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**HAMMANSKRAAL WEST PROPER ON A PORTION OF THE FARM
HAMMANSKRAAL 112 JR, GAUTENG**

Phase II Archaeological Excavations and Documentation
(Permit Number 80/05/01/002/51)

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ABSTRACT

During the relocation of graves (SAHRA Permit NO 80/04/09/006/51), undertaken for the proposed Hammanskraal West Proper development, which is located on part of Portions of the Farm Hammanskraal 112-JR in the Hammanskraal area of the Gauteng Province, one potential archaeological site was identified that required further investigation.

Professional Grave Solutions was appointed by Distala Construction, under the Gauteng Department of Housing and Development to conduct the relocation of graves located within the above project area. During the relocation project members of PGS were directed to a site directly along-side newly built single-point toilet facilities. Messrs Fourie and Birkholtz were shown some bone material unearthed during construction work, which was thought to be human remains. Since no conclusive identification could be made on site the Community Liaison Officer (CLO) was instructed to fence off the area with danger tape. Further investigation of the area brought a large scattering of glass beads, as well as potsherds and an ash deposit. The area was fenced off and the developer informed of the find after which PGS was again instructed to proceed with the application for a test excavation permit and, subsequently, a destruction permit.

It was impossible to determine the extent of the site during the initial assessment or to establish what type of deposit, if any, was present. However, the glass beads and ceramics found on the surface indicated a possible Late Iron Age of historic period find-spot.

A recommendation was consequently made that the site be documented by means of a test excavation and an application be submitted afterwards for a destruction permit, if deemed appropriate.

*The aim of the excavation at **HAM99** was therefore to identify and collect a representative sample to confirm or refute the presence of an archaeological find-spot.*

Should it turn out to be an archaeological find-spot, the aim would be to identify and collect a representative sample for classification purposes and to possibly obtain a relative date for the site without recourse to radiocarbon dating.

During the subsequent test excavation, numerous glass beads, a few ceramic pieces and some more recent historic artefacts, including plastic buttons and an enamel plates were recovered.

As is evident from the documentation and sketch of the northern profile of the trench, no definite stratigraphy or cultural layers could be identified in the excavated levels. What the profile does indicate is evidence of numerous disturbances by burrowing animals, as well as the successive enlargement of the burrow over a period of time.

During the investigation one of the local inhabitants informed us that she was of the opinion that the site might be that of a grave of a local diviner, as she had recurring dreams in connection with a spirit indicating that its grave has been disturbed. A meeting was therefore set up with a local diviner and a discussion about the possible presence of a grave was conducted.

From this discussion, it became evident that the above-mentioned excavated finds were possibly associated with a sangoma's grave and that further investigation would be necessary under the grave relocation permit for the project.

It was then decided that further test pits would have to be dug in an attempt to identify a possible grave pit in the area. The results of such further investigation into the possible presence of a grave will be discussed a forthcoming report dealing with the relocation of the graves in the project area.

This report, therefore, only deals with the findings of the test excavation aimed at determining the presence of a possible Iron Age or Historic site. Suffice it to say that no grave pit was discovered during the subsequent investigation of the area surrounding the test trench.

Conclusion

It is clear that all the cultural material found during the test excavation had been displaced over a period of time through the burrowing activities of animals on the site. The cultural material is thus not in primary context.

The glass beads, enamel plate, and other glassware indicate a recent cultural deposition of historic material. The site can thus be classified as recent historic and not archaeological. The main aim of the test excavation,

'to identify and collect a representative sample to confirm or refute the presence of an archaeological find-spot.'

has been accomplished. As mentioned above, further investigations to locate a possible grave pit yielded negative results.

It is thus concluded that the site is not of archaeological importance and it is

recommended that it can be destroyed after the community and local sangomas have completed their cultural ceremony for the relocation of the 'symbolic' grave.

Such a cultural ceremony, which included the removal of the cultural material, under the relocation permit, was concluded on the 9th of February 2005. The reburial of the presumed or 'symbolic' grave and cultural remains were conducted on the 13th of April 2005. This was done together with the reburial of the analysed remains of the graves already exhumed from other areas within the development area under the permit issued for the relocation of such graves.

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1. INTRODUCTION

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Professional Grave Solutions was appointed by Distala Construction, under the Gauteng Department of Housing and Development to conduct the relocation of graves located within the above project area. During the relocation project members of PGS were directed to a site directly along-side newly built single-point toilet facilities. Messrs Fourie and Birkholtz were shown some bone material unearthed during construction work, which was thought to be human remains. Since no conclusive identification could be made on site the Community Liaison Officer (CLO) was instructed to fence off the area with danger tape. Further investigation of the area brought a large scattering of glass beads, as well as potsherds and an ash deposit. The area was fenced off and the developer informed of the find after which PGS was again instructed to proceed with the application for a test excavation permit and, subsequently, a destruction permit.

2. SITE NAME AND LOCATION

2.1. National grid reference

2528CC – Site Names: HAM99

2.2. Name of country, state, county, nearest township, and local name of site

Hammanskraal West Proper on a portion of the farm Hammanskraal 112 JR, Gauteng Province

2.3. Means of access

Access by means of tarred and gravel road from the Old Warmbaths Road.

2.4. Location above mean sea level

1400 metres

2.5 Condition in which the site was found

The site of HAM99 is situated in the proposed Hammanskraal West Proper. It is located along the northern boundary of a row of newly constructed toilets, which form part of a basic services provision project.

The site was heavily disturbed by the soil-moving activity of a burrowing animal as well as trenches and overburden of trenches, which had been dug to lay pipes for the services project. Small pieces of ceramic and numerous glass beads were present on the surface.

3. PRELIMINARY RESEARCH (PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE OF THE SITES BEFORE EXCAVATION)

3.1 Discovery

The site was discovered during a grave relocation project conducted by Professional Grave Solutions (PGS) on behalf of the client Distala Construction under the Gauteng Department of Housing and Development. The relocation project was in its final stages when the Community Liaison Officer (CLO) indicated to the archaeologists involved with the relocation project that some bone fragments, ceramics and glass beads had been found by workers on site.

During the subsequent site visit it was ascertained that numerous beads, ceramic sherds, as well as some historic porcelain, were present. The dense vegetation made it impossible to conclusively determine the extent of the site.

3.2 Previous investigations, surveys, excavation, and dates

- October 2004 – Relocation of graves impacted by project. SAHRA Permit No 80/04/09/006/51

4. EXPEDITION AIMS AND PURPOSES

4.1 Reasons for excavation

It was impossible to determine the extent of the site during the initial assessment or to establish what type of deposit, if any, was present. However, the glass beads and ceramics found on the surface indicated a possible Late Iron Age of historic period find-spot.

A recommendation was consequently made that the site be documented by means of a test excavation and an application be submitted afterwards for a destruction permit, if deemed appropriate.

*The aim of the excavation at **HAM99** was therefore to identify and collect a representative sample to confirm or refute the presence of an archaeological*

find-spot.

Should it turn out to be an archaeological find-spot, the aim would be to identify and collect a representative sample for classification purposes and to possibly obtain a relative date for the site without recourse to radiocarbon dating.

4.2 Statement of archaeological problems that may be resolved through excavation

Identify and collect a representative sample to confirm or refute the presence of an archaeological find spot.

4.3 Collaborating institution or society

Department of Anthropology and Archaeology – Archaeology Division, University of South Africa

4.4 University library, museum, or department where field records are on file

A prior agreement was reached according to which all records and artefacts would be lodged with the Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology, University of South Africa.

5. EXCAVATIONS AND DOCUMENTATION

The following section describes in detail the excavations and documentation of the heritage resources influenced by the development.

5.1 Introduction

After the CLO had alerted PGS archaeologists during the final stages of the grave relocation project to the discovery by workers of some cultural material directly alongside newly built toilet facilities, construction work was halted in a 10-metre radius around the find-spot, and an application was lodged with the South African Heritage Resources Agency for an excavation permit.

5.2 Methodology

The site was cleared of all vegetation and a block of 1 metre x 3 metres was set out. After the cleared area had been investigated, it was decided that only the

northern-most portion of the block would be excavated as it showed the highest concentration of artefacts. The final excavation measured 1 metre x 1.5 metres and was aligned north-south.

The site and all visible disturbances were plotted on a scaled plan sketch. Several other features were also identified and plotted on the scaled plan sketch.

The surface of the excavated block was swept and documented as **layer 0**. There after excavations were done in arbitrary layers of 10cm each within identified features and documented numerically. All the material excavated was screened with a 2 mm and 8 mm mesh. Finds were bagged and catalogued. Each layer of the excavation was photographed digitally and on 35 mm black and white film and slides as required by legislation and permit requirements.

5.3 Finds

5.3.1 HAM99 Layer 0

Depth of layer: Surface

Methodology: The cleared surface was swept and the soil sieved.

Soil: The surface consisted of a light yellow-brown soil mixed with organic material associated with the top layer of soil strata.

The layer yielded the following material remains:

- Numerous white, black, blue and pink glass beads;
- Ceramic pieces;
- One enamel tin plate;
- One large cow bone;
- One plastic button; and
- One glass bottle cap.

(Refer to Section 10 for photographs)

The layer was photographed

5.3.2 HAM99 Layer 1

Depth of layer: 10cm

Methodology: The cleared surface was excavated by trowel and shovel, swept and sieved.

Soil: The soil consisted of a light yellow soil.

The layer yielded the following material remains:

- Numerous white, black, blue and pink glass beads;
- One plastic button; and
- One Middle Stone Age flake with retouch

(Refer to Section 10 for photographs)

The layer was photographed

5.3.3 HAM99 Layer 2

Depth of layer: 10-20cm

Methodology: The surface was excavated by trowel and shovel, swept and sieved.

Soil: The soil consisted of a red-brown soil. The northern profile had a small disturbance made by burrowing animals.

The layer yielded the following material remains:

- Numerous white, black, blue and pink glass beads;
- One large blue glass bead;

(Refer to Section 10 for photographs)

The layer was photographed

5.3.4 HAM99 Layer 3

Depth of layer: 20-30cm

Methodology: The surface was excavated by trowel and shovel, swept and sieved.

Soil: The soil consisted of a red-brown gravelly soil.

The layer yielded the following material remains:

- A few white glass beads;

(Refer to Section 10 for photographs)

The layer was photographed

5.3.5 HAM99 Layer 4

Depth of layer: 30-40cm

Methodology: The surface was excavated by trowel and shovel, swept and sieved.

Soil: The soil consisted of a red-brown gravel layer.

The layer yielded no cultural remains

(Refer to Section 10 for photographs)

The layer was photographed. Refer to Section 10 for section sketch of northern profile.

6. EXCAVATION SUMMARY

6.1 Area and extent of work

The area covered by the initial disturbance and distribution of cultural material was 10 metres x 15 metres. An initial test pit of 1 metre x 1.5 metres was excavated in the northern part of the site. This area had the highest concentration of cultural material on the surface.

6.2 Site conditions

The site was heavily disturbed by the soil-moving activity of a burrowing animal as well as trenches and overburden of trenches that was dug to lay pipes for the services project. Small pieces of ceramic and numerous glass beads were present on surface.

6.3 Methodology

As outlined in 5.2, standard archaeological procedures were followed during excavation. The site and all visible disturbances were plotted on a scaled plan sketch. The final excavated trench measured 1m x 1.5 m. Excavations were done in arbitrary layers of 10 cm each within identified features and documented numerically. All excavated material was screened with a 2 mm and an 8 mm mesh. All finds were bagged and catalogued. Each excavated layer was photographed digitally, as well as on 35 mm black and white film and slides as required by legislation and permit requirements.

6.4 Tools used

During the excavation the following tools were utilized:

- Automatic Level – Site sketches
- Trowel – Excavating
- Dust Pan and brushes – Excavating and cleaning
- Sieves (2mm and 8mm mesh) – Sieving

6.5 Labor

The labor used was sourced locally to assist in the sieving and sorting of the material excavated. Two archaeologists responsible for the project did the physical

excavation.

6.6 Dates when work was carried out

The work was conducted on the 7th and 8th of February 2005.

6.7 Staff members and their respective responsibilities

Principal Investigator – Dr. J.C.A Boeyens

Principal Field Director – Wouter Fourie

Field Director – Polke D. Birkholtz

Field Supervisor – Jaco van der Walt

Field Supervisor – Henk S. Steyn

7. RESULTS

During the subsequent test excavation, numerous glass beads, a few ceramic pieces and some more recent historic artefacts, including plastic buttons and an enamel plates were recovered.

As is evident from the documentation and sketch of the northern profile of the trench, no definite stratigraphy or cultural layers could be identified in the excavated levels. What the profile does indicate is evidence of numerous disturbances by burrowing animals, as well as the successive enlargement of the burrow over a period of time.

During the investigation one of the local inhabitants informed us that she was of the opinion that the site might be that of a grave of a local diviner, as she had recurring dreams in connection with a spirit indicating that its grave has been disturbed. A meeting was therefore set up with a local diviner and a discussion about the possible presence of a grave was conducted.

During the consultation with sangoma Sophie Ndlovu, two other older women from the area, Elizabeth Thaba and Margaret Ngubeni were present. Elizabeth Thaba's father was also a sangoma.

The three women indicated that a sangomas grave is marked with the following items:

- A large rock at the head of the grave;
- A small ceramic pot on the surface;
- A plate (enamel or glass); and
- A spoon

They explained that a ceramic bowl called, *nkgo* (the Tswana word for clay pot), was

usually placed on top of the grave and constituted the deceased sangoma's mixing bowl in which all their medicine was prepared.

The beads, which were recovered on top of and inside the excavated trench, is known to them as *Dipetha* and is one of the characteristics that can be used to identify sangomas. The bracelet of which the beads formed part of is called a *leseka* (plural *maseka*).

According to them beads are an indication of status within the local sangoma community, which consists of two groups, the *Mundau* and *Molozzi*. The *Mundau* group is distinguished with beads of two colours, for example, black and white or blue and white. Cowry shells are also incorporated into the *Mundau* bracelets and necklaces. The *Molozzi* group is identifiable by uni-coloured beads.

From this discussion, it became evident that the excavated finds were possibly associated with a sangoma's grave and that further investigations would be necessary under the grave relocation permit for the project.

It was then decided that further test pits would have to be dug in an attempt to identify a possible grave pit in the area. The results of such further investigation into the possible presence of a grave will be discussed a forthcoming report dealing with the relocation of the graves in the project area.

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8. CONCLUSIONS

All It is clear that all the cultural material found during the test excavation had been displaced over a period of time through the burrowing activities of animals on the site. The cultural material is thus not in primary context.

The glass beads, enamel plate, and other glassware indicate a recent cultural deposition of historic material. The site can thus be classified as recent historic and not archaeological. The main aim of the test excavation,

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9. CATALOGUE OF ARTEFACTS

- Numerous white, black, blue and pink glass beads;
- Ceramic pieces;
- One enamel tin plate;
- Plastic buttons;
- One large cow bone;
- One glass bottle cap; and
- One Middle Stone Age flake with retouch.

All these artefacts were reburied along with other beads and material collected during the grave investigation excavations.

10. ILLUSTRATIONS

10.1 Maps, plans, and sections

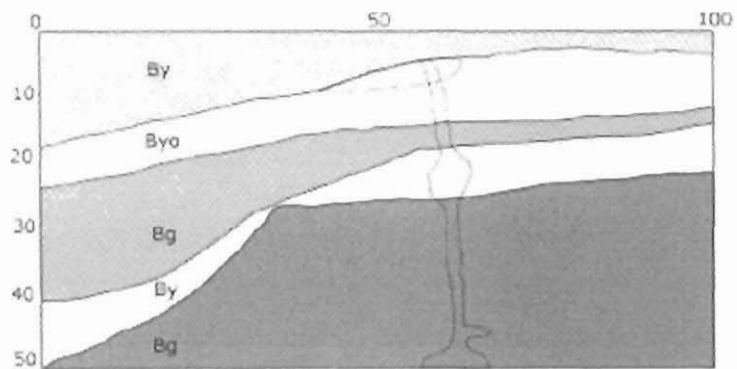
Locality Map

Hamman's Road Proper West Test Excavation - HAM 99



Layout Plan of Site

**HAM99
Profile Sketch
Northern Profile**



Scale 1:10

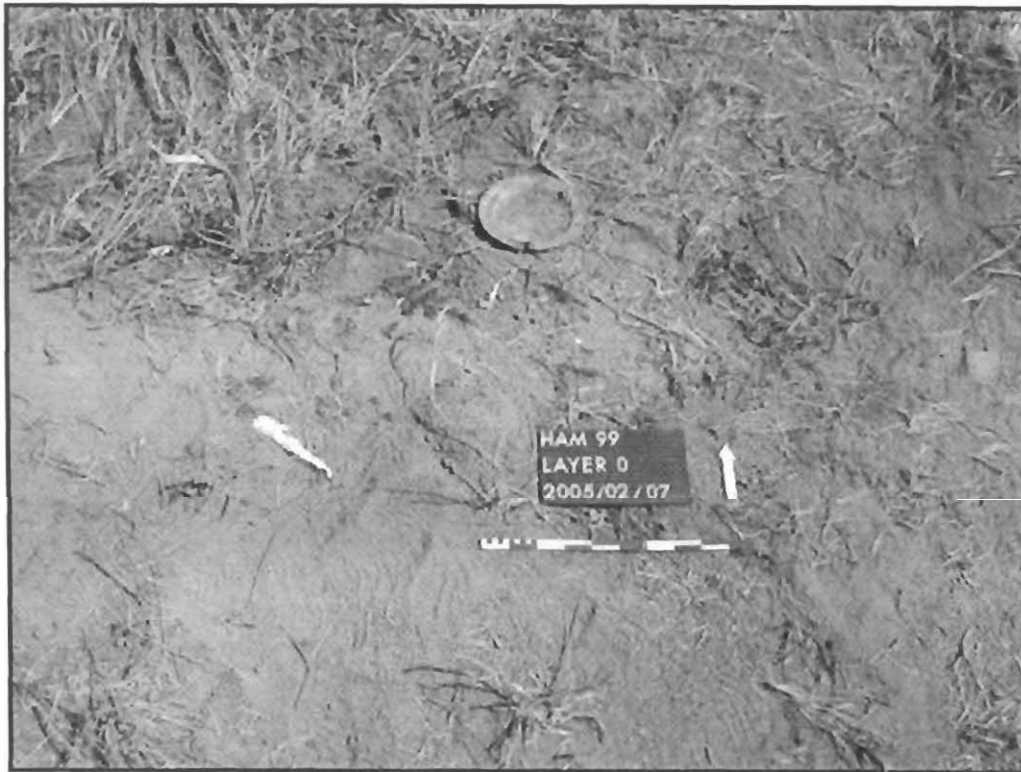
Legend

- By - Brown Yellow
- Byo - Brown yellow with organic matter
- Bg - Brown Grey
- - Disturbance

10.2 Catalogue of artefacts

- Numerous white, black, blue and pink glass beads;
- Ceramic pieces;
- One enamel tin plate;
- Plastic buttons;
- One large cow bone;
- One glass bottle cap; and
- One Middle Stone Age flake with retouch

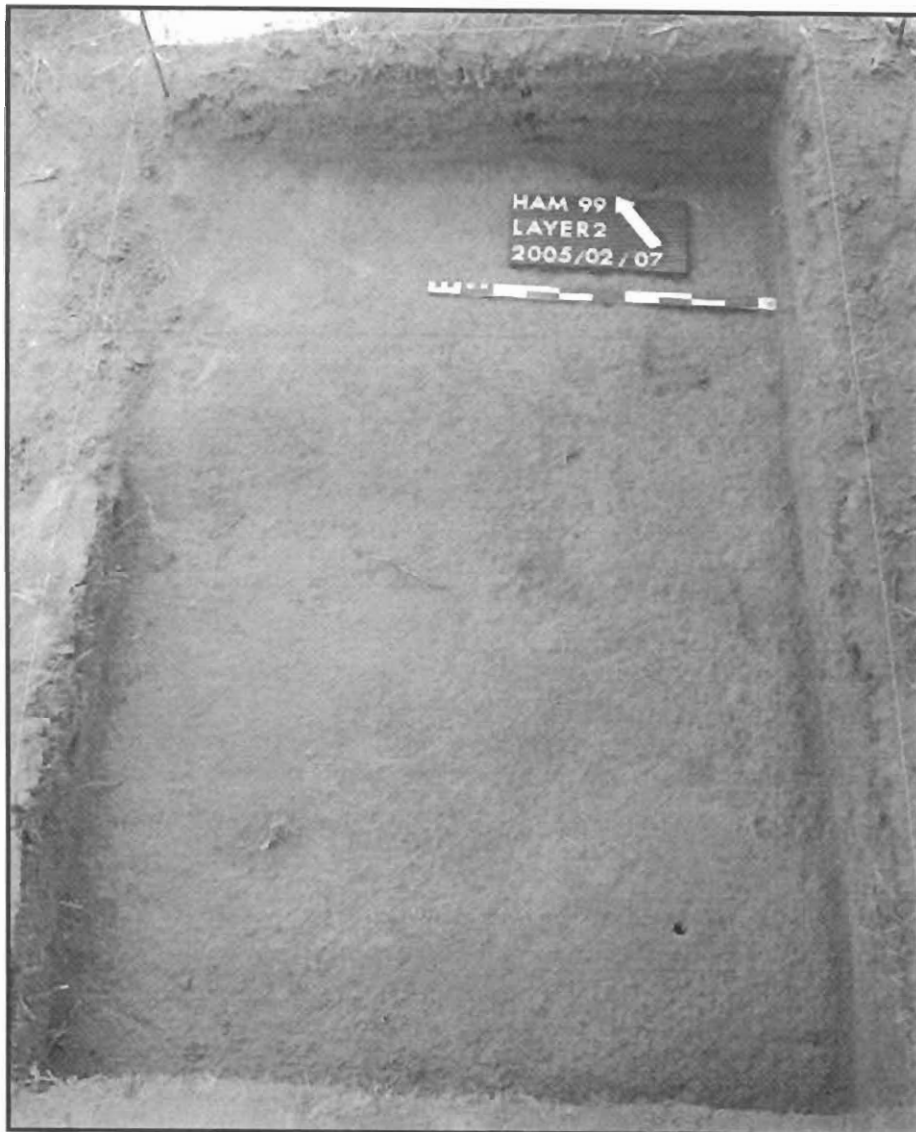
10.3 Photographic illustrations



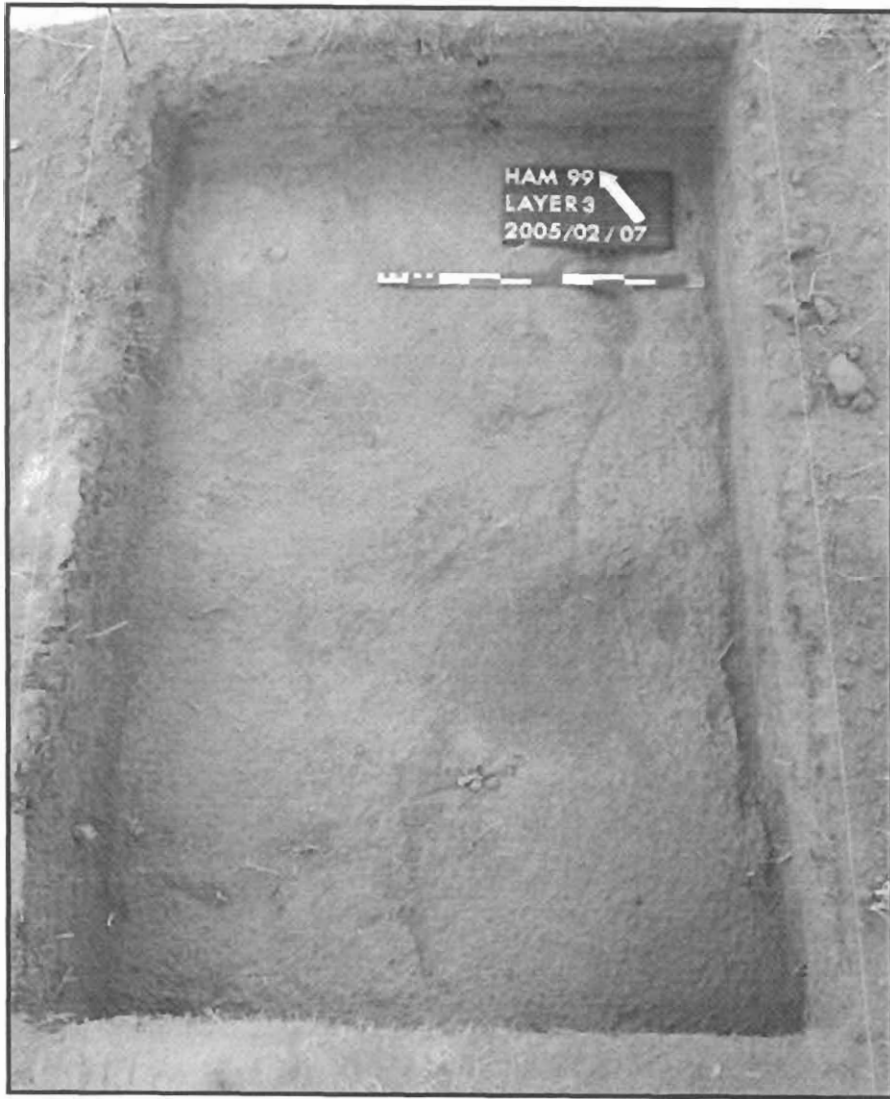
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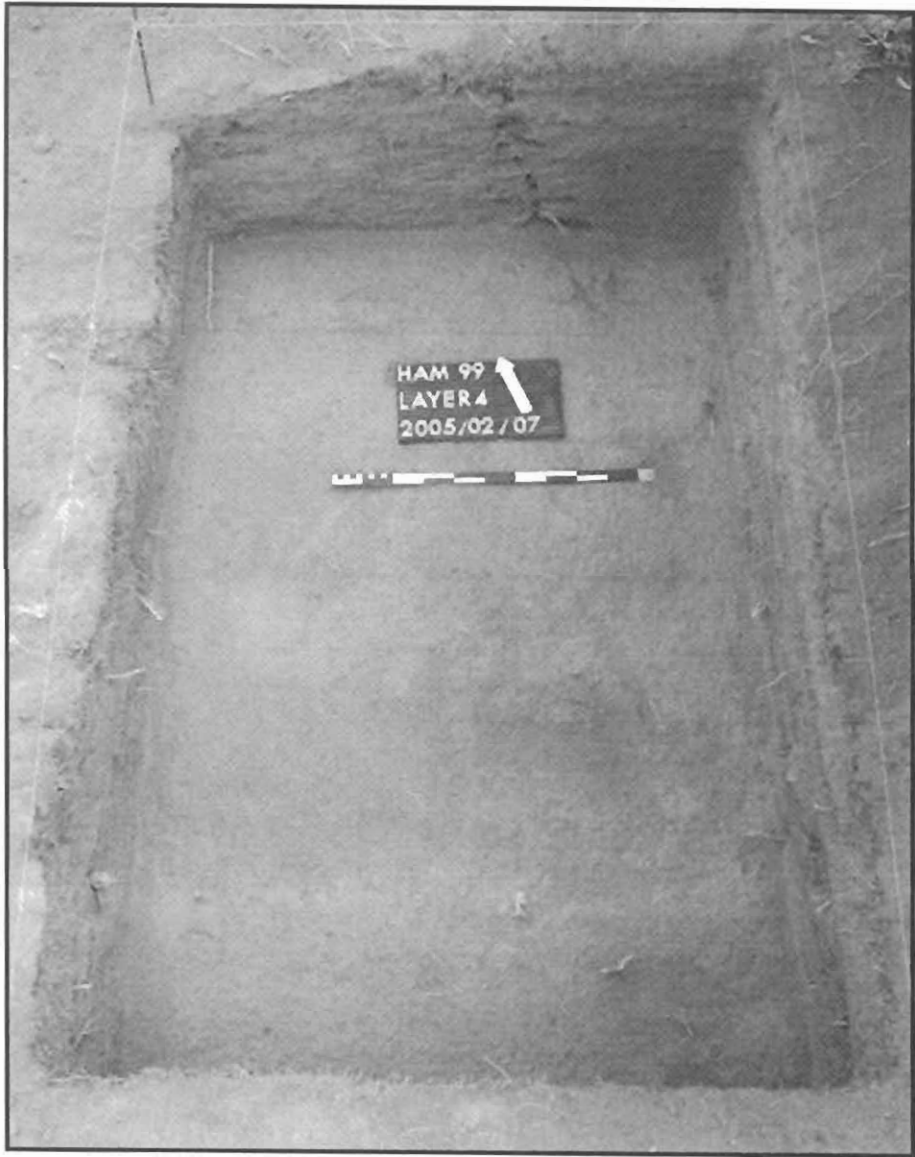
HAM99 Layer 1



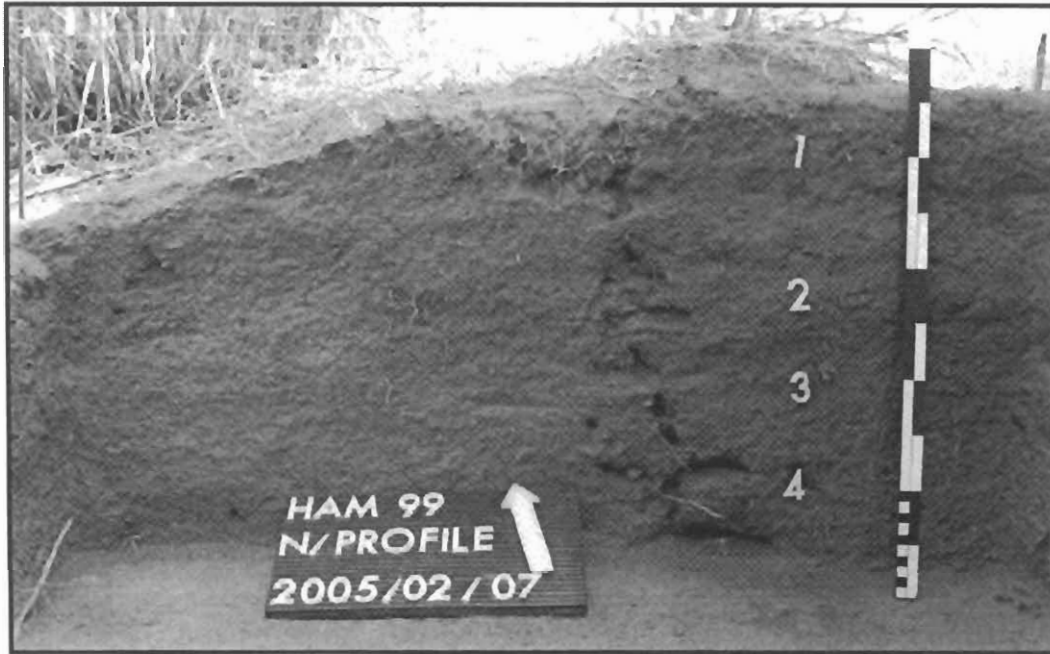
HAM99 Layer 2



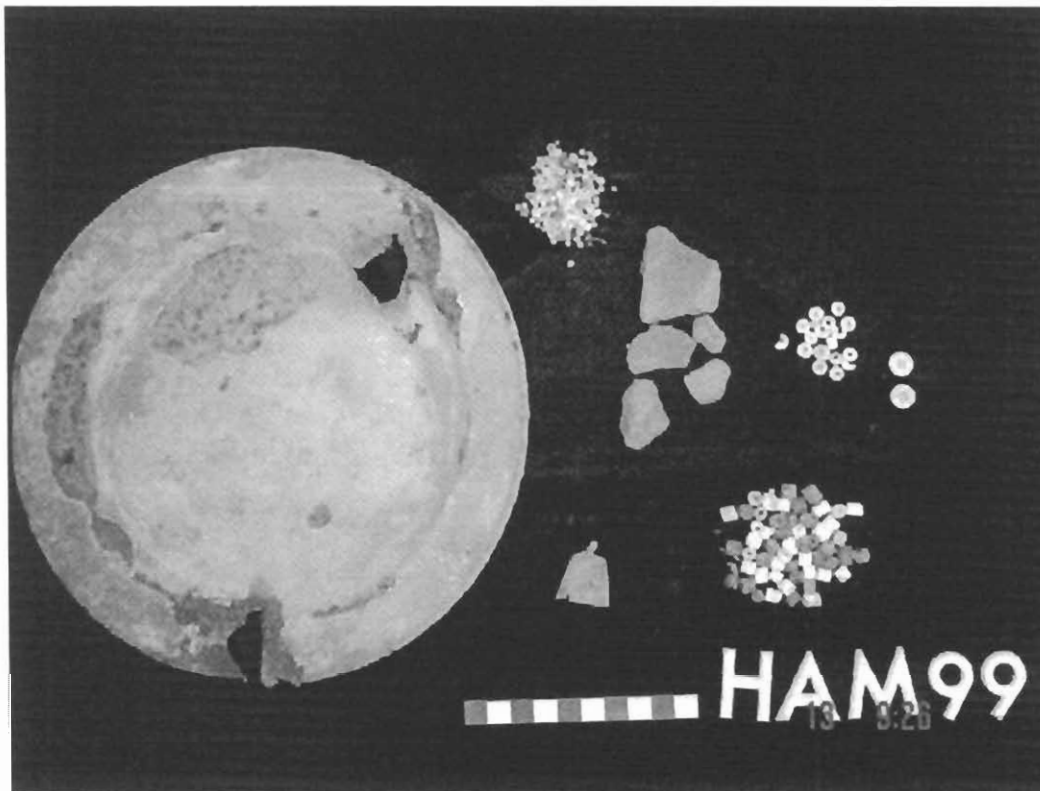
HAM 99 Layer 3



HAM99 Layer 4



Northern Profile



Finds from test trench HAM99

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