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**K2 REHABILITATION PROJECT
PROGRESS REPORT**

PHASE 2

SESSIONS 1 & 2

2002-2003

A report prepared for the ATG, SAHRA, SANParcs and Vuka Project Management
Services

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INTRODUCTION

In 2001, Archaeological Resources Management (ARM) completed the first phase of rehabilitating K2 as part of a Poverty Relief Fund Project administered by VUKA Environmental Project Services on behalf of SANParks. This first phase involved cleaning, recording and stabilizing the sides of Gardner's large blocks, excavated in the 1930s. Mr. Murimbika supervised the work (Huffman & Murimbika 2001).

The second phase, also administrated by VUKA, concentrates on Gardner's long trench (Ts 1) excavated in 1935 through the huge central midden. According to Gardner (1963: 3), the trench measured slightly less than two metres wide and four to six metres deep. Today, however, the top is over five metres wide; and so, there has been considerable erosion.

METHOD

The work was divided into four sessions, each about one month long, with an additional month as a contingency against lost days due to rain and other unpredictable delays. The first session lasted from 17 November to 14 December 2002, while the second session extended from the 5th to the 31st of January 2003. Once again, Mr. Murimbika was the site supervisor. Mr. S. Gaigher of ANP was responsible for logistical arrangements.

As with the previous work, the two sessions involved cleaning the sections to expose Gardner's original cutting, recording the sections and then stabilizing them with sandbags

and loose soil. The soils for both operations came from the slumped deposits and Gardner's northwest dump, after they had been sifted.

RESULTS

So far the team has completed the northern cross-trench and about half of the long Ts 1. The section at the south end of Ts 1 is noteworthy (Figures 1 & 2), for it reveals a sequence that helps to clarify some questions about the occupation at K2. First, the underlying sands contain Zhizo pottery that predates the initial K2 horizon. The main Zhizo deposit probably lies elsewhere on site. Two thick cattle dung layers, separated by an ash lense, lie directly on top of the sand. Interestingly, each kraal layer shows a series of thin white lenses. These white lenses are probably the result of the cyclical use of the kraals, that is, cattle were probably not kept here throughout the year. On top of the dung lay sloping lenses of ash and bone, marking the midden. A particularly rich bone lense occurs just above the dung. Towards the middle of the trench (Figures 3 & 4), this midden rises some four metres above the dung.

In addition to bone, the midden has yielded an enormous pottery sample and a variety of other artefacts. These include typical K2-period glass and clay beads, the tip of an ivory tusk and numerous clay animal figurines. Gardner's dump also contained similar material, and it can be used for display purposes later.

ON SITE INTERPRETATIONS

Initially, The ATG had envisioned a visitor's tunnel that followed Gardner's long trench through the midden. The narrow width of the original midden, however, and the fragility of the original deposit make this plan impracticable. As a result, representatives of ARM, SANParks and VUKA agreed to refocus attention to the south section for interpretative displays. This area can serve the same purpose as the tunnel, at much less cost, without endangering the midden deposit.

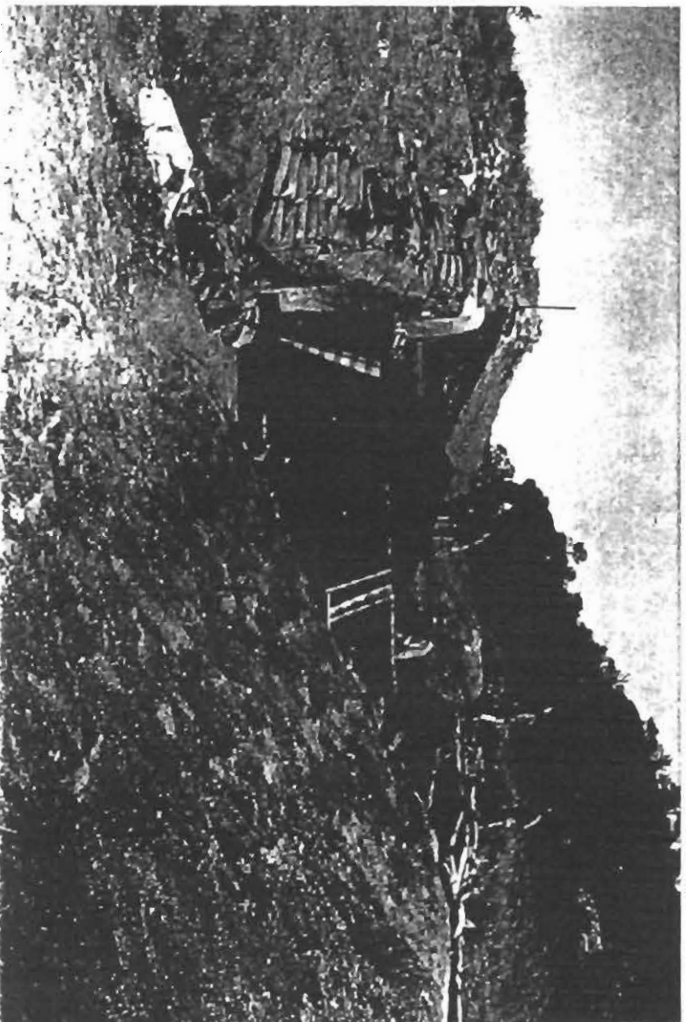


Figure 1. South end of Ts 1.



ash
bone
dung 2
ash
dung 1
sand

Figure 2. Complex stratigraphy at south end of Ts 1.



Figure 3. Sloping ash lenses towards the middle of the midden.

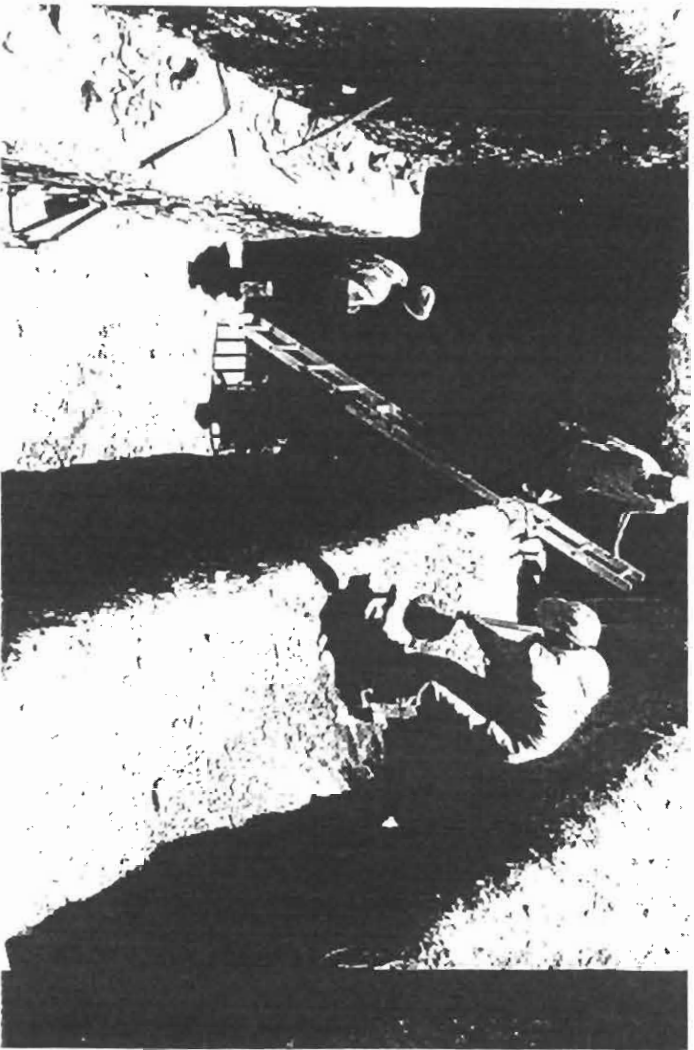


Figure 4. Towards the middle of the midden.

MINOR DELAYS

The revised display plan means that the long trench must be permanently closed now, and that ultimately, soil, rather than the tunnel, must be used to reconstruct the original shape of the midden. There are sufficient contingency days for this new work, and we do not anticipate any undue delays.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank SANParks staff for their help and cooperation. We also thank Stephan Gaigher for organizing the labour and other logistic arrangements.

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