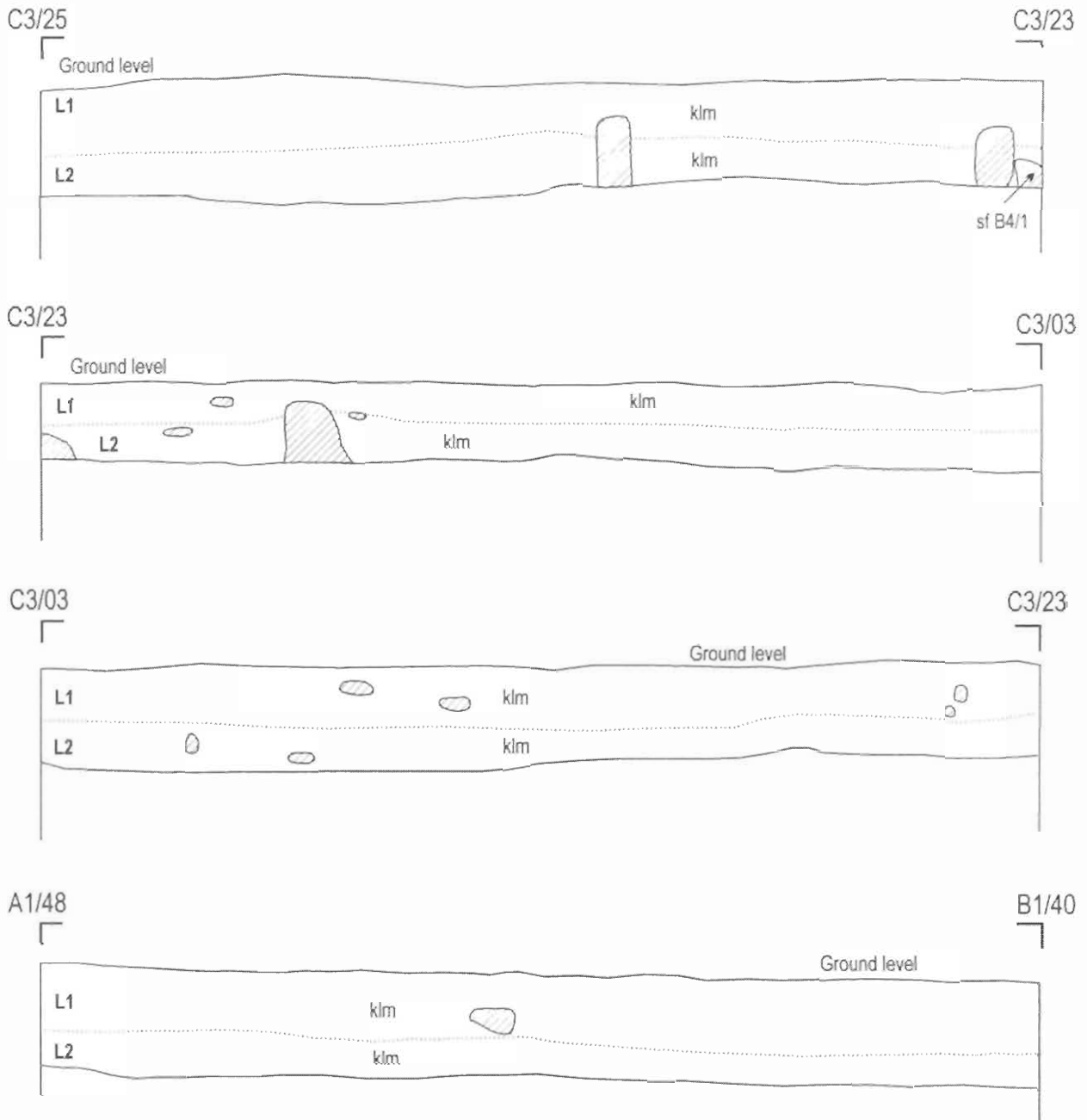


0 10 20 30 40 50
centimetres

FIGURE 12

Legend

- klm grey brown sandy soil
- sf stone feature
- ip red ground floor
- kp grey-brown gravel



Site: **MAPUNGUBWE 24**
Hamilton 41 MS

Test Pit in Square B4
Profiles
September 1999

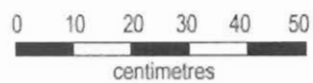


FIGURE 13

Legend




-  stone
-  klm grey-brown sandy soil
-  sf stone feature



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.

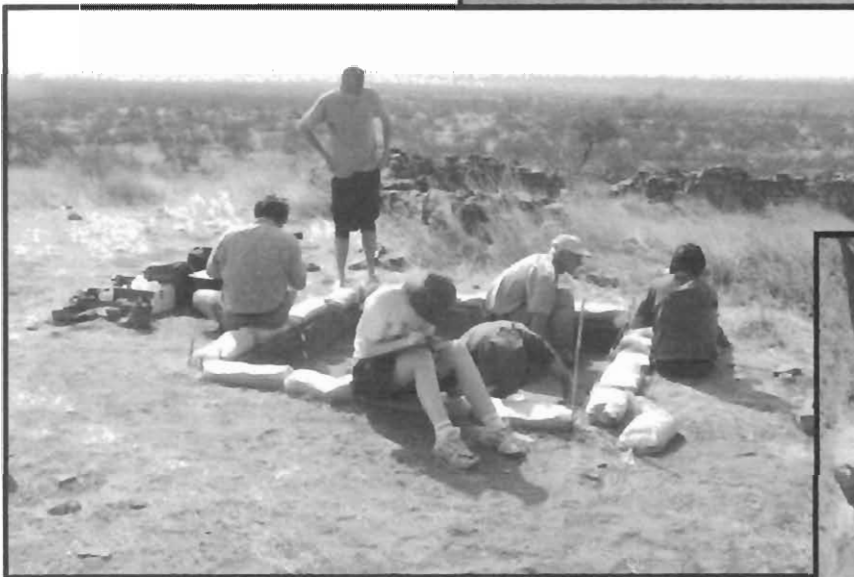
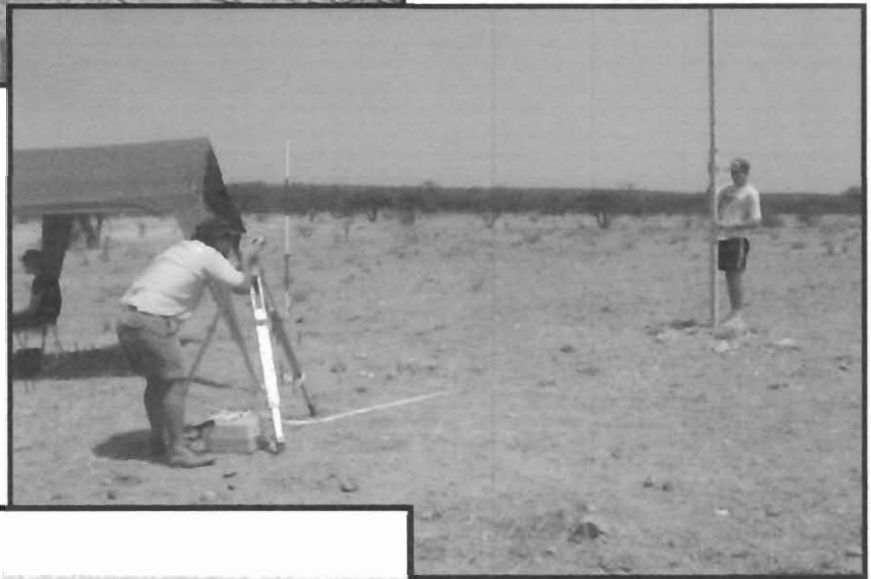


Photo 3.
A test pit excavation (Test Pit TP1/Map21/99) by the field research team on site Map 21.

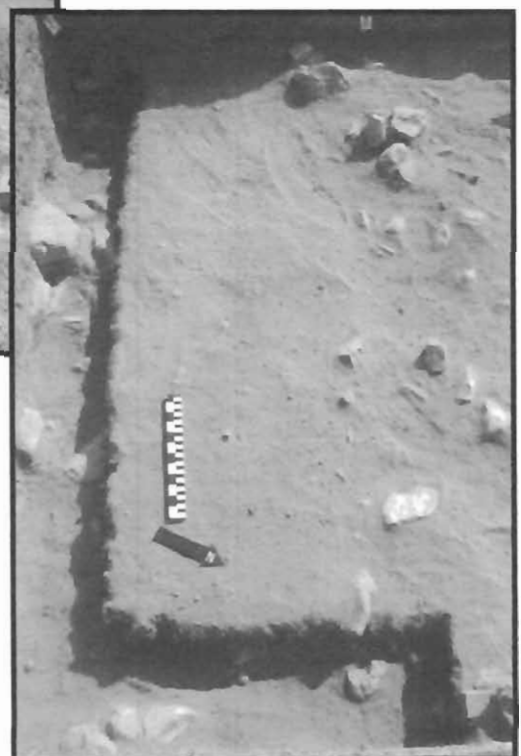


Photo 4.
A mini test trench in the test pit (TP1/Map21/99) on site Map 21.



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.

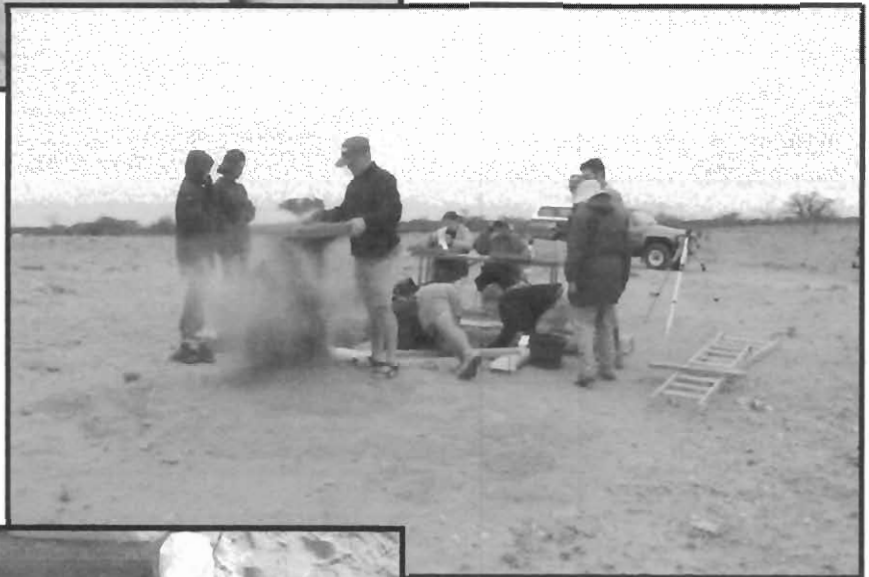


Photo 7.
Excavating a human skeleton in a grave in the test pit (TP1/Map23/99) on Site Map 23.

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



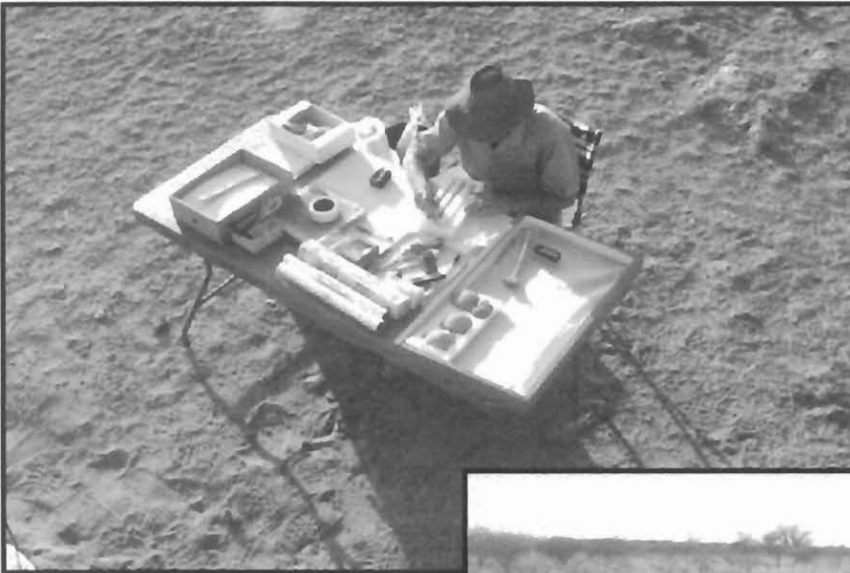


Photo 9.

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.



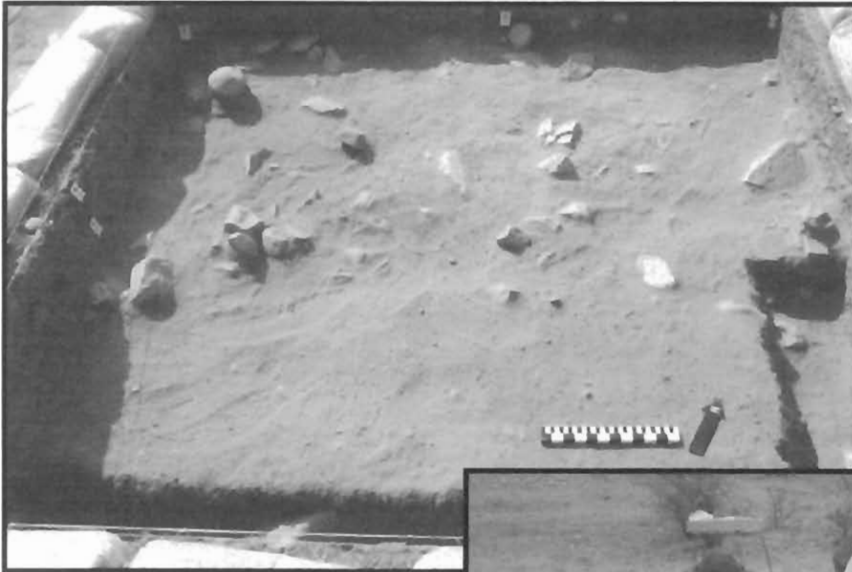


Photo 13.
The surface of Layer 3 in the test pit (TP1/Map21/99) on site Map 21.

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

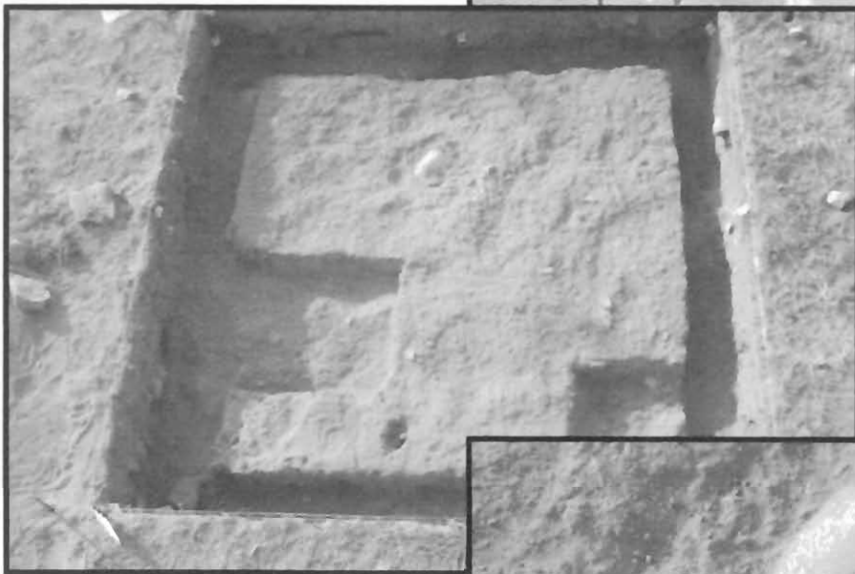


Photo 15.
The excavation of Layer 2 in the test pit (TP1/Map23/99) on site Map 23.

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

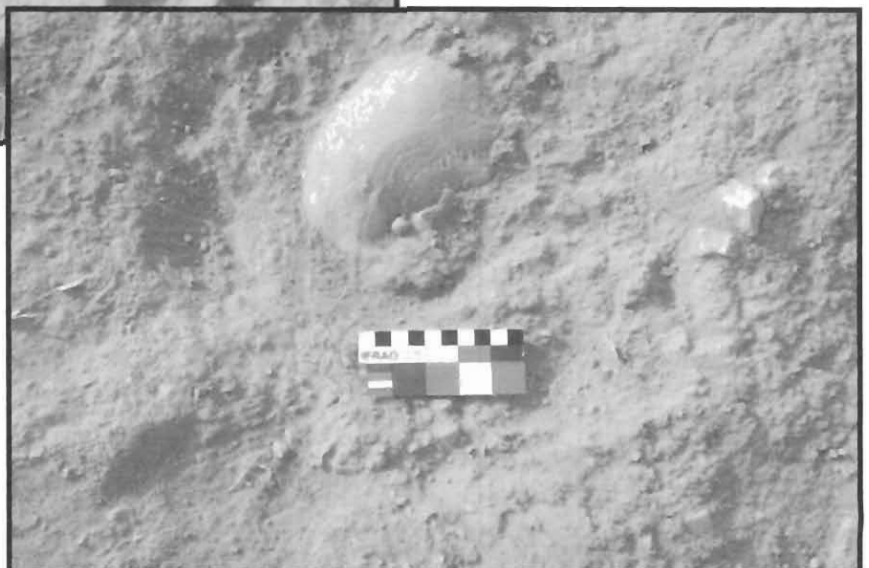




Photo 17.
Layer 2 partially excavated in the test pit (TP1/Map23/99) on site Map 23.

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

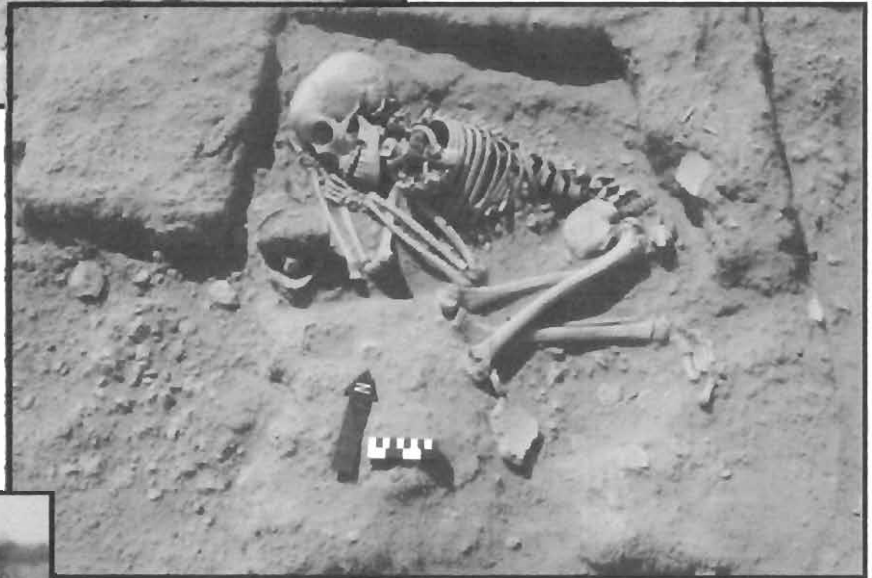


Photo 19.
A stone feature on the surface of site Map 24.

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



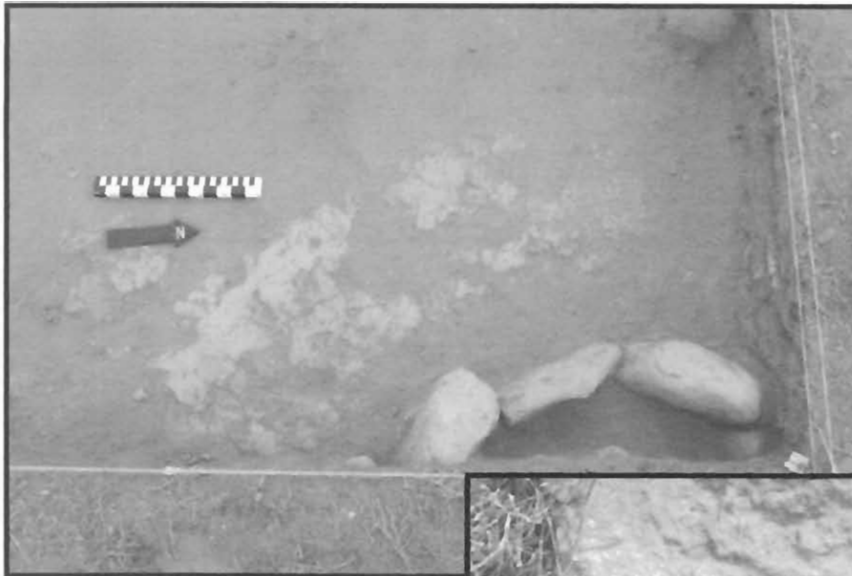


Photo 21.
The stone feature (sfB4/1) and
gravel floor in Layer 2 in the
test pit (TP1/Map24/99)
on site Map 24.



Photo 22.
Potsherds on Site Map 25.