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**THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF HISTORICAL AND
IRON AGE SITES ON THE FARM DE GLADDEKLIPKOP 763 LS,
SEKGOSESE DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

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SUMMARY

During May 2005 the NCHM conducted archaeological excavations at sites on the farm De Gladdeklipkop 763 LS in the Limpopo Province. The continued development of the BoTlokwa Commercial Hub prompted the work, with this phase of the project being a follow-up of archaeological research conducted on the farm in 2004. Two excavations were undertaken, one at the Motumo Trading Post, and the second at Makgosi, a site located east of Motumo on a part of the farm where a luxury lodge will be developed. The Motumo excavations focused on a recent historical hut, while the one at Makgosi was done on a midden, possibly related to the Iron Age. A number of huts at Makgosi, forming part of recent Tlokwa settlement in the area, were also cleaned and documented.

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THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF HISTORICAL AND IRON AGE SITES ON THE FARM DE GLADDEKLIPKOP 763 LS, SEKGOSESE DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

AIMS

The aims of the archaeological work at the sites on the farm De Gladdeklipkop 763 LS were basically two-fold:

- (a) to develop a time-span of settlement at the sites through radiocarbon dating and the analysis and interpretation of cultural material recovered during the excavations
- (b) to reconstruct and interpret the domestic economies followed by the inhabitants of the area during the various phases of settlement

The main reason for carrying out the archaeological work stems from the fact that major development is taking place here. The BoTlokwa Commercial Hub, a development that includes the Motumo Trading Post, is being set up for the benefit of the local communities. The aims of this development are poverty alleviation and the development of tourism in the area.

The archaeological work conducted at these sites is the direct result of a number of surveys carried out by the NCHM in 2001. These surveys were undertaken to determine the impact of the development on the cultural heritage in the area. The resulting report (2001KH19) proposed a number of mitigation measures, including archaeological excavations, to minimize the impact of the development. The archaeological investigations carried out in 2005 are a continuation of work done in January 2004.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology comprised the following:

Excavations - Excavations were measured out in pre-determined areas (a hut at Motumo and midden at Makgosi). Standard archaeological methods of excavation were used.

Mapping and Drawing - This was done using a Nikon Total Station Electronic Surveying device. The data generated through this was downloaded onto computer and a software package called Model Maker was then used to generate maps and drawings of the various sites (See **Appendix 2**).

Documentation - This comprised preliminary documentation in the field of artefacts recovered during excavations. Artefacts were sorted into different categories and put in labelled bags and boxes. This was done per excavation and layer. Further documentation was done in the laboratory, with detailed sorting of artefacts into various categories.

Photographic documentation - Photographs of the site in general, as well as individual structures, features and objects, were taken to help with the interpretation of the findings. These photographs also form part of the permanent record of the sites, as parts of it will be destroyed.

Analysis & Interpretation - Artefacts were analysed in the laboratory by the researchers (ceramics, metal, glass and other material) and by various other specialists (faunal remains and C14 dating).

GPS Data - A GPS reading of each site was taken in order to locate it on the 1: 50 000 map of the area (See **Appendix 2**).

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

The site is located on the farm De Gladdeklipkop 763 LS, west and east of the N1 road and approximately 60km northeast of Polokwane (Pietersburg), in the Sekgose District of Limpopo Province (**Fig. 1**). Large granite outcrops dominate the sites, and it is along the foot of these features that most human settlement was located.

Two veld types occur in the area. The development area is located in Sour Bushveld, with Mixed Bushveld occurring to the east of that (Acocks 1988). The current land cover can be described as degraded land, due to over grazing and exploitation for firewood. The morphology can be described as slightly undulating plains, with the largest river, the Sand River, located to the west of the study area. The lithology is granite, which is an intrusion into the gneiss found in the larger area.

DISCUSSION

The sites excavated had two elements on it, consisting of the remains of a more recent historical settlement overlying an earlier Iron Age occupational phase. The Iron Age itself might possibly contain two components, namely the Early and Late Iron Age. The archaeological investigation consisted of excavations, as well as mapping, drawing and photographic documentation.

THE EXCAVATIONS

Motumo 1b

Excavation 1

This was 0,50 m x 6,30 m trench (**Fig. 4 – 7**) on the remains of a historical Tlokwa dwelling (hut). The aims were to look at the building method followed, as well as to try and find a living floor. Another aim was to see whether or not this phase of settlement at the site was overlying any earlier Iron Age settlement.

The dwelling had an enclosing double wall of stone, with an infill of smaller stone, and possibly had plastered clay walls on top of this foundation. In the centre of the structure the deposit was much softer than closer to the edge, and it had a distinct ashy grey colour. Although no clear floor was uncovered, it seems as if a fill of larger stones and quartz pebbles was used to create a 'living' floor, levelling the original ground surface for this purpose. The floor was then smeared with a thin layer of dung and plaster, traces of which were found in the excavation.

The dwelling had a diameter of just more than 6 meters, including a *mōsa* or *lapa*. At the northern end of the excavation a pit, containing ash, faunal remains and a relatively large amount of pottery, was found. A thin layer of gravel and plaster, 12 cm thick, was also visible at the northern section. Bits of plaster were also uncovered at the southern wall. The excavation reached a depth of between 50 and 70 cm (the deepest point) before sterile levels was reached. Cultural material recovered includes ceramics, faunal remains, metal fragments and a number of stone tools. Last mentioned probably came into the deposit via the fill that was used in the construction of the dwellings' floor.

Makgosi

Excavation 1

Excavation 1 (**Fig. 8**) was located on the midden, situated north of a number of recent, historical Tlokwa homesteads and about 20 meters north of an informal historical graveyard. The graveyard contains approximately 20 graves, all of packed stone and without identifiable headstones. Although originally a 3 m x 2 m trench, the excavation was later extended to 3,50 m x 4 m to include a number of granary structures, as well as a hard compacted clay 'floor' possibly associated with these granaries.

Layer 1 was between 26 cm and 44 cm deep (the midden slopes down from south to north where it is the deepest). The hard clay floor started appearing at a depth of around 12 cm below the surface. The existence of the granaries was first noticed at about 26 cm deep, and layer 2 started at this level. Layer 2 continued to between 1,06 m and 1,15 m, after which sterile soil was reached. The stratigraphy of the excavation consists roughly of a thin layer of dark brown topsoil, followed by various layers of ash and cattle dung, with the ash and dung levels alternating each other.

The artefacts recovered from Excavation 2 include ceramics, faunal remains and shell, metal fragments and some charcoal that will be used to radiocarbon date the site, features and objects found. Rodent burrowing disturbed the deposit to a certain degree, and some fairly recent pieces of glass, porcelain and metal was recovered low down in the excavation due to this.

Granaries

The first of three granaries (**Fig. 9 – 11**) [the third is visible in the profile] started appearing at a depth of about 26 cm in the southern part of the excavation. This, the smaller of the two granaries, prompted the extension of the initially much smaller excavation. The larger of the two granaries measured 1,42 m in diameter with a height of 0,60 m, while the smaller one was 0,83 m (diam.) x 0,30 m (height). The third granary, although not excavated in totality, had a diameter of roughly 1,50 m. Both the excavated granaries were fairly well preserved and it seems as if they were capped with dung and ash after construction. In shape these granaries resemble typical Iron Age pots with short upright necks. They were constructed with a framework of thin poles that was first erected and then smeared with clay and dung. The poles were bound together with rope or other fibrous material. The grooves for the vertical poles and the horizontal sections of rope/fibre are visible in the clay (**Fig. 12**).

The opening of the large granary was closed with a 'plug' of hard clay (**Fig. 13**). This opening, facing northeast, was around 0.60 m wide. No opening was visible in the small granary. Both granaries were opened to determine if it contained any cultural remains such as pots or cereals, but besides a single glass bead, some pieces of shell, bone and pottery, as well as small pieces of charcoal (possibly burnt remnants of the pole structure) that was recovered from on top of or in close proximity to, nothing was recovered from inside these features.

An interesting feature, possibly associated with the granaries, was the hard compacted clay 'floor' (**Fig. 14**) located next to and to the west of them. This surface is elevated slightly above the granaries and started appearing at a depth of around 20 cm below the surface. It is roughly 5 cm thick, and is similar to the hard clay surface uncovered in the 2004 excavation of a granary at Motumo (Pelser et.al 2004). The function of this 'floor' has not been determined yet.

Tlokwa huts

The remains of a number of more recent historic huts and other structures (Fig. 15 – 17) are present at Makgosi. They are similar to the ones located at Motumo and are most probably associated with the known Tlokwa settlement in the area during the late 19th to mid 20th centuries (Van Schalkwyk 2001; Van Warmelo 1953). At Makgosi these features are located south of the graveyard and Excavation 1, next to and abutting the granite outcrops on the site.

Although there might be more remains, we investigated two areas with two huts and a *môsa* (or lapa) each. No formal excavations were undertaken, but both areas were extensively cleaned to determine the size and layout of each dwelling, while limited surface collecting of cultural material was also undertaken. This helped to facilitate the mapping and photographic documentation of these features (See Fig. 3). The huts and *môsas* are demarcated by stones (foundations), with the huts all elevated slightly above the *môsa*. No clear indication of floor was found anywhere, although some sections of clay/dung and ash were visible in one of the huts from the second area that was cleaned.

The huts have a diameter of between 3,50 m x 4,50 m, while the *môsa* differs between 6 m x 9m and 8 m x 9 m in size respectively. In the first area the hut entrances face each other (east-west), with the *môsa* in between. In the second area the huts are situated right next to each other, with the *môsa* in front (down slope to the east) and their entrances facing east.

Cultural material recovered from the surface of these features includes pieces of ceramic, faunal remains, pieces of glass and some metal fragments. These artefacts were not included in the final analysis of material from Makgosi, as they were found out of context.

CULTURAL MATERIAL

Motumo 1b

Nearly 350 objects were recovered from the two layers of this excavation, including ceramics, faunal remains, metal, stone artefacts and slag. As there were no distinctive difference between the two layers' objects and because it is quite clear that only one occupational level is represented, the objects from the two layers were combined during the final analysis of material from Motumo 1b.

Faunal remains and shell

See Appendix 1 Specialist Report

Ceramics

Ceramics are one of the most durable materials recovered from archaeological sites, sometimes remaining intact for hundreds or even thousands of years. Ceramics are therefore a great tool in helping the archaeologist to reconstruct a relative time frame for human occupation of a site, while it also helps us to understand the domestic economy practised at a site and determining the cultural identity of its occupants.

Iron Age ceramics

In total 247 potsherds were recovered from Motumo 1b, including 202 undecorated body fragments, 34 decorated body fragments, 3 rim shards and 8 decorated rim shards (Fig. 18).

The ceramics were analysed according to procedures proposed by Huffman (1980). In this multidimensional types are formed using three independent variables: vessel profile,

decoration layout (position on the vessel) and decoration motif. The intersection between these variables produces classes of vessel present on a site. For the purposes of this report, the undecorated rims are therefore discarded, as no classes can be identified. The undecorated rims from Motumo 1b are too small in any case to determine vessel profile.

Although decorated body shards are not included in the formal analysis, they play an important role in giving us an idea of the types of decoration present in the sample. Bands (single or multiple) of cross-hatching or herringbone incisions, as well as various incised lines and bands of incisions are most common. There is however also comb stamping, thumbnail impressions, punctuates and red/black ochre and graphite bands in combination with other types of decoration, such as incisions, present. It should be mentioned that the sample from Motumo 1b is fairly heavily fragmented, and that determining vessel profiles, decoration motifs and layout modes were very difficult. Therefore classifying the ceramics from the site proved nearly impossible, especially if one considers that only one excavation was undertaken here.

However, some tentative decoration motifs were identified, including:

1. Succeeding bands of horizontally incised lines with bands of ochre/graphite in between them
2. Bands of cross-hatched incisions with ochre bands in between
3. A single line of horizontal incisions bordered below by a single line of punctuates or dots

The decoration layouts vary. Decoration occurs either on the body of vessels, on the neck or on the rim, neck and body. Only 1 type of vessel was definitely identified, this being a bowl. The other rim shards, although too small to really determine profile, probably belonged to various types of pot.

Therefore, the intersection between profile (1) and layout modes (3) produced a possible three classes of vessel, of which one is present. This is a bowl with rim nicking, horizontal incisions on the neck and diagonal incisions below the neck and on the body of the vessel.

Dating the site using the decorated ceramics, and placing them in any specific, recognizable ceramic sequences, proved even more difficult, as the sample is fairly fragmented. Some pieces, specifically those with the herringbone and cross-hatching designs, are similar to decorated ceramics recovered from Motumo during 2004. This pottery decoration is typical of the Doornkop and/or Eiland phases, although it was also used much later. Most of the other pottery excavated during 2005 (rim nicking, incised lines/bands in combination with ochre/graphite) is typical of the Late Moloko/Letaba phase. This provides a tentative time span of settlement at the site of more than a thousand years (AD 800 – AD 1800), although for this specific site and excavation it is probably less. The hut itself probably dates to around the late 1800's to mid 20th century, with the Early Iron Age pottery, just as the stone tools found here, probably a later intrusion into the deposit.

Other ceramic/clay objects

This category included an unknown number of fragments of hut clay and plaster and four worked pieces of pottery. These worked shards (with abraded or rounded edges) were probably used either as pottery scrapers/burnishers or wye stoppers.

Metal

Only a small number of metal objects were recovered from Excavation 1, and included fragments of unidentified artefacts and an iron bangle (**Fig. 19**).

Stone artefacts

This category included 18 Middle/Late Stone Age tools (**Fig. 20**), varying between scrapers, points, cores and other flake tools. These artefacts probably ended up in the deposit as fill when the floor of the hut was levelled.

Glass and glass beads

The only object in this category was a small piece of dark green coloured bottle glass, possibly from a wine or other liquor bottle.

Miscellaneous

This included two pieces of ochre (used for body and pottery decoration), one piece of white plaster, five pieces of metal slag and two small charcoal samples. The slag might be evidence of metal working being practised here at some stage, although this cannot be confirmed. The charcoal sample was too small to be submitted for radiocarbon dating purposes.

Makgosi

More than **1200** objects were recovered from the two layers of this excavation, consisting of faunal remains, ceramics, metal, glass and glass beads, stone artefacts, pieces of cattle dung and charcoal. The charcoal samples from Makgosi were large enough to submit to the CSIR's QUADRU Section for radiocarbon analysis. The amount of material from the excavation is surprisingly low, when the size and depth of it is taken into consideration (3,5 m x 4 m and nearly 1 m deep).

Although it was initially decided to separate the material from the two layers in the final interpretation to see whether or not there is a possible age difference between the midden (layer 1) and the granaries (essentially layer 2), the cultural material (especially the ceramics) show no marked difference. The material from the two layers was therefore handled as a single unit.

Faunal remains and shell

See Appendix 1 Specialist Report

Ceramics

Ceramics contributed nearly 90% of the total material culture sample from the excavation at Makgosi.

Iron Age ceramics

The ceramics from the site were also analysed according to the procedures proposed by Huffman in 1980. The undecorated rims were once again not used in the determination of pottery classes from Makgosi, although some of the rim shards were large enough to determine vessel profile.

A total of **1043** pieces of pottery was recovered from the excavation, including **895** undecorated body fragments, **62** decorated body fragments, **73** undecorated rims and **13** decorated rims (Fig. 21). The rim shards are representative of **68** and **13** individual vessels respectively.

The undecorated rims from Makgosi provided us with two vessel types, namely pots with slightly everted rims and short upright necks, and open-mouth bowls. Although decorated body shards are not useful in determining pottery classes, they give an idea of the types of decoration present in the sample. A large portion of the Makgosi sample was decorated with either herringbone and/or cross-hatching designs, while incisions were also quite common. Other types of decoration included thumbnail and stylus impressions, as well as ochre and graphite bands.

It was possible to identify to a certain degree some decoration motifs, including:

1. Slanting incised lines bordered above and below by single lines of incisions
2. Wide bands of incised lines
3. Single bands of herringbone or cross-hatching
4. Cross-hatching bordered above and below with single incised lines
5. A band of graphite burnish, followed by a band of cross-hatching

The decoration layouts vary. They are:

1. On the rim
2. On the neck and rim
3. On the neck and body of the vessel
4. On the body

Five types of decorated vessel were identified, including:

1. Open-mouth bowls with a band of herringbone decoration on the rim and neck
2. Open-mouth bowls with a band of graphite and a succeeding band of cross-hatching on the neck and body
3. Pots with slightly everted rims and bands of cross-hatching on the body
4. Pots with slightly everted rims and short upright necks and bands of incisions on the neck and body of the vessel
5. Pots with slightly everted rims and short upright necks and herringbone decoration on the body

The intersection between profile (5) and layout modes (4) therefore produced a possible 20 classes of vessel, of which five are present.

Based on the prevalence of cross-hatching and herringbone decoration, the pottery from Makgosi is typical of the Doornkop and/or Eiland phases, although it was also used much

later on. Some of the other pottery recovered could possibly date to the late Moloko/Letaba phase of the Iron Age, especially the incised and graphite/ochre decorated shards. This provides a tentative time span of settlement at the site of more than a thousand years (AD 800 – AD 1800), something that was also evident for Motumo settlement from the 2004 excavation results. This could also mean that the granaries uncovered at Makgosi date to the Early Iron Age, although the radiocarbon dates need to confirm this assumption.

Other ceramic/clay objects

This category consisted of two worked shards, probably used as pot scrapers, burnishers or wye stoppers. Some might have been intended as spindle whorls. The edges of these pieces of broken pottery have been abraded, and some have evidence of ochre or graphite burnish on their surfaces. A very interesting ‘utilized’ piece of pottery is a possible snuff grinder. This body fragment has thin vertical and horizontal incised lines on its inside surface, forming a mesh (**Fig. 25**). Tobacco was rolled on this surface to create the snuff.

Metal

Only six metal objects were recovered from the excavation, all from the first layer. Five of these were fragments of an unidentified object, while the sixth was a modern bottle cap, probably from a cooldrink or beer bottle (**Fig. 23**).

Stone artefacts

The first artefact under this category was an upper grinder/rubbing stone (**Fig. 23**). The edges of this artefact have also been damaged, and it might have functioned as a hammer stone as well. The other four stones from the excavation were all Middle and/or Late Stone Age tools, including scrapers and flakes. These tools might have a later Iron Age origin, as it is known that Iron Age people also used stone tools as hide scrapers.

Glass and glass beads

Seven pieces of glass were recovered from layer 1, representing two artefacts. The first six pieces formed part of the lid of a sugar bowl or butter dish. Similar lids were recovered from Late 19th/early 20th century ash middens in Pretoria and other towns. The other fragment was part of a bottle, possibly non-alcoholic.

Four glass beads (**Fig. 24**) were found, from both layer 1 and 2. The first bead is dark blue, donut shaped and broken in half. Two other smaller beads, one green and the other yellow, are typical of the glass beads found on Iron Age sites. The fourth bead is a well-known dark blue hexagonal Venetian bead, also fairly common on Iron Age sites. The glass beads are of course evidence of trade and links with established trade networks during this time.

Miscellaneous

This category includes a single ostrich eggshell (oes) bead (**Fig. 24**), as well as a sample of cattle dung (**Fig. 26**) from the granaries.

MAPPING THE SITES

The mapping and drawing of any archaeological site forms an integral part of the recording and documentation process. Therefore, fairly detailed mapping of the site and features found on it is carried out, including of the excavations that are conducted.

DATING THE SITES

Determining a time frame for human occupation of the two sites was one of the main aims of the archaeological research. Getting dates can be done in two ways. Firstly, relative dates can be obtained through the analysis of cultural material, especially decorated ceramics and other objects that can be compared to dated artefacts from sites with known dates.

In order to obtain much more absolute dates, one needs dateable samples of charcoal or burnt bone. The analysis of these samples provides us with calibrated radiocarbon (C14) dates that are fairly accurate. A number of samples were recovered from Excavation 1 at Makgosi, with no suitable material found at Motumo. The samples from Makgosi were handed in to QUADRU at the CSIR for analysis.

The results of the analysis are still outstanding.

INTERPRETING THE INFORMATION

Settlement layout and site features – Motumo & Makgosi

It is known that the Tlokwa lived in the area during more recent historic times, and the settlement layout of the sites during this period therefore follows the layout of a typical Tlokwa homestead. Features identified at the site dating to this period, and possibly the LIA, include stone walled enclosures and other sections of stone walling. These enclosures were used as hut bays and livestock enclosures (kraals), and also include *mōsas* or lapas. The settlements are all located close to an abutting the granite outcrops that characterize these sites.

The granaries found at Makgosi were probably typical of the earlier Iron Age occupation of the area. That these features were prominent during this time period is clear, as a similar grain storage facility (albeit a pit) was uncovered during excavations at Motumo during 2004 (See Pelser et al 2004). What the rest of the settlement layout looked like during this phase of human occupation is unknown, although huts, cattle enclosures and ash middens probably featured prominently.

Time frame of human settlement in the area

At this stage it is really difficult to determine exactly the time frame of human settlement at Motumo, and more specifically Makgosi, as the final results of the C14 (radiocarbon) analysis are still outstanding. Based on the results of the 2004 archaeological research Motumo 1b is probably contemporary with the historically known settlement of the Tlokwa people in the area. The Tlokwa dwellings at Makgosi also date to this phase of settlement, while the granaries found at Makgosi could possibly date to much earlier.

It is evident that people have settled in the area for a fairly long time. Historical material, such as porcelain, glass, metal and other artefacts recovered from Motumo in 2004 is clear indication of the recent settlement component. Typical glass trade beads, as well as Late Moloko (Tswana) pottery represent the Late Iron Age (LIA). A third, and much earlier possibly, occupational level is represented through mainly decorated pottery that can be identified as Eiland and Doornkop style pottery.

Therefore, although this needs to be confirmed, human settlement in the area where Motumo and Makgosi are located stretches back from around the 9th century up to the mid 20th century, a period of more than 1000 years. Undoubtedly this was not continuous, and there might have been breaks in occupation between the various settlement phases.

The domestic economy at Motumo and Makgosi

Domestic economy includes aspects such as trade, agriculture, diet and metalworking. Evidence of trade comes in the shape of the glass beads. These types of glass beads were traded with during a major part of the Iron Age, and are found on many southern African archaeological sites dating to this time.

The type of agriculture practised was difficult to determine. It is more than likely that crops such as maize, sorghum or millet, or a combination of a few, were grown and utilized here, although no definite evidence for these were found. The only tangible evidence for the production and use of such crops on these sites are the granaries uncovered in Excavation 1 at Makgosi, probably dating to the Early Iron Age., as well as the pit excavated at Motumo in 2004. A number of upper grinding stones, used to grind cereals, was also found, while grinding hollows were identified on a number of the granite outcrops on the sites.

Domestic animals (cattle & goat) produced the largest number of identifiable specimens to the bone sample, followed by hunted, trapped and gathered animals. Therefore, although they herded animals, a fair amount of their diet did consist out of non-domestic species. Species such as steenbok, impala, blue wildebeest, zebra, buffalo and giraffe were identified in the faunal sample from the 2004 excavations (Scott 2004) and although no specifically identified non-domestic species were found during 2005 (other than Bov.II-sized antelope), it can be assumed that these animals were more than likely hunted. They also trapped animals such as springhares, of which some number are represented in the faunal sample. Other food sources that contributed to their diet include freshwater mussel and giant land snail. The diet of the people, right through time, has therefore been very high in meat content.

Another aspect of domestic economy that can be mentioned is skin or hide working. The springhares would have been trapped not only for their meat, but also for their skins. Other evidence for this is the lion, leopard and other carnivore remains found during the 2004 excavations. These animals would have been hunted and trapped more for their skins than as a source of meat. Some of the worked pieces of pottery, as well as the stone scrapers, could also have been used as hide scrapers.

Metalworking is the last aspect of domestic economy that needs some mention. Although the evidence is very scant, a few pieces of metal slag (from Motumo 1b) and some tuyere (clay blowpipe fragments) from the 2004 excavations were recovered, pointing in the direction of this activity.

Cultural identities

Determining the cultural identities of the people who settled at Motumo and Makgosi during the different time periods was one of the main aims of the archaeological investigations.

During more recent historical times we know that the Tlokwa people settled in the area (See Van Schalkwyk 2001). It is said that the origin of all Tlokwa people can be traced to Tlokweg on the Mooi River near Potchefstroom, where they had the *thakadu* (ant-bear) as their totem. From here can be traced the Tlokwa tribes of Northwest Province, Free State, Lesotho, KwaZulu-Natal, Botswana and Limpopo. Exactly when this segregation took place, can no longer be determined with any clarity. It is however justifiable to estimate that the northward movement of the Tlokwa people took place before the year 1700. According to tradition they first settled at Moletane in the Potgietersrus district, but early in the 18th century they moved further northward (Van Warmelo 1953). Many sites identified in the area (Van Schalkwyk 2001), as well as the stonewall enclosed huts at both Motumo and Makgosi has a Tlokwa origin.

Determining the cultural identities of the earlier Iron Age people who lived here is more problematic. Although there is some Doornkop and Eiland style decorated pottery, the decorated sample is too small to say with absolute surety that people speaking a language associated with these traditions were present at the site, although it is quite possible. The Moloko (Tswana) pottery recovered at the site also indicates that Tswana speaking people possibly lived here during the Iron Age.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2005 excavations at Motumo 1b and Makgosi, two Iron Age sites on the farm De Gladdeklipkop 763 LS, were fairly successful. Although far less material was found than during the 2004 excavations at Motumo we were able to reach the aims set out for the 2005 season. Coupled with the results from the previous season we now know far more about the prehistory and history of the area than before.

Although we were not able to develop a definite time-span of settlement at Motumo 1b and specifically at Makgosi yet (due to still outstanding C14 results), it is possible to say that human occupation of the area have possibly been taking place for more than 1000 years, commencing in approximately AD 800 and continuing up to the mid 20th century. To some extent we were also able to interpret the domestic economy practised here over the span of occupation. The diet consisted to a large extent of meat, although other food sources such as cereals, other plant foods and marine shell were also utilized. They practised herding, although hunting and trapping non-domestic animals also took place. Links with trade networks existed, as evidenced by the glass trade beads, while hide working and metalworking was also more than likely practised.

It is recommended that the planned development at the two sites continue. We believe that ample information and objects have been recovered from the sites during the two seasons of fieldwork, helping not only to 'rescue' the sites and their prehistory from total destruction, but also contributing to our general knowledge about the archaeology of the area. A display at the Motumo Trading Post (where the results of the 2004 research will be highlighted) will help to inform and educate the local inhabitants about their past, while giving the general public access to information they would otherwise not have known about. The excavations and display are clear evidence of not only the clients' commitment to the preservation of our heritage, but also that of the NCHM's.

We would also like to recommend that further archaeological research be conducted on other undisturbed sites in the area before any development is undertaken in future. This will help to fully interpret and reconstruct the history and prehistory of the wider geographical area that the De Gladdeklipkop site forms part of.

PROJECT TEAM

Dr. J. van Schalkwyk, Principal Investigator and Project Leader

A. Pelser, Principal Investigator

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Other sources

Map: 2329 DA – 1: 50 000 scale

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We would like to thank the following groups and/or individuals for their help during and support of the project:

Mr D Joubert and Associates; the National Roads Agency; all the ladies from the local community, without whose help the excavations would not have been carried out successfully; the Management of both the NFI and NCHM for their support and help; Ms Karin Scott for the analysis of the faunal remains; QUADRU for the radiocarbon dating.

APPENDIX 1 – SPECIALIST REPORTS

Faunal Report on Magosi
Karin Scott

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Introduction

The site is located on the farm De Gladdeklipkop west of the N1 road and approximately 60 km northeast of Pietersburg, in the Sekgosese district of Limpopo Province.

Excavation Methods and Methods used in Faunal Analysis

For the excavation methods used refer to Mr Pelser's report.

The faunal material was sorted into identifiable and not identifiable fragments. The identifiable analysis was done with the help of the Transvaal Museums' Archaeozoology Department's collection. The analysis was done at international standards as promoted by ICAZ (International Council of Archaeozoology)

Age class determination where applicable was done according to Voigt (1983) and Plug (1988). The quantification methods MNI, NISP and QSP used were done in accordance to the methods set out by Plug, I (1988).

Complete bones and worked bones were measured using a calliper with an accuracy of 0.1mm as part of the standard archaeological analytical methodology. These measurements are not included here but are kept on file. The measurements were taken using the standard points of measurements described by Von den Driesch (1976) and Peters (1986)

Weathering was estimated by comparison to the rest of the sample analysed.

Faunal Sample

1. Identifiable

The total sample bones that could be identified were 123 with a mass of 799.8g. All species identified occur and did occur in the region.

A variety of 10 species were identified. Most commonly found was *Pedetes Capensis* followed by *Bos taurus* and then *Capra hircus*. The largest variety of species, 9 in all, was found in Excavation 1 Midden. This excavation unit also produced the largest identifiable sample (57 specimens). *Achatina* sp did yield the most identifiable fragments but it has to be kept in mind that the shell fragments and that several fragments make up only one specimen.

2. Age classes identified

In Excavation 1 Midden four juvenile *Bos taurus* specimen were identified. These specimens were all deciduous teeth UDM; LLD3PM; LLDM and a RLDM. This could point to young animals being slaughtered but as it is only the teeth with no juvenile or sub-adult pos-cranial material to support it, this conclusion is tentative. One further juvenile Bov II radius shaft was identified in this layer.

In Excavation 1 Midden Layer 2 one juvenile deciduous *Bos taurus* RLD3PM was identified. The aged LL1M belonged to a *Capra hircus* and exhibited heavy wear. Excavation 1 Midden Granary 2 (large) one aged Bov II left lower premolar also exhibited signs of heavy wear and points to an aged individual.

In Motumo 1b one juvenile Bov II Metapodial distal shaft was discovered.

3. Sex and pathology

The Bov II premolar in Excavation 1 Midden Granary 2 (large) shows signs of root pathology.

In Motumo 1b the 2nd phalanx of the *Capra Hircus* shows exostosis and could probably be due a trauma suffered or to the age of the individual.

4. Taphonomy and worked bone

Out of the total of 488 fragments, 103 were burnt. No bones showed weathering and 5 bones show cut marks. One bone exhibited carnivore bite marks.

The ostrich eggshell found in Excavation 1 Midden was worked into a square.

Discussions and Conclusions

Most of the identifiable fragments were from domestic animals. No hunted animals were discovered on this section of the site but it is not unusual as this is a very small sample and the excavation was situated around granary pits (Magosi) and one living quarter (Motumo). It can be argued that the springhares found were not solely hunted for their meat, but also for their skins. The tortoise is a common and easy food source and was widely utilised in the Iron Age.

The *Capra hircus* (goat) 2nd Phalanx that exhibited pathology, coupled with the previous identification of pathology on this terrain could point to possible genetic factors, but this would require further research into the Archaeozoology of the region.

The small rodent mandible found is not unexpected, as rodent would be expected around granary pits.

Certain of the conclusions are tentative because of the small sample size. To stimulate further discussion and test the conclusions reached, more research needs to be done in the area.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Mr A. Pelsler for allowing me the opportunity to do the analyses for the terrain.

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Species List – Motumo and Makgosi

1. *Bos taurus* (*domestic cattle*)
2. *Capra hircus* (*goat*)
3. Bov.II
4. Bov.II (non-domestic) [**medium sized antelope**]
5. Small rodent
6. *Pedetes capensis* (*springhare*)
7. *Struthio camelus* (*ostrich*)
8. *Geocephalone pardalis* (*leopard tortoise*)
9. *Achatina* sp.
10. *Unio* sp.

APPENDIX 2 – MAPS, DRAWINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

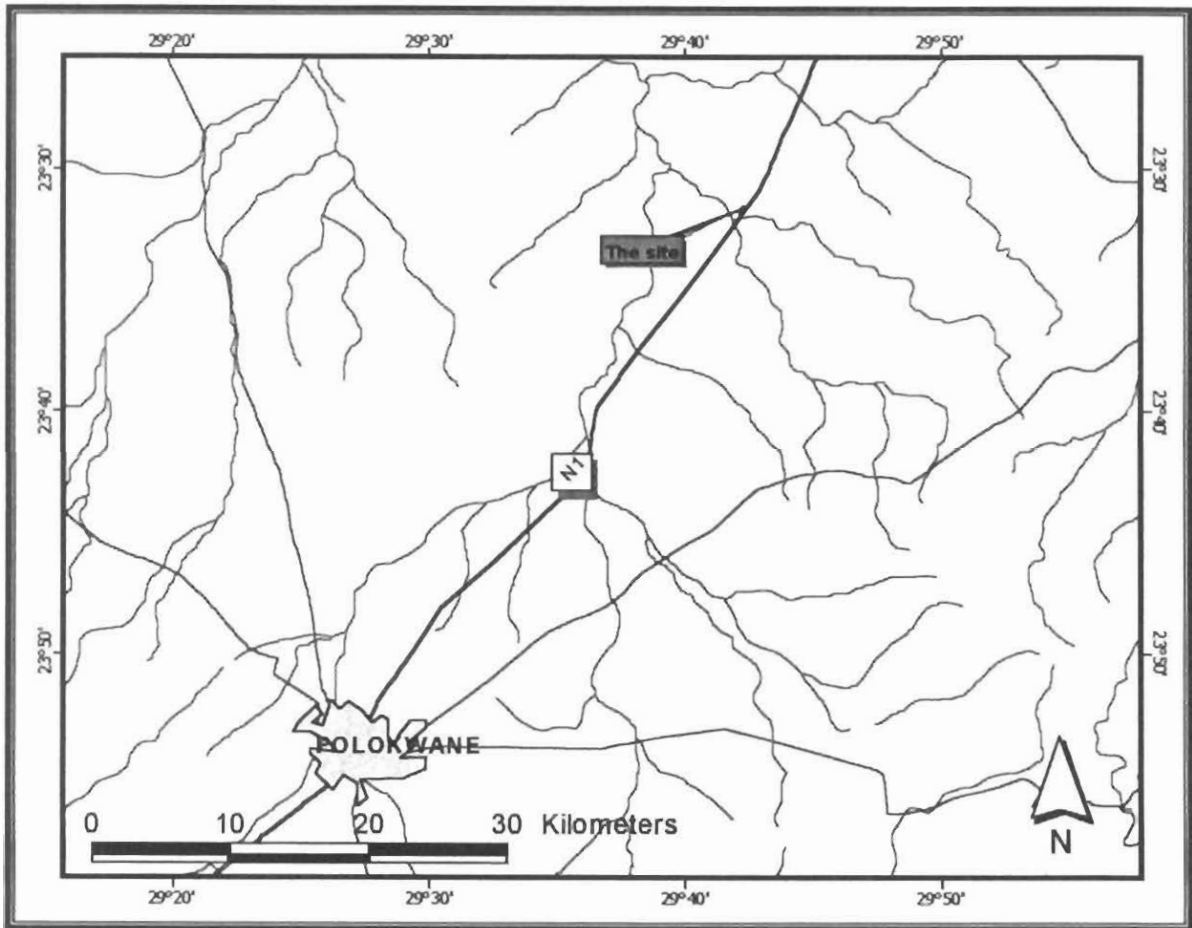


Fig. 1. The location of the sites.

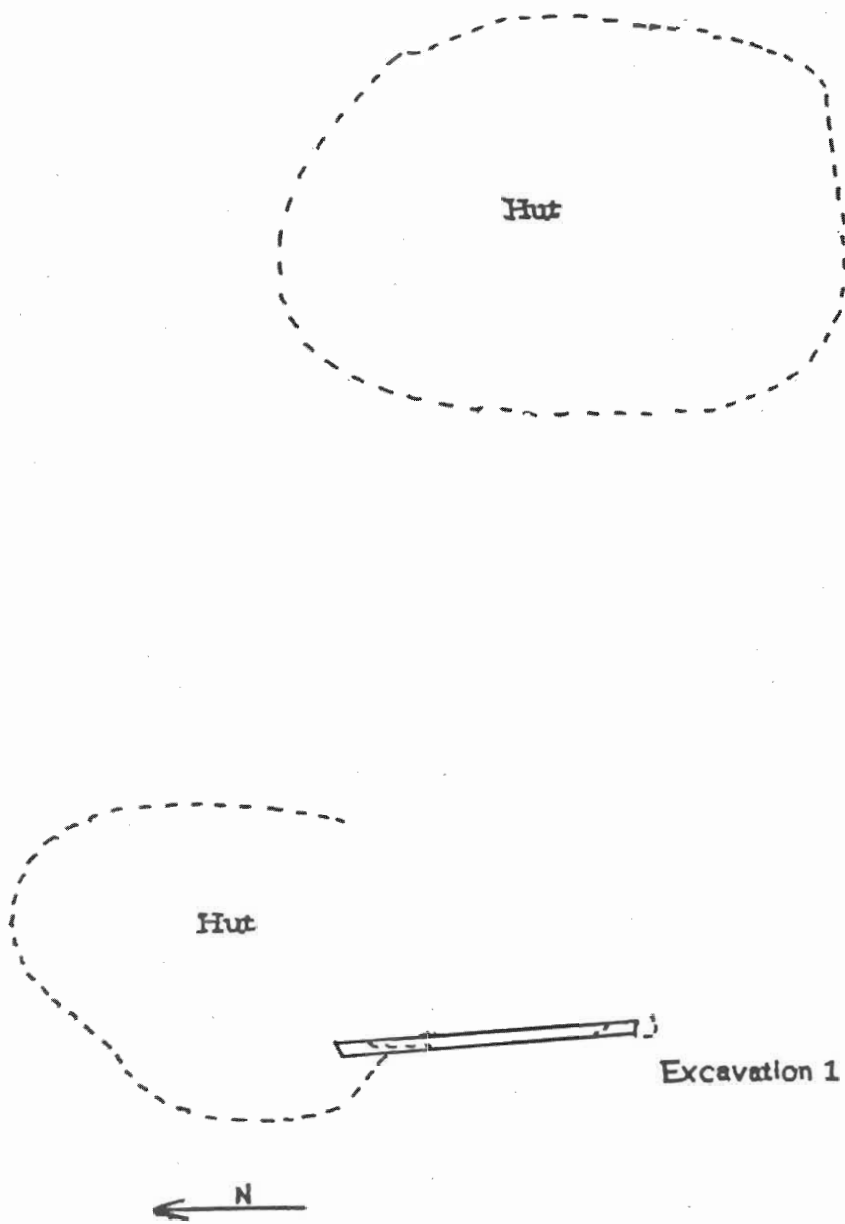


Fig. 2. Map of Motumo Ib, showing the location of Excavation 1.

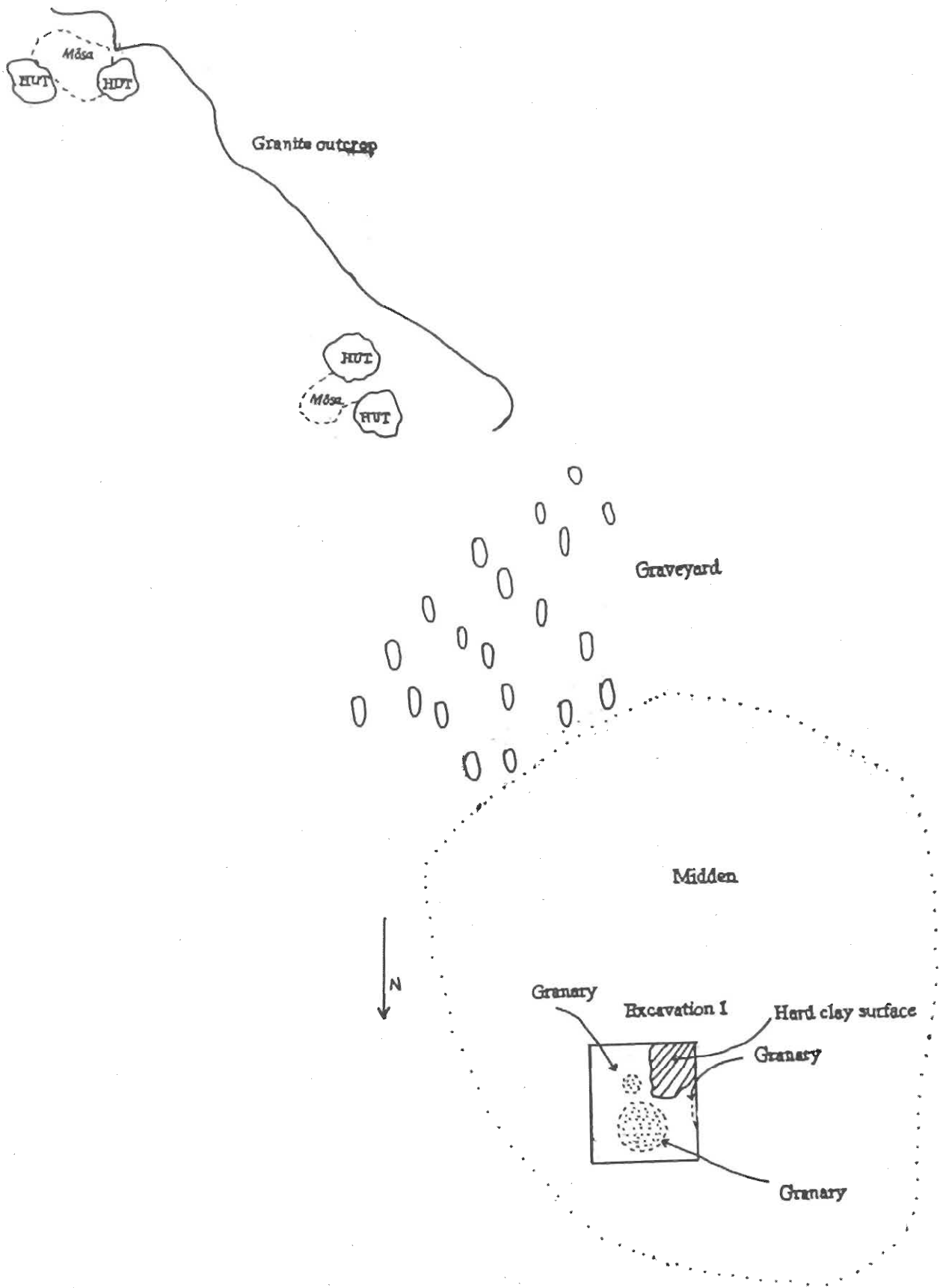


Fig. 3. Map of Makgosi, indicating the location of the Tlokwa huts, the granite outcrop, the cemetery, midden and Excavation 1.



Fig. 4. The location of Motumo 1b.

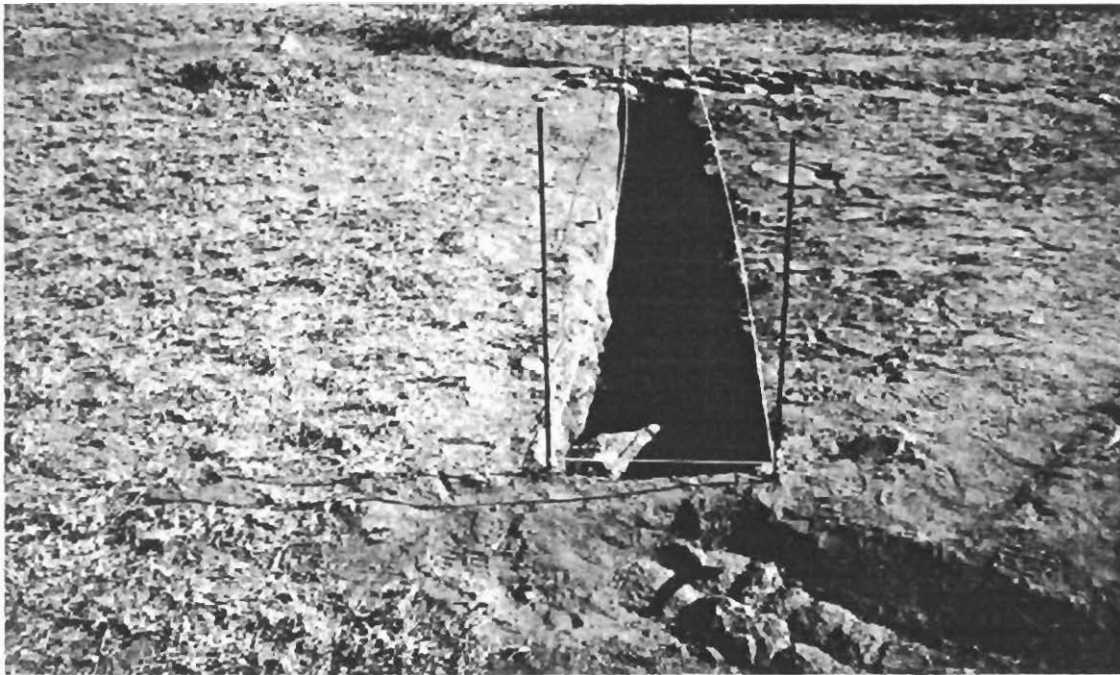


Fig. 5. Excavation 1. Sections of the enclosing stone wall is visible.



Fig. 6. Northern section of the excavation. The stones form part of the enclosing wall that collapsed inwards.

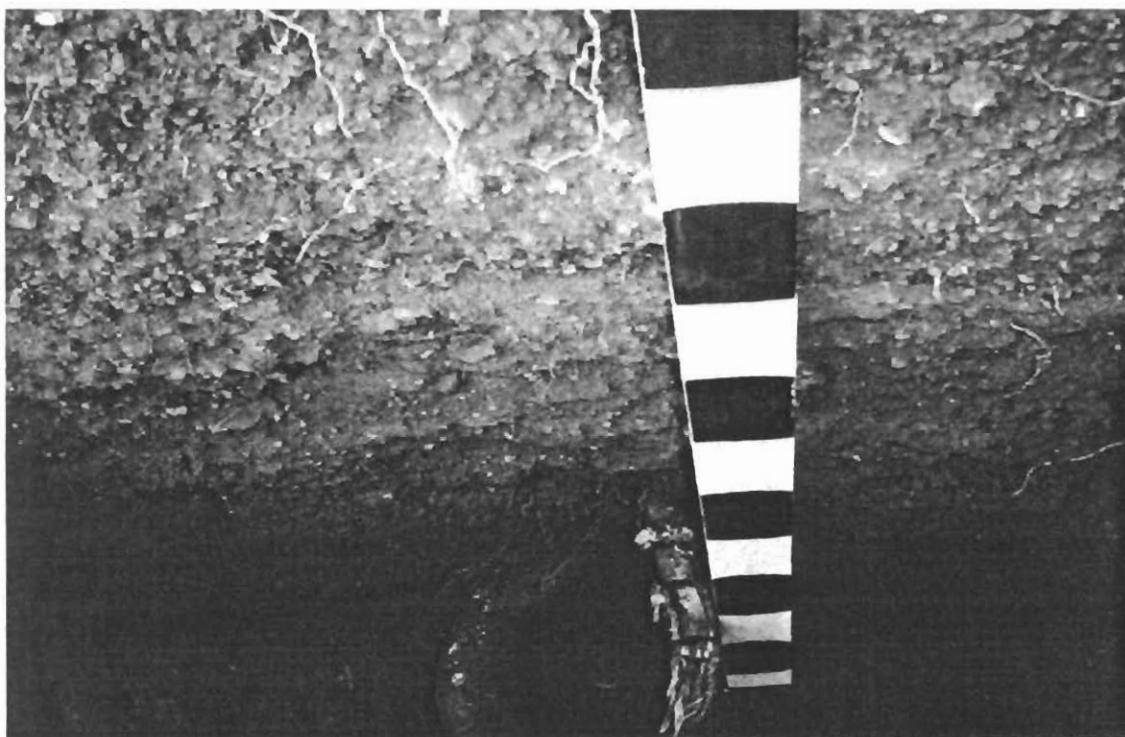


Fig. 7. Close up of stratigraphy. A layer of ash lies beneath layers of topsoil, gravel and clay.



Fig. 8. Makgosi Excavation 1. The recent cemetery is located between the cemetery and the granite outcrop in the distance.

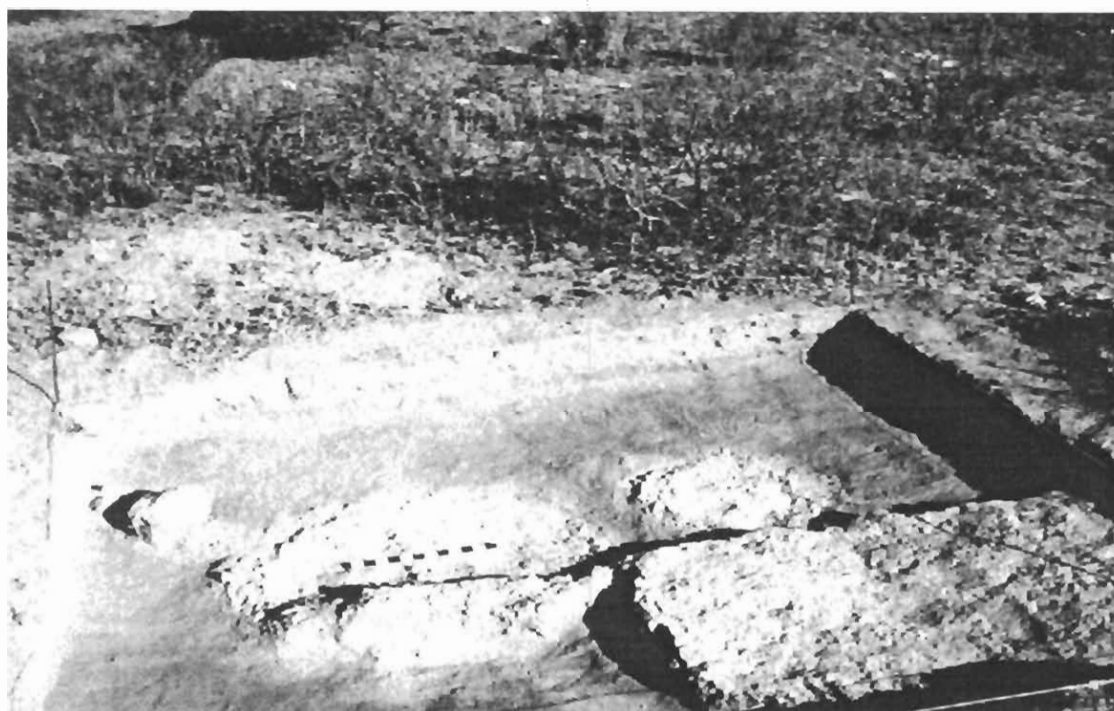


Fig. 9. The two granaries in the beginning stages of being uncovered.

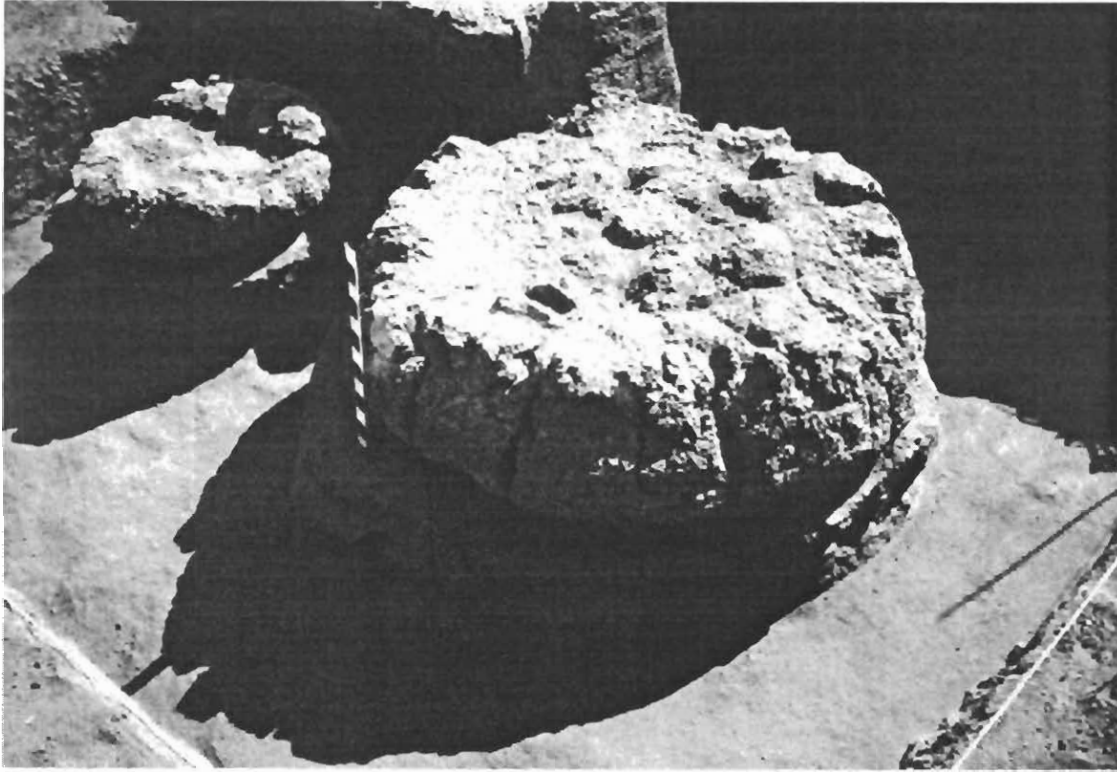


Fig. 10. The two granaries completely excavated. Note the third one in the profile behind the large granary.

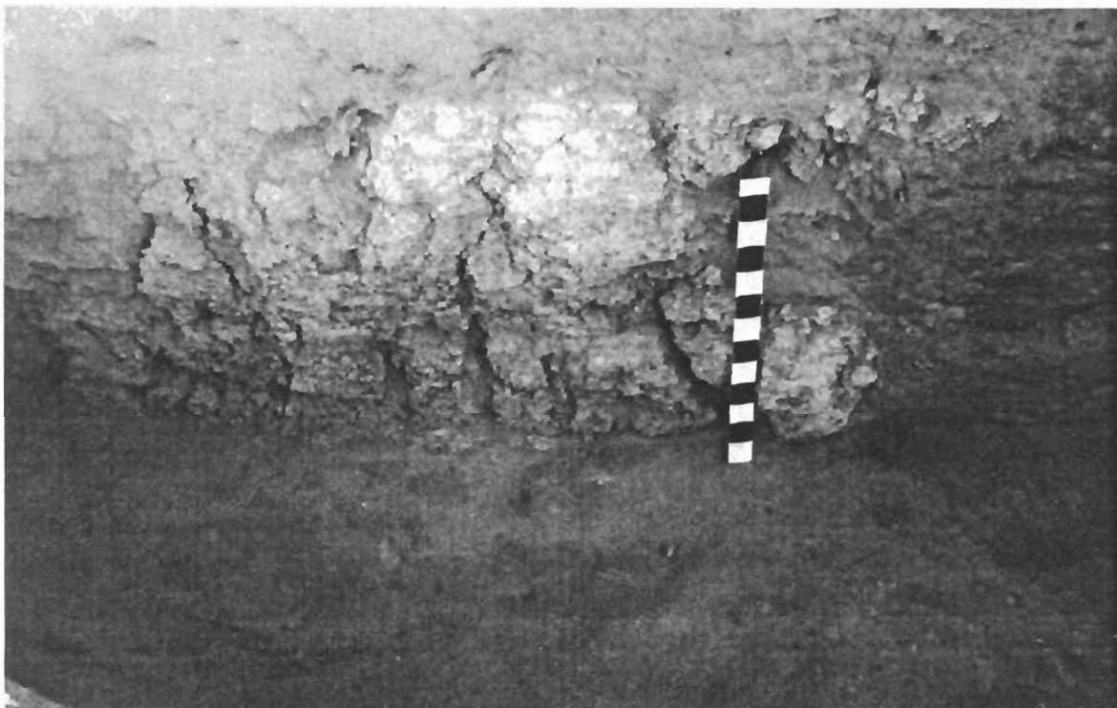


Fig. 11. The third granary exposed in the western profile.



Fig. 12. The vertical pole impressions and the horizontal rope/fibre impressions in the clay and dung structure is clearly visible.

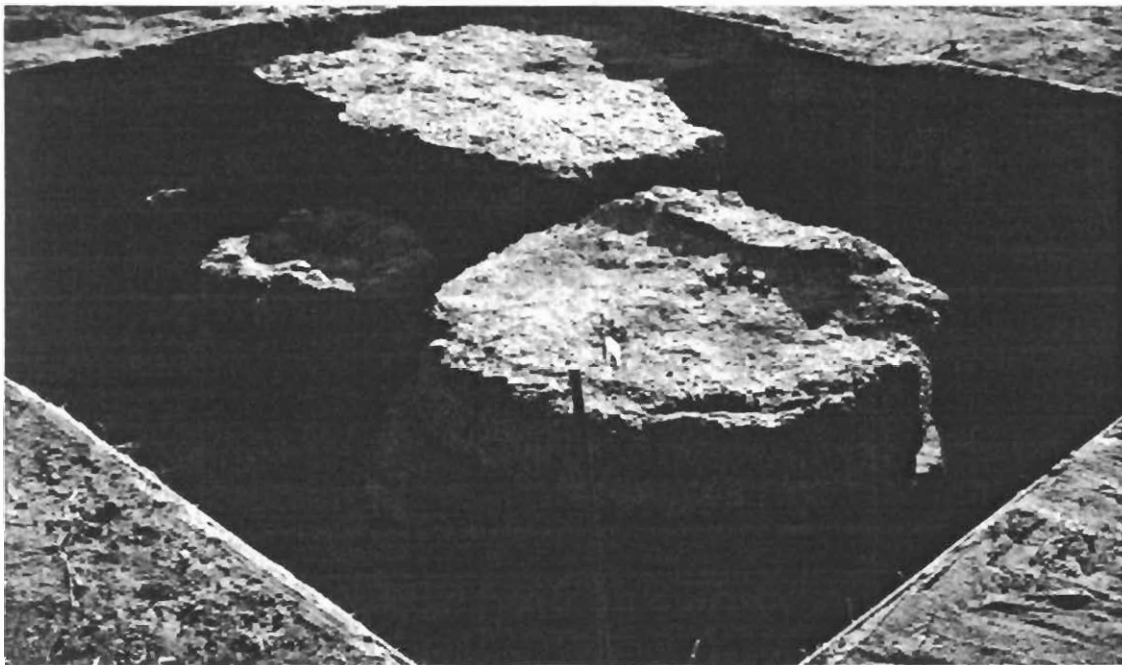


Fig. 13. A hard clay 'plug', right of the pole, conceals the opening of the granary.

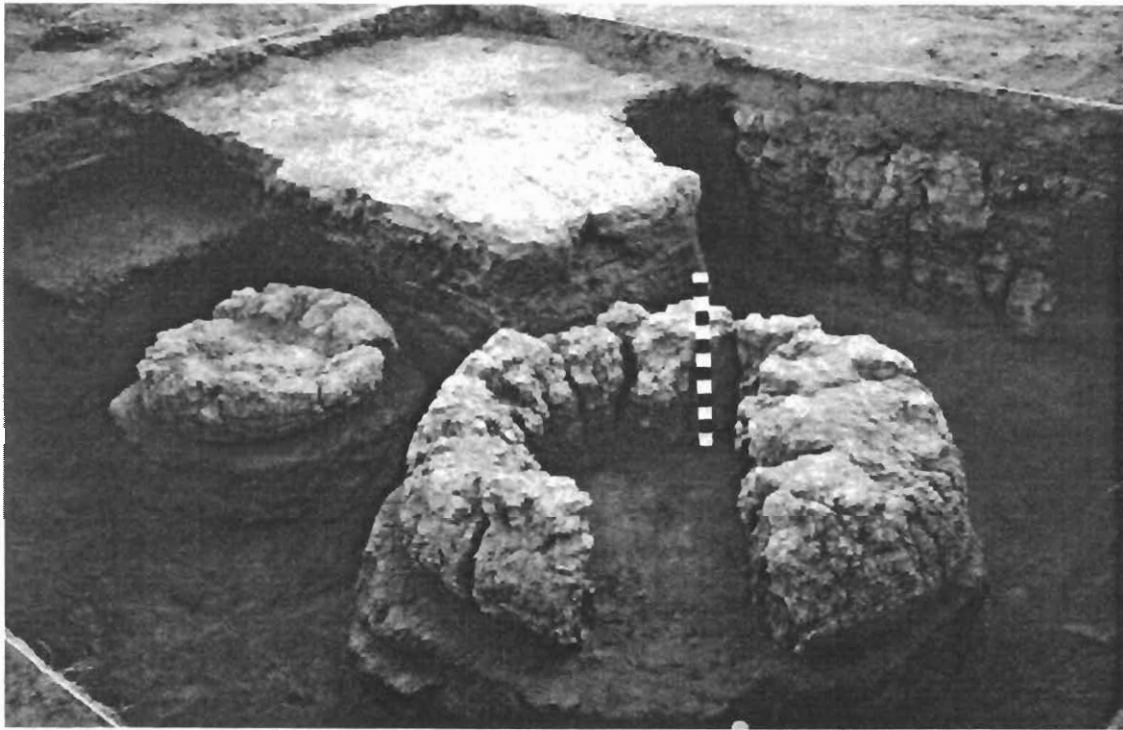


Fig. 14. The hard clay surface/floor, slightly elevated above the granaries, can be seen here.



Fig. 15. Remains of historic Tlokwa dwellings at Makgosi. Note the two huts facing each other, with the *mōsa* in the center.

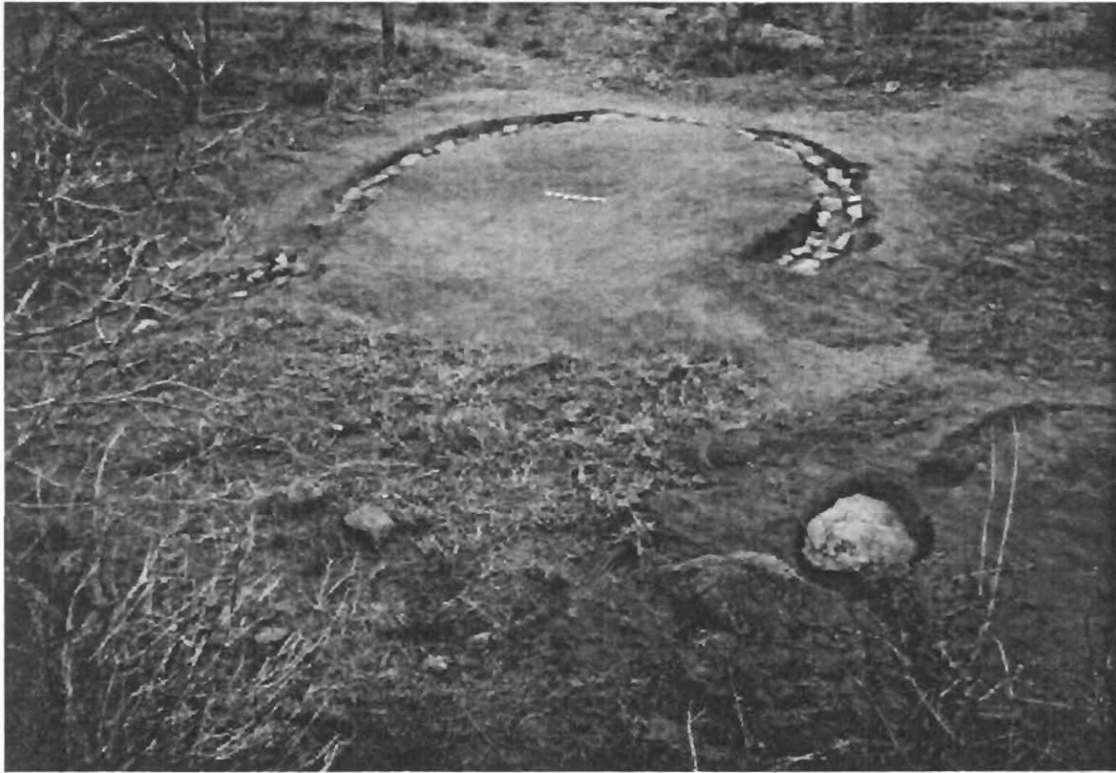


Fig. 16. The second area of Tlokwa huts. Huts are located next to each other, with the *mōsa* below them.



Fig. 17. Thin section of hut floor at Makgosi. The huts were elevated above the *mōsa*.

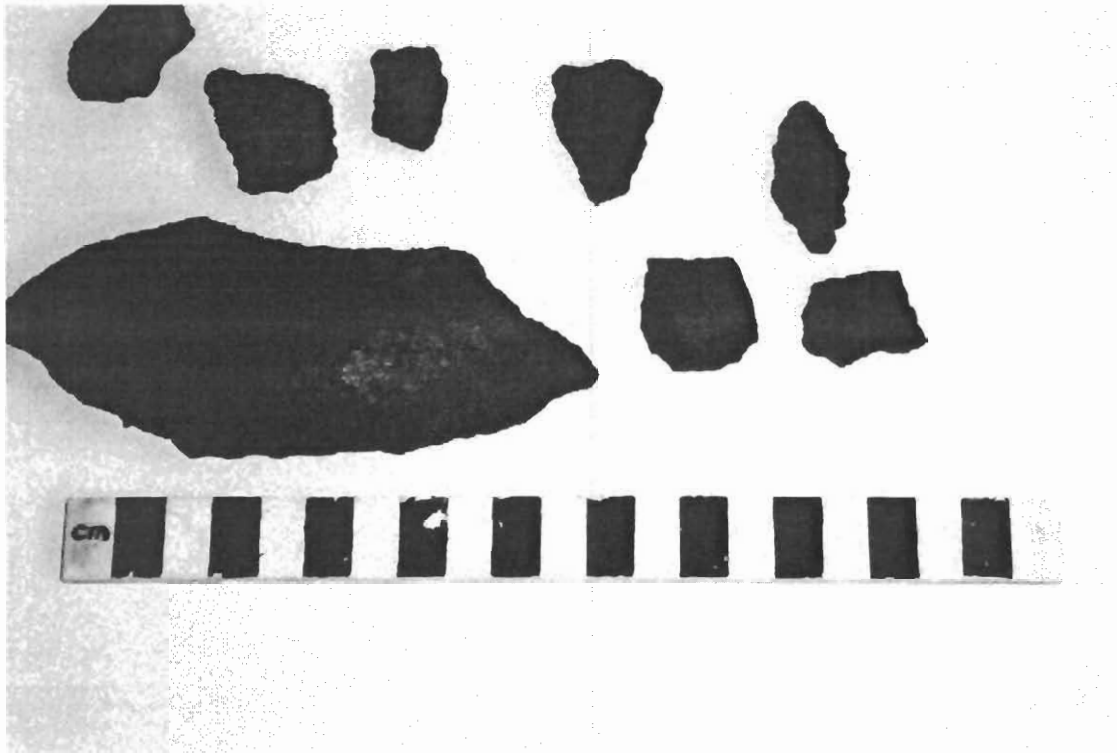


Fig. 18. Decorated pottery from Motumo 1b.

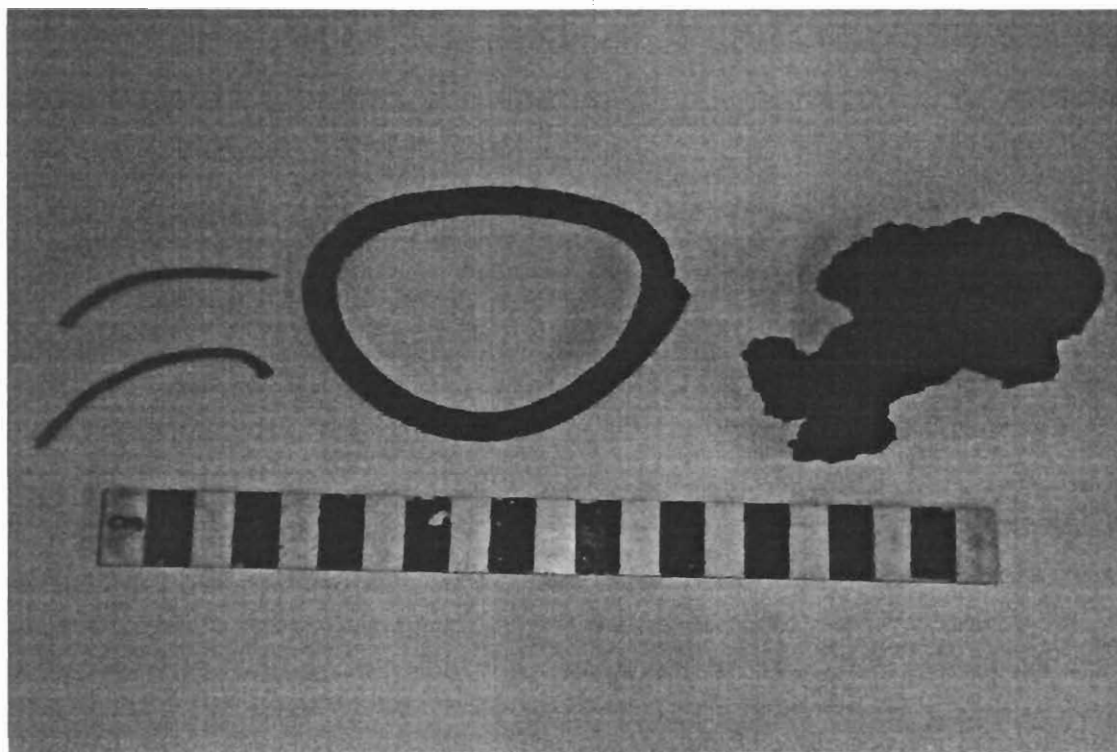


Fig. 19. Copper and iron bangles and pieces of slag from Motumo 1b, Excavation 1.

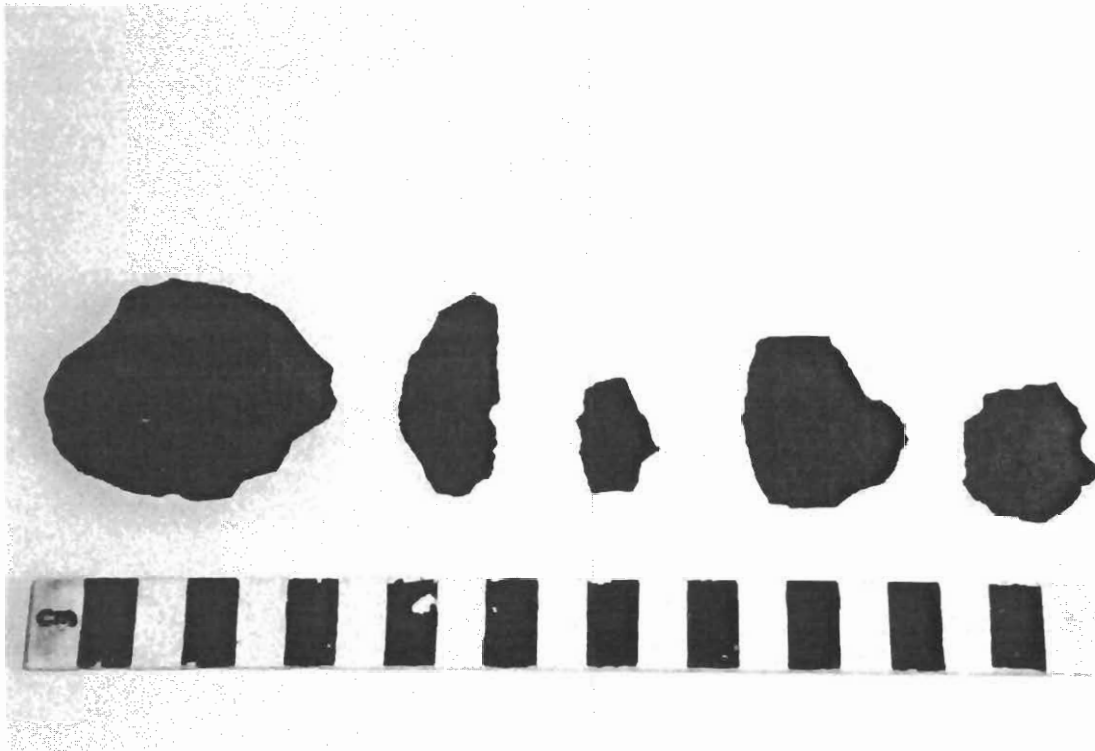


Fig. 20. Various MSA & LSA stone tools from Motumo 1b.

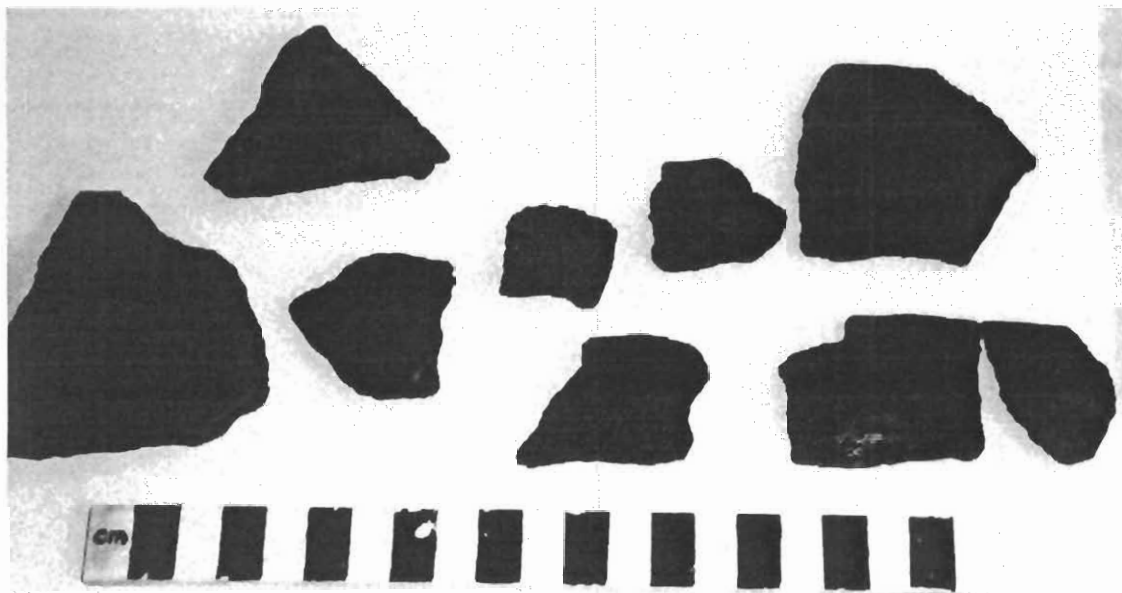


Fig. 21. Decorated pottery from Excavation 1, Makgosi.

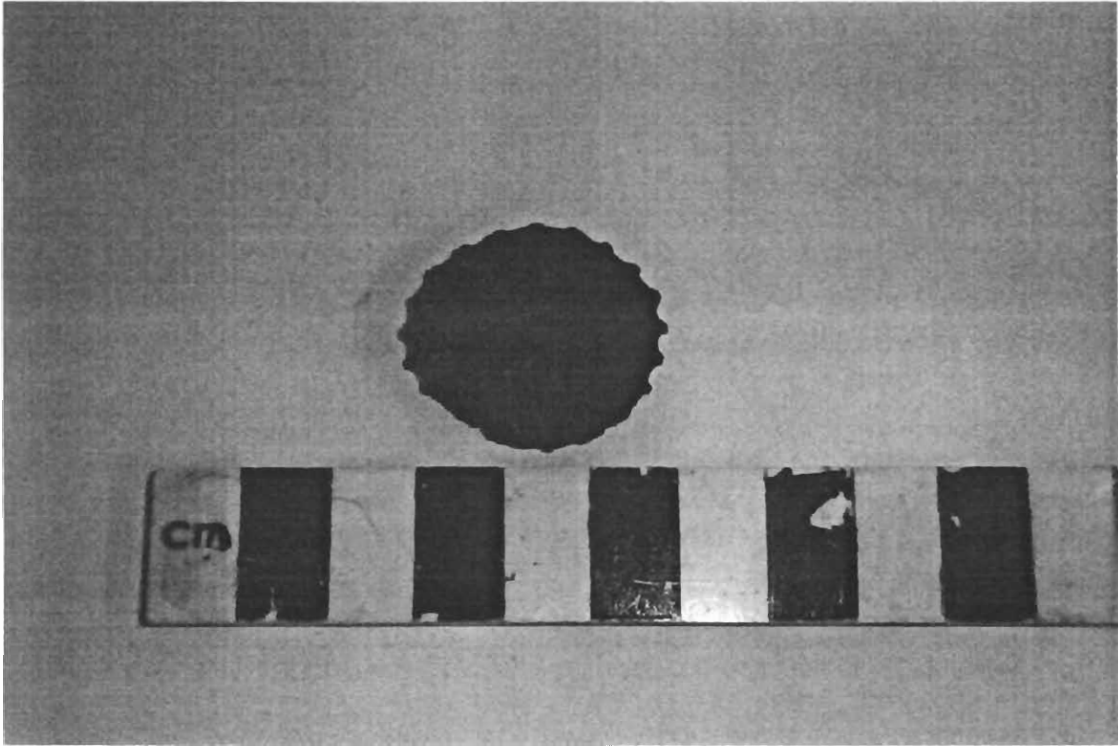


Fig. 22. Recent bottle cap from Makgosi.

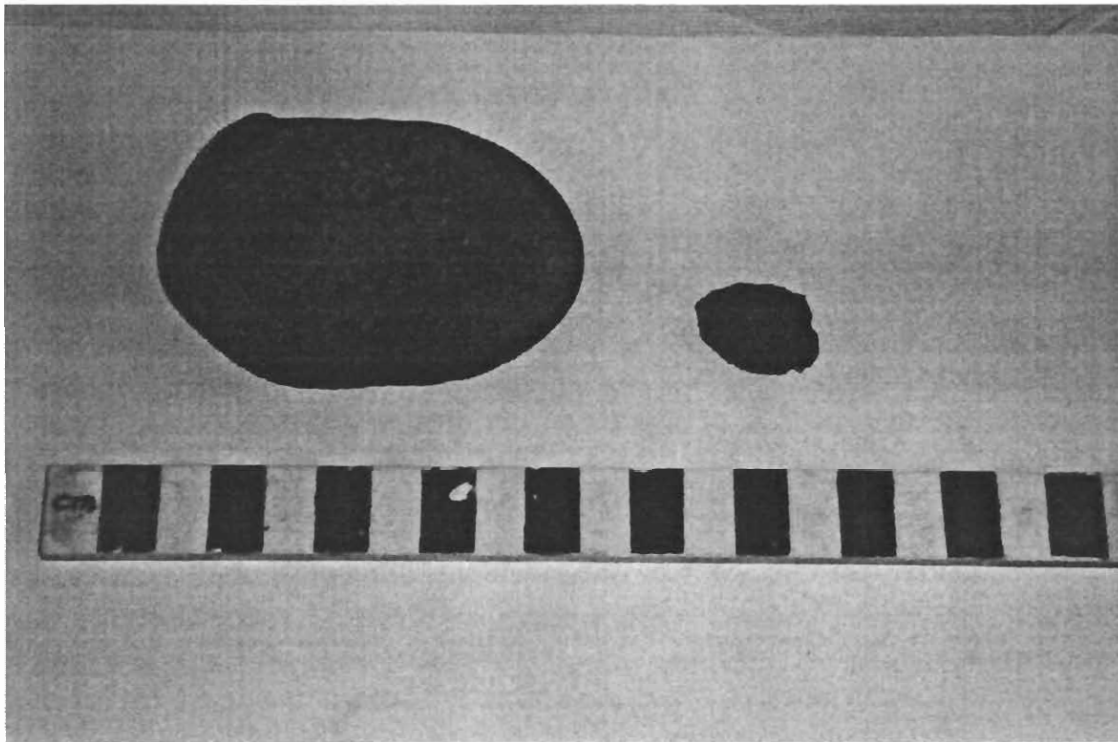


Fig. 23. A grinding stone and a MSA/LSA scraper from Makgosi.

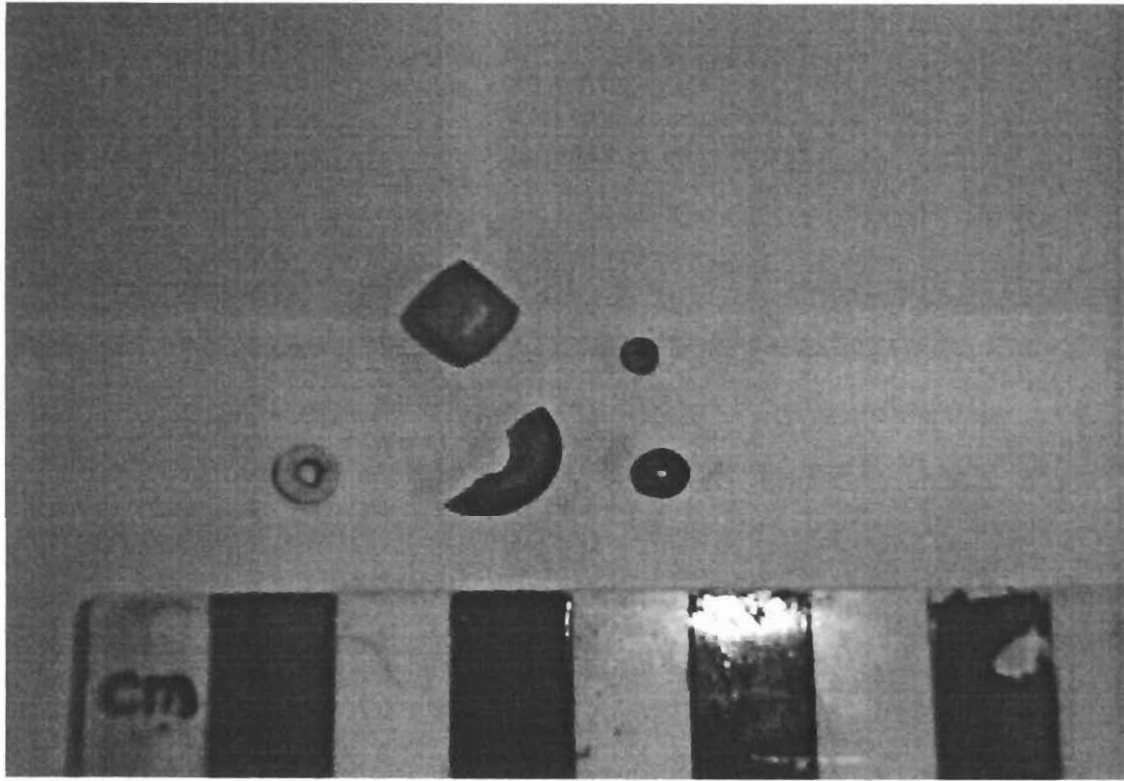


Fig. 24. Glass and shell beads from Excavation 1, Makgosi.

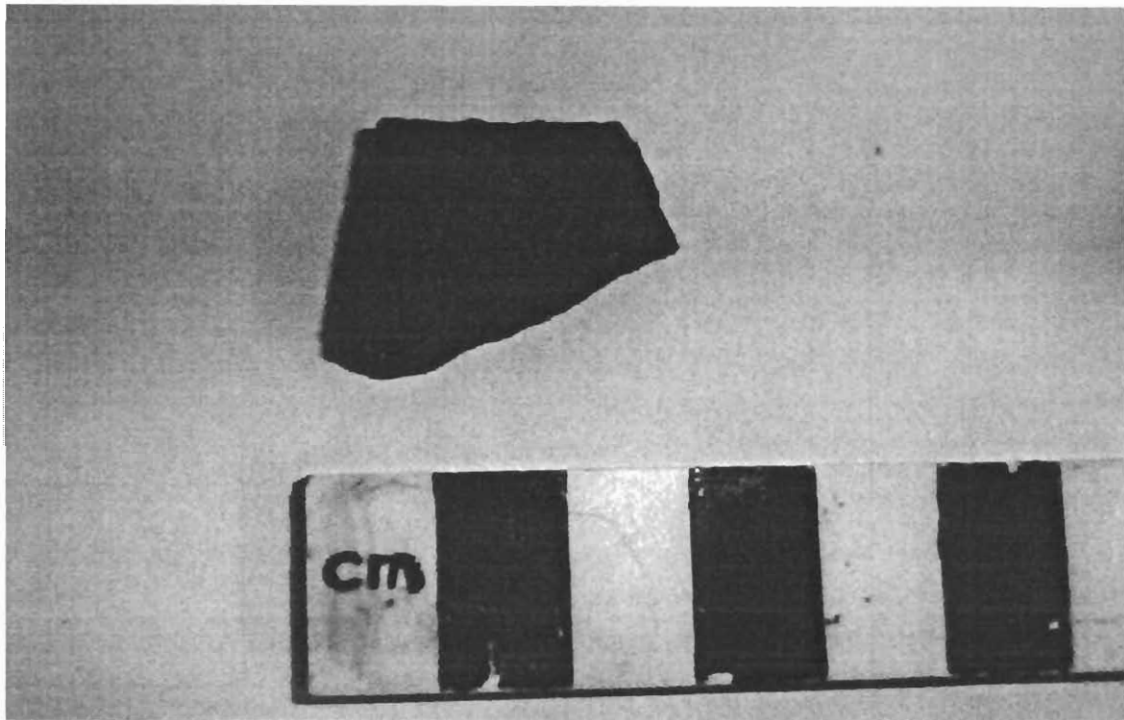


Fig. 25. Snuff grinder from Makgosi.

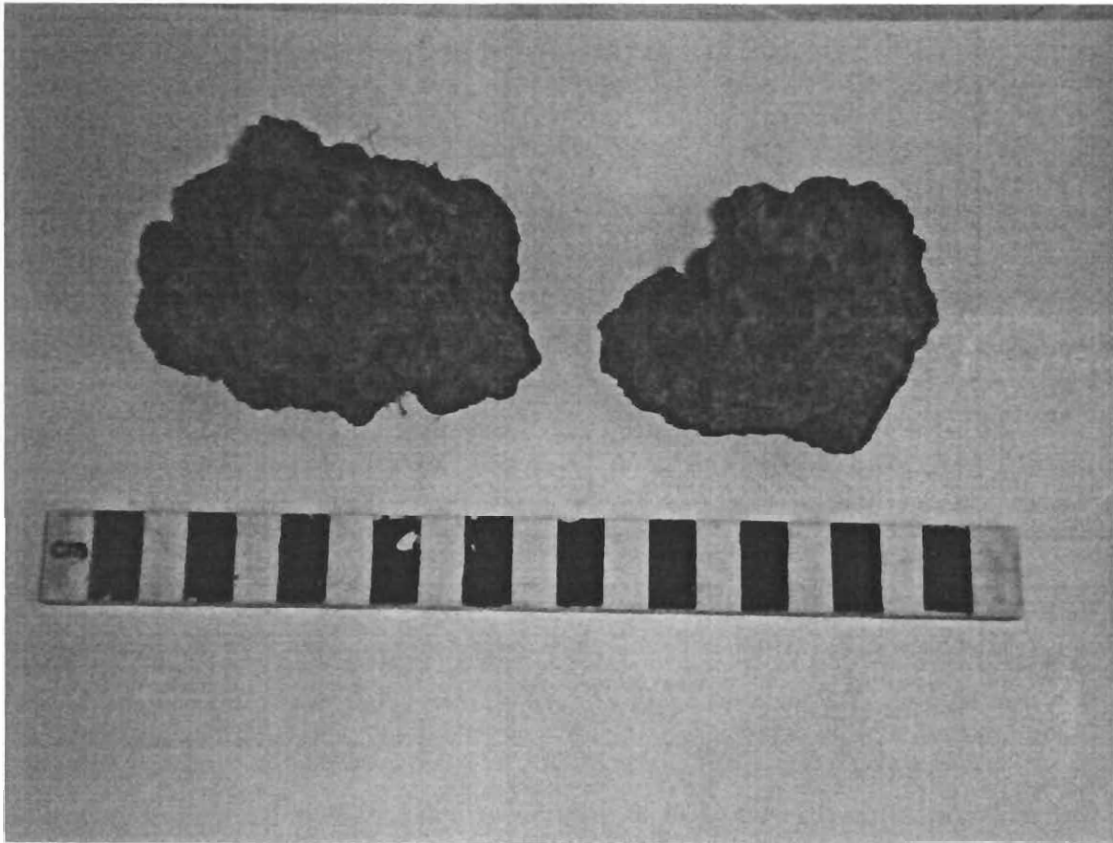


Fig. 26. Pieces of dung from the granaries in Excavation 1, Makgosi.