

Al Bustan - a Pre-Islamic cemetery, report of the Test Excavation 1991

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In 1983 Saef bin Muhammad al-Wahebi from the old village of al-Bustan brought some finds to the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture which he claimed derived from his property. Five years later Ghassan Sayid al-Ghassani and the writer visited the finder at his home in the new village with the purpose of learning more about the find. In about 1983, as a result of the construction of the al-Bustan Palace Hotel, the old settlement of the same name was demolished. The inhabitants were moved into new homes a few hundred metres to the north. Saef bin Muhammad now lives in Way 8310, House no. 701. He showed us the findspot. Maps of the area show two houses which no longer exist which bordered on the area we selected for excavation.

Directly at the foot of a rock outcropping locateable by its nearness to the northwest bordering wall on the property of the Al Bustan Hotel we spotted the surface traces of from 10 to 18 graves which seemed most likely datable to the Samad Period, to judge from their size and orientation. This provisional dating confirmed that of the finds, but for a single exception, which Saef bin Muhammad brought into the Ministry. A stone bowl (no. 4) dates to the Lizq Period. While his information as to the find circumstances cannot be confirmed, there is no good reason to doubt it. One of the roof stones of one of the graves (Bu1) stood open as a result of a recent robbing. The locals told us with little conviction that Indian workers had found a coin hoard here which they took away. In 1989 the open grave had been filled with concrete.

The area of the Pre-Islamic cemetery lies in an alluvial fan between the mountains and the beach. The investigated part of the cemetery is located in a shallow depression filled with about 1 m of recently deposited debris. The test area stopped where to the west and north the rock broke through the surface sediment.

The following finds were delivered to the Ministry by Saef bin Muhammad¹:

- 1 Stretched pitcher (Samad Culture), bellied, 4 horizontal lines around the neck, on the uppermost short spikes leaning to the right, dashes on the handle, surface slip light red (2.5YR 6/6), small amount of serpentine and straw (?) temper, h. 34.4, br. 25.4, wall 0.5-1.3 cm, pub.: P. Yule/G. Weisgerber 1988, 17 Fig. 4.2, DA 8198
- 2 Spherical bowl (Samad), exterior weathered, rim broken, wheel-turned, interior reducing fired, fabric light red - strong dark grey (2.5YR 6/6 - N3/0), interior light brownish grey (7.5YR 6/2), balsamarium ware, slight organic temper, h. (pres.) 8.0, br. 10.8,

¹ The designation of the find in the catalogue is that from the standard typology of finds from Oman as used by the German Mission. The colours given are those of the Munsell Soil Color Chart. Where published the publication is cited. The decoration of the pottery vessels is impressed. All are handmade unless otherwise stated. Descriptions of the fabric are relative within a system relative to the pottery of the Samad period.

- wall 0.2-0.7 cm, DA 8197
- 3 Stretched pitcher (Samad), slim, around shoulder a chevron frieze to left, below wavy line, around belly double wavy line, exterior badly weathered, spalted, relatively hard fired, exterior colour heterogeneous, weak red (10R 4/3), fabric reddish yellow (7.5YR 6/6), middle amount of grog temper, middle coarseness, h. 29.5, br. 16.9, wall 0.5-1.2 cm, DA 8199
- 4 Stone bowl (Lizq), soft stone, round base, at carination triple horizontal line, triple zigzag lines in alternating diagonal frieze, h. 8.0, br. 7.2 x wall 0.6-1.0 cm, DA 8200
- 5 Stone bowl (Samad), dark grey soft stone, lathe-turned, 5 lines at the rim, h. 5.6, br. 12.2, wall 0.4-0.8 cm, DA 8196

From 16 September to 3 October 1991 a salvage excavation was undertaken where one of the graves was opened by robbers. The investigation was financed jointly by the Department of Antiquities and the American Council of Learned Societies. The danger of building, landscaping, or grave robbing in al-Bustan, not to mention a partial confirmation that the finds in the Department actually derived from here all served as reasons for an investigation. In addition, the question arose if the Samad-Culture of the Interior also existed on the coast. Eight workers began the clearance of the surface around the robbed grave Bu1. We began excavation on the spot which seemed most likely to contain graves, and not be disturbed. Except for Bu1 none of the graves investigated were visible prior to the clearing of the surface. Compared to the known graves of the Samad Period in Samad, those here lay unusually close to each other, even overlapping. Bu1, Bu2, Bu3, Bu6 and Bu8 formed a row, each having a roughly east/west axis. Bu4 and Bu5 deviated and showed a roughly north/south axis.²

Grave Bu1

UTM coordinates of the long axis (a-b):

a. ⁶63906.8; ²⁶07377.6

b. ⁶63908.8; ²⁶07379.0

Azimuth of the long axis: 262 gon (=NE-SW)

L. of floor: 1.30 m

Br. of floor: 0.87 m

D. of floor b. surf.: 1,07 m

Height of floor: 3,51 m

Finds: Samad

Reuse proveable: n

² The descriptions of the graves follow a standard order. In the first paragraph the find circumstances and preservation are briefly noted. Second, the architecture is described. Third the finds are described as they lay. They are described clockwise. The skeletal remains were identified by Prof Manfred Kunter of the University of Giessen. If not otherwise mentioned, the decoration on the pottery is impressed or incised. The pottery is normally hand made. If not otherwise identified, the metallic finds are of iron. In the catalogue red "copper" has not been analysed, some of it may be tin-bronze.

The designations of the types of graves also follows a standardized scheme. U=incomplete, S=stone ring, O=orthostatic lowest course of stones, R=bar wall atop the wall, W=roof support stones and cantilever stones, s=floor narrow (<1:2, breadth to length), g=floor broad (>1:2 breadth to length).

Architecture: Samad

Grave type: Wg

Since the damaged roof of this grave was already visible, work began here first. Most of the stones of the roof were still in situ. The grave was robbed and contained a fragmentary grave inventory and few skeletal fragments.

The westernmost end of the chamber was sunk into the bedrock. Large flat stones of the roof rested on the roof support stones. Chamber walls consisted of broken stones. The roof support stones which stabilized the entire construction and the chamber wall consisted of wadi stones. An entrance construction was not recognizable. The floor of the chamber was rectangular with the eastern wall short wall a bit shorter than the opposite one.

This grave was robbed, perhaps within the last 10 years. The Skeleton (LZ³ 156, 169, 175, 341) as well as the finds lay scattered on the floor. No finds were dispersed in the debris above the floor. Skull sherds, finger rings and a hair pin lay together in the western end of the grave, and it seems likely that that originally belonged in this end. Head and torso were oriented in this end. 20 cm from the western wall the pin (1) was found. Its point pointed to the north. Finger rings (2 and 3) were located 10 cm to the north. Although probably not in situ, a foot of a storage vessel (4) stood in the northwest corner. On the south side toward the middle a ring (5) was found. In the southwest corner a few bones (6) were identified as sheep or goat. Near the wrist beads occurred (7). Beside the arms two cramps were found (11). Other finds including pottery sherds (8) came to light at different points on the floor. Some finds were sieved from the disturbed floor.

Anthropological identification

age: 18-20 years
sex: "man"⁴
position: not recognizable, head to west

Finds:

- 1 Hair pin, copper, 13.0 x 0.8 cm, 12 gr, DA 11963, floor
- 2 4 finger rings, copper, together on a phalange, **2.1** dm. 2.3, th. 0.1 cm, 5 gr (3 together); **2.2** dm. 1.4, th. 0.2 cm; **2.3** 1.5 cm, 2 gr, DA 11962.1, .2 & .4, floor
- 3 Finger ring, copper and 6 fragments, together in a row, **3.1** dm. 2.0, th. 0.2 cm, 2 gr; **3.2** fragments, DA 11962.3 & .4, floor
- 4 Foot of a storage vessel (Samad-Period), wheel-turned, fabric light red (10R 6/8), small amount of organic temper, H. (pres.) 2.0, dm. foot 18.0, DA 11961, not reproduced here, floor
- 5 2 rings, mother of pearl, broken and spaltet, exter. dm. c. 2 cm, DA 11965
- 6 Animal bones, sheep or goat, LZ 175

³ LZ=Laufzettel in German. In English=sequential find slips. LZ nos. are given to all finds, but DA numbers are given only for artefacts.

⁴ The finds belong to a woman's costume.

Al-Bustan, Pre-Islamic Cemetery, excav. 3 Oct. 1991 report 14 August 1992

- 7 5 beads from a bracelet, **7.01** irregularly round, middle, unidentified soft stone, light chrome yellow, undecorated, inlaid, x1, DA 11972; **7.02** cylindrical, very large, mollusc shell, beige-grey, undecorated, inlaid, x3, DA 11972; **7.03** cylindrical, very large, terracotta, orange brown, undecorated, incised, x1, DA 11972
- 8 Pottery sherds of a stretched pitcher (Samad), chevrons on the handle, interior colour not identifiable due to weathering, exterior colour red (10R 5/8), fabric weak red (10R 4/2), heavy amount of serpentine/grog/organic temper, H. 30.0+ cm, wall thickness 0.8 cm, DA 11966.1
- 9 Bangle of iron, 8.0 x 8.5, th. 0.15 cm, 10 gr, band-shaped, DA 11964
- 10 267 beads, **10.01** spindle-shaped, very large, bone, beige-grey, undecorated, incised, x1, DA 11973; **10.02** slim biconical, middle, bone, beige-grey, undecorated, incised, x1, DA 11973; **10.03** microbeads, very small, frit/fayence, black-grey, undecorated, incised, x15, DA 11973; **10.04** microbeads, very small, opaque glass, straw yellow, undecorated, incised, x82, DA 11973; **10.05** oblate, small, opaque glass, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, incised, x6, DA 11973; **10.06** not recognizeable/incomplete, fine, unidentified soft stone, black-grey, undecorated, incised, x1, DA 11973; **10.07** spherical, middle, carnelian, polychrome, second colour: dull red, undecorated, incised, x1, DA 11973; **10.08** spindle-shaped, large, terracotta, dull orange-red, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 11973; **10.09** cylindrical, large, glazed glass, pink, undecorated, vertical grooves, x2, DA 11973; **10.10** disc convex rim, biconcave boring, middle fine, translucide quartz, citrine, amethyste, dull orange-red, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 11973; **10.11** short platelet, CS rectangular, middle, opaque glass, colour not identifiable/badly faded, 1 or 2 vertical bands, sandwich glass, x1, DA 11973; **10.12** short cylindrical, middle fine, opaque glass, dull orange-red, undecorated, sandwich glass, x6, DA 11973; **10.13** biconical, 1 point flatter, middle, opaque glass, greyish brown, undecorated, sandwich glass, x1, DA 11973; **10.14** not recognizeable/incomplete, middle fine, opaque glass, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, sandwich glass, x1, DA 11973; **10.15** microbeads, small, opaque glass, greyish brown, undecorated, sandwich glass, x150, DA 11973; **10.16** biconical, middle, opaque glass, greyish brown, undecorated, x1; **10.17** wire bead, small, brochantite, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, sandwich glass, x1, DA 11973
- 11 2 cramps, copper, **11.1** 1.3 x 0.8 x 0.9 cm, 2 gr; **11.2** 1.4 x 0.8 x 0.8 cm, DA 11967.1 & .2
- 12 2 rings, mother of pearl, broken, **12.1** exter. dm. c. 2.0 cm; **12.2** exter. dm. c. 3.0 cm, DA 11968.1 & .2
- 13 Fragments of molluscs, #, DA 11969
- 14 2 earrings, silver, **14.1** 3.8 x 2.5 x 0.2 cm, 2 gr; **14.2** 3.0 x 2.6 x 0.2 cm, 3 gr, sieved, DA 11970
- 15 Fragment, sheet copper, 5.2 x 2.0 x 0.1, 2 gr, sieved, DA 11971
- 16 Sherds of a bellied pitcher (Samad), DA 11966.2, not reproduced, surface

excavation finished 23.09.1991

Grave Bu2

UTM coordinates of the long axis (a-b):

Al-Bustan, Pre-Islamic Cemetery, excav. 3 Oct. 1991 report 14 August 1992

a. ⁶63907.2; ²⁶07375.9

b. ⁶63909.5; ²⁶07376.9

Azimuth of the long axis: 74/274 gon (=ENE-WSW)

L. of floor: 1.40 m

Br. of floor: 0.65 m

D. of floor b. surf.: 1.30 m

Height of floor: 3.84 m

Finds: Samad

Reuse proveable: n

Architecture: Samad

Grave type: SWs

With the clearing of the surface debris the stone ring, fashioned of head-sized stones, came to light. A long river stone, part of the roof of the grave, lay still in situ in the ENE end of chamber. The roof was badly damaged and most of its stones were missing. For this reason and owing to the condition of the grave goods and the debris inside the chamber it is clear that the grave was robbed. The stone ring of Bu6 overlapped that of Bu2. In turn the stone ring of Bu2 clearly overlapped that of Bu5.

No trace of an entrance, such as a bar wall could be found. We can assume that the burial took place through the roof. Roof support stones and cantilever stones were clearly visible. At both ends of the chamber the walls were inwardly corbelled. Wadi stones formed the walls and half of the roof support stones. The other half consisted of worked stones. The floor of the chamber was roughly rectangular in shape. On the surface around the grave lay a ring of wādī stones.

Only two parts of seal shell were preserved of the grave goods. A few fragments (LZ 157 and 342) of the disturbed skeleton were identifiable.

Anthropological identification

age: 20-25 years

sex: woman

position: not recognizeable

Finds:

Parts of two snail shells, unworked, DA 11974, not reproduced

excavation finished 23.09.1991

Grave Bu3

UTM coordinates of the long axis (a-b):

a. ⁶63906.5; ²⁶07379.6

b. ⁶63909.2; ²⁶07381.3

Azimuth of the long axis: 64/264 gon (=ENE-WSW)

L. of floor: 1.40 m

Br. of floor: 0.80 m

D. of floor b. surf.: 0.30 m

Height of floor: 3.67 m

Finds: Samad

Reuse proveable: n

Architecture: -

Grave type: SRg

Badly eroded, of all of the graves excavated in al-Bustan Bu3 was the most poorly preserved owing to its exposed stratigraphic position. Only the lowest one or two courses of stones of the burial chamber were preserved where they were sunk into the weathered bedrock.

The floor of the grave was irregularly ovoid in shape. Part of the chamber wall existed disturbed in the balk: A bar wall was visible. What was preserved of the chamber wall consisted of wādī stones. An irregular stone also seems to have surrounded the grave on the surface.

Apart from a single bead, neither skeletal remains nor grave goods were preserved.

Find:

Miniature bead, disc-shaped, sehr small, translucid glass, green, undecorated, x1, DA 11975

excavation finished 21.09.1991

Grave Bu4

UTM coordinates of the long axis (a-b):

a. ⁶63911.9; ²⁶07376.7

b. ⁶63912.1; ²⁶07379.5

Azimuth of the long axis: 206 gon (=N-S)

L. of floor: 1.25 m

Br. of floor: 0.84 m

D. of floor b. surf.: 1.50 m

Height of floor: 3.13 m

Finds: Samad

Reuse proveable: n

Architecture: Samad

Grave type: SWg

This intact grave as well as Bu5 distinguish themselves from most other Samad-graves owing to a true stone packing consisting of head-sized stones placed directly atop the roof of the chamber. Over the centuries a layer of silt 10 cm thick sickered into the chamber. Both ends of the grave were overlapped by the neighbouring Bu7 and Bu9.

The roof was built of long river and worked stones. It rested on roof support stones balanced by cantilever stones. In the upper courses the chamber corbelled strongly inwardly. It consisted of three irregularly set layers. The short walls of the chamber were flat in the N end and rounded in the S end. A stone ring surrounded the grave on the surface.

The skeleton lay contracted with the back toward the E and with the skull to the S. Just before the forearms a balsamarium (1) lay on its side with the mouth toward the N. Directly beside it closer to the skeleton a stone bowl (2) still stood in situ. Beside the shins a large pitcher (3) stood which almost touched the roof of the chamber. Unusual was a depression in the floor beneath the pelvis. Here in 2 cm thickness a black powdery mass (4) occurred extending all the way to the feet as a thinner layer. In this mass two cramps (5) were found.

They more likely are to be associated with this powdery substance than with the damaged dagger (6) worn on the left hip.

Anthropological identification

age: 20–25 years

sex: man

position: contracted, left-sided, skull to the S, glance to the W, hands before face

Finds:

- 1 Balsamarium (Samad), handmade, outside vertically burnished, interior and exterior light red (2.5YR 6/6), fabric colour nicht distinguishable, old breaks, no temper, h. 16.0, br. 5.0, wall 0.3 cm, DA 11977
- 2 Bowl of soft stone, horizontally beneath the rim and four times verically over the body a zigzag band, h. 4.5, br. 8.9, wall 0.5 cm, DA 11980.1
- 3 Stretched pitcher (Samad), tournette-made, around shoulder between horizontal lines a wavy line, interior light red (10R 6/6), exterior slip heterogenic: light red (2.5YR 6/6) and black (2.5YR 2.5/4), fabric light red (2.5YR 6/6), fine middling amount of organic temper, old breaks, h. 39.0, br. c. 27.0, wall 0.5 cm, DA 11976
- 4 Organic powdery mass, LZ 257, 346
- 5 2 cramps, copper, **5.1** 2.1 x 1.2 x 0.5 cm, 2 gr; **5.2** 2.0 (pres.) x 2.0 x 0.6 cm, 1 gr, DA 11979
- 6 Dagger, old breaks, 16.0 (pres.) x 2.0 x 0.8 cm, 54 gr, DA 11978

excavation finished 02.10.1991

Grave Bu5

UTM coordinates of the long axis (a-b):

a. ⁶63909.4; ²⁶07377.3

b. ⁶63910.1; ²⁶07380.2

Azimuth of the long axis: 16 gon (=ENE-WSW)

L. of floor: 1.40 m

Br. of floor: 0.80 m

D. of floor b. surf.: 0.50 m

Height of floor: 3.61 m

Finds: Samad

Reuse proveable: n

Architecture: Samad

Grave type: SWg

Following the clearing of the surface Bu5 revealed itself as an irregular stone packing made of head-sized stones which lay directly atop the roof of the grave. Clay mixed with small stones separated these two stone layers. No trace could be found of a looting. Inside the chamber 20 cm of sediment had sickered in over time.

Conspicuous was the large oval stone ring encircling the cantilever stones. The roof stones were large broken slabs and a few flat river stones. It rested upon roof support stones, in turned stabilized by flanking cantilever stones. At the WSW end of the roof construction a low bar wall seemed identifiable which after closer inspection turned out to be simply piled up stones on the grave roof. The chamber wall was sunk irregularly into bedrock. At the N

end the bedrock serves as the base of the chamber wall. Two to three layers of river stones served as the chamber wall. The floor was oval/rectangular.

The well preserved skeleton (LZ 196) lay in the middle of the floor with the back turned to the SW. Near the face the deceased wore on one finger a ring (1). Directly before the forehead lay a copper bowl (2) aslant. NW of this also on the floor a bowl fashioned of soft stone (3) came to light. Animal bones and a cawri (4) occurred in the upper debris. These probably entered the grave with the help of rodents.

Anthropological identification

age: 20-30 years

sex: woman

position: left-sided, contracted, head to the N, glance to the W, hands before face, knees strongly contracted

Finds:

1 Finger ring, copper, 2.3 x 2.4, th. 0.5 cm, 1 gr, DA 11980.2

2 Bowl, copper, h. 8.0, br. 13.0, rest., 184 gr, DA 11982

3 Bowl, soft stone, at the rim and in the lower zone of the body horizontal parallel lines, between them two rows of dotted concentric circles, beneath rim hatched zones, h. 7.0, br. 8.1, wall 0.4 cm, DA 11981

4 Animal bones, not identified, LZ 197

excavation finished 30.09.1991

Grave Bu6

UTM coordinates of the long axis (a-b):

a. ⁶63908.3; ²⁶07374.8

b. ⁶63911.0; ²⁶07375.4

Azimuth of the long axis: 287 gon (=ENE-WSW)

L. of floor: 1.40 m

Br. of floor: 0.80 m

D. of floor b. surf.: 0.50 m

Height of floor: 3.48 m

Finds: Samad

Reuse proveable: y

Architecture: Samad

Grave type: SWg

In the middle of the roof a flat roof stone was caved in probably as a result of the use of heavy earth moving vehicles used for the demolition of the houses previously located on the site. Part of the flat stone was missing, and the grave was partially filled with stones and modern debris.

The roof the burial chamber consisted of flat river stones and broken stones which rested on a course of broad inwardly corbelled roof support stones. Cantilever stabilized the entire construction. The roof and cantilever consisted of unworked river stones. The chamber wall, in contrast, was built of three to four courses of flat broken stones. The chamber wall

rested on the bedrock. The floor of the chamber was irregular in shape and at the S end long stones jutted into the interior.

Attribution of grave goods to the three individuals in the grave is least certain for the earliest and most disturbed of them. For the final burial (skeleton 3) the grave goods of the preceding individuals were pushed into the S end of the chamber floor.

Skeleton 3: Probably in situ at the time of the excavation were a bowl in soft stone (1) which stood vertically in the NW corner of the chamber. A foot and sherds of a large stretched pitcher (2) lay on the on top of the debris. It floated presumably here prior to the damage to the grave mentioned above. Also laying akip on the old debris was a pitcher (3) which probably also floated and tipped owing to the seepage of water into the grave. In the SE corner of the chamber in a rude niche a small bottle (4) stood apparently in situ. Directly in front of the stomach of the skeleton lay a ring (5) which owing to its position can be attributed to this skeleton. Between the elbows in chest height a necklace (6) occurred. On the right wrist the individual wore a bangle (7), and 10 cm W of this a second example (9) came to light not on the wrist. In front of the face beads were found (8). Perhaps on the left hand the deceased wore four rings (10) on one of his fingers. Beneath and behind the skull further beads (11) occurred, which belonged to this individual. They were worn in the hair or were embroidered on cloth. Beads also were worn behind the head at its base in bundles and occurred beneath the head strung. Some beads lay between the individuals 2 and 3 although the kinds of beads are most clearly associated with skeleton 3. A hair pin (13) lay behind the head of skeleton 3; its point pointed to the feet. Problematic is the attribution of a second hair pin (13b) to the skeletons 2 or 3, lying closest to it. Such pins belong to women's trappings.

Skeleton 2: This anthropologically male skeleton lay partly above, partly mixed with skeleton 3. Rings worn severally on a finger (15 and 16) lay before the face of the individual. A further ring (14) lay on the floor directly in front of the eyes of skeleton 2. An anciently broken dagger (17) and an arrowhead (18) remained at the hip. Nine flat clam shells (19) lay on the skeleton on the skull, tibia and in chest height.

Skeleton 2 or 1: Several finds could have belonged to skeleton 2 or 1 and cannot be individually attributed to the one or the other. Therefore they are listed together. At the W end of the grave floor a copper bowl (20) and two clay vessels (21 and 22) lying on their side seem to have belonged to one or both of these two individuals. Two groups of rings worn together on two fingers (23 and 24) also lay in disturbed position.

Anthropological identification

Sequence of burials: 1, 2, 3 (latest)

Skeleton 3

age: 30-40 years

sex: woman

position: left-sided, contracted, head to the W, glance to the N, hands before face

Skeleton 2

age: 11-12 years
sex: perhaps male
position: head in the W, position otherwise not determinable

Skeleton 1

age: 50-60 years
sex: man
position: head in the W, position otherwise not determinable

Finds:

Skeleton 3:

- 1 Bowl, soft stone, 6.5 x 5.2 cm, two horizontally positioned rows of tubular drill ornament, diagonal cross hatching above and below, DA 11990
- 2 Stretched pitcher (Samad), wheel-turned, incised grooves on the shoulder, chevrons on the strap handle, heavy grog and sand temper, middle coarseness, interior colour nicht identifiable, exterior slip reddish green (7.5YR 6/8), fabric dark grey (2.5YR N3/0) and light red (2.5YR 6/8), h. 36.0, br. 24.5, wall 0.5 cm, on one side an old repair of the neck, old breaks, DA 11984
- 3 Stretched pitcher (Samad), two incised wavy lines around the neck, verticle dashes gouged into the base of the handle, middling amount of grog and serpentine temper of a middle to coarse coarseness, owing to weathering exterior colour not determinable, h. 28.0, br. 17.5, wall 0.6 cm, DA 11985
- 4 Small bottle (Samad), herringbone and below zigzag pattern at the transition between shoulder and neck, middling amount of coarse grog and serpentine temper, interior colour not determinable, exterior slip yellowish red (5YR 5/6), fabric light red (2.5YR 6/6), h. 17.5, br. 15.2, wall 0.4 cm, DA 11986
- 5 Ring, copper, 2.6 x 2.5 cm, 1 gr, DA 11997
- 6 Necklace, **6.01** ring pedant, metallic, open, middle, "copper", colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, sandwich glass, x2, DA 11995; **6.02** ring pedant, metallic, closed, middle fine, iron, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, sandwich glass, x2, DA 11995; **6.03** long, CS sqare, very large, marble, white, undecorated, sandwich glass, x2, DA 11995; **6.04** plate, CS biconvex, very large, marble, white, undecorated, sandwich glass, x1, DA 11995; **6.05** cylindrical, slanted ends, very large, unidentified middle-hard stone, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, sandwich glass, x1, DA 11995; **6.06** disc, biconvex edge, middle, basalt, dark colour not recognizeable, undecorated, sandwich glass, x2, DA 11995; **6.07** irregular short cylinder, large, calcite, white, undecorated, sandwich glass, x2, DA 11995; **6.08** not recognizeable/incomplete, middle, not identifiable, dark chrome, undecorated, sandwich glass, x1, DA 11995; **6.09** slim biconical, large, not identifiable, straw yellow, vertical grooves, vertical grooves, x1, DA 11995; **6.10** disc, biconvex edge, middle, unidentified middle-hard stone, black-grey, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 11995; **6.11** short cylindrical, middle, mollusc shell, beige-grey, undecorated, vertical grooves, x10, DA 11995; **6.12** short cylindrical, middle, unidentified

- middle-hard stone, black-grey, undecorated, vertical grooves, x2, DA 11995; **6.13** cylindrical, middle, opaque glass, orange yellow, undecorated, vertical grooves, x2, DA 11995; **6.14** biconical, 1 point flatter, middle fine, heavily weathered glass, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 11995; **6.15** cylindrical, middle, opaque glass, polychrome, undecorated, vertical grooves, x4, DA 11995
- 7 Bangle, copper, 5.5 x 4.8, th. 0.3 cm, 9 gr, DA 11992
- 8 Bracelet, 10 beads preserved, **8.01** cylindrical, both ends convex, large, heavily weathered glass, polychrome, lightly striated, vertical grooves, x2, DA 12010; **8.02** biconical, middle fine, translucent glass, royal blue, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12010; **8.03** slim biconical, large, bone, beige-grey, undecorated, vertical grooves, x2, DA 12010; **8.04** short cylindrical, middle fine, opaque glass, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12010; **8.05** oblate, fine, heavily weathered glass, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x4, DA 12010
- 9 Bangle, copper, 6.0 x 5.5, th. 0.4 cm, 11 gr, DA 11993
- 10 4 Finger rings on one finger, **10.1** iron, 2.0 int. dm., 4 gr; **10.2** 1.6 cm int. dm., 2 gr; **10.3** 1.6 cm int. dm., c. 3 gr; **10.4** 1.6 cm int. dm., DA 11994
- 11 93 beads, head decoration, **11.01** long, irregular pendant, large, mother of pearl, metallic silver, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12011; **11.02** cylindrical, slanted ends, large, unidentified soft stone, polychrome, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12011; **11.03** slim biconical, large, bone, beige-grey, undecorated, vertical grooves, x3, DA 12011; **11.04** short cylindrical, middle fine, banded/spotted agate, polychrome, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12011; **11.05** slim biconical, middle, carnelian, dark orange-red, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12011; **11.06** disc, middle fine, mollusc shell, beige-grey, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12011; **11.07** disc, biconvex edge, middle, heavily weathered glass, colour not identifiable/badly faded, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12011; **11.08** irregular disc, biconcave piercing, fine, carnelian, orange red, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12011; **11.09** spherical, fine, heavily weathered glass, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x11, DA 12011; **11.10** short tube, very thin, small, translucent glass, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x14, DA 12011; **11.11** short tube, very thin, small, translucent glass, dark chrome, undecorated, vertical grooves, x3, DA 12011; **11.12** double spherical, one sphere smaller, very small, silver, metallic silver, undecorated, vertical grooves, x2, DA 12011; **11.13** biconvex disc, middle fine, silver, metallic silver, undecorated, vertical grooves, x2, DA 12011; **11.14** biconical, 1 point flatter, middle fine, translucent glass, grey, undecorated, vertical grooves, x2, DA 12011; **11.15** tear-shaped, middle, mother of pearl, metallic silver, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12011; **11.16** cylindrical, middle, heavily weathered glass, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12011; **11.17** disc, biconvex edge, middle, unidentified middle-hard stone, polychrome, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12011; **11.18** irregularly round, middle fine, not identifiable, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12012; **11.19** short tube, very thin, fine, translucent glass, sulphur yellow, undecorated,

vertical grooves, x2, DA 12012; **11.20** short cylindrical, fine, translucent glass, dark chrome, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12012; **11.21** cylindrical, middle, heavily weathered glass, sulphur yellow, undecorated, vertical grooves, x3, DA 12012; **11.22** irregularly round, middle fine, silver, metallic silver, undecorated, vertical grooves, x8, DA 12012; **11.23** sphere on short cylinder, middle fine, silver, metallic silver, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12012; **11.24** not recognizeable/incomplete, middle fine, silver, metallic silver, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12012; **11.25** spherical, middle fine, opaque glass, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x14, DA 12013; **11.26** slim biconical, very large, carnelian, orange red, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12013; **11.27** slim biconical, small, carnelian, orange red, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12013; **11.28** slim biconical, large, unidentified middle-hard stone, polychrome, lightly banded, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12013; **11.29** cylindrical, large, carnelian, orange red, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12013; **11.30** biconical, middle fine, carnelian, polychrome, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12013; **11.31** biconical, middle fine, carnelian, orange red, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12013; **11.32** irregular short cylinder, middle fine, not identifiable, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12013; **11.33** disc, small, heavily weathered glass, dark chrome, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12013; **11.34** ring pedant, metallic, open, middle fine, iron, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12013; **11.35** irregularly round, middle fine, heavily weathered glass, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x4, DA 12013; **11.36** irregular short cylinder, fine, heavily weathered glass, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12013; **11.37** oblate, fine, opaque glass, light chrome yellow, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12013

12 140 beads, **12.01** biconical, middle, banded/spotted agate, polychrome, lightly banded, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12009; **12.02** irregularly round, middle, banded/spotted agate, polychrome, lightly banded, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12009; **12.03** disc convex rim, biconcave boring, middle fine, carnelian, brownish red, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12009; **12.04** double spherical, one sphere smaller, middle fine, silver, metallic silver, undecorated, vertical grooves, x2, DA 12009; **12.05** irregularly round, middle fine, silver, metallic silver, undecorated, vertical grooves, x6, DA 12009; **12.06** biconical, 1 point flatter, middle fine, translucent glass, green, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12009; **12.07** microbeads, small, opaque glass, dark chrome, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12009; **12.08** glass "shell", small, opaque glass, cream, undecorated, vertical grooves, x3, DA 12009; **12.09** biconical, middle, carnelian, blackish orange, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12009; **12.10** cylindrical, large, opaque glass, polychrome, undecorated, vertical grooves, x2, DA 12009; **12.11** cylindrical, large, coral, white, undecorated, vertical grooves, x3, DA 12009; **12.12** glass "shell", middle fine, opaque glass, pale blue, undecorated, vertical grooves, x9, DA 12009; **12.13** irregularly round, middle fine, opaque glass, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x15, DA 12009; **12.14** ring pedant, metallic, closed, middle fine, "copper", colour not identifiable, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 12009

Al-Bustan, Pre-Islamic Cemetery, excav. 3 Oct. 1991 report 14 August 1992

13 Hair pin, copper, L. 14.0, th. 0.3 cm (shaft), 13 gr, DA 11991
13a Hair pin, copper, L. 13.8, th. 0.8 (head), 10 gr, DA 12008

Skeleton 2:

14 Ring, copper, 2.3 x 2.0 cm, 2 gr, DA 11999
15 3 or 4 rings, copper, **15.1** int. dm. 1.5 cm, 1 gr; **15.2** int. dm. 1.5 cm, 1 gr; **15.3** int. dm. 1.3 cm, 4 cm, DA 12002
16 3 rings, copper, **16.1** int. dm. 1.3 cm, 1.5 gr; **16.2** int. dm. 1.6 cm, 1 gr; **16.3** int. dm. 1.7 cm, 1.5 gr, DA 12000.1, .2
17 Pommel and blade fragments of a dagger, total length 13.0 cm, 97 gr, DA 12003
18 Arrowhead, 6.0 (pres.) x 1.6 x 1.0 cm, 13 gr, DA 12004
19 9 flat mollusk shells, DA 12001

Skeleton 1 or 2:

20 Bowl, copper, h. 6.8, br. 16.0 cm, 283 gr, DA 11983
21 Small bottle (Samad), middling amount of fine serpentine-temper, owing to preservation measures the surface colour is not determinable, h. 12.0, br. 11.0 (pres.), wall 0.5 cm, DA 11988
22 Globular vase (Samad), wheel-turned, light amount of fine organic temper, balsarium-ware, exterior and fabric strong dark grey (2.5YR N3/0), h. 9.8, br. 12.0, wall 0.5 cm, DA 11987
23 3 rings, **23.1** iron, int. dm. 1.4 cm, 1 gr; **23.2** iron, int. dm. 1.9 cm, 1 gr; **23.3** silver, int. dm. 1.8 cm, 1 gr, DA 12006
24 3 rings, **24.1** copper, double overlapped or 2 corroded together, int. dm. 1.2 cm, 1.2 gr; **24.2** copper, int. dm. 1.4 cm, 1 gr; **24.3** iron, int. dm. 1.7 cm, 1 gr, DA 12007

Not attributeable to a specific burial

25 4 rings copper, **25.1** int. dm. 1.9 cm, 1 gr; **25.2** int. dm. 1.7 cm, 1 gr; **25.3** int. dm. 1 cm, 1 gr; **25.4** int. dm. 1.8 cm, 1 gr, DA 12005.1, .2
26 29 beads, **26.01** lentoid, middle, unidentified middle-hard stone, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 11998; **26.02** lentoid, middle fine, carnelian, dark orange-red, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 11998; **26.03** slim biconical, large, limestone, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 11998; **26.04** cylindrical, middle, carnelian, blackish orange-red, second colour: white, 1 or 2 vertical bands, vertical grooves, x1, DA 11998; **26.05** slim biconical, large, heavily weathered glass, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 11998; **26.06** cylindrical, slanted ends, large, opaque glass, green, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 11998; **26.07** irregularly round, middle, heavily weathered glass, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x5, DA 11998; **26.08** tear-shaped, middle, pearl, metallic silver, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 11998; **26.09** short cylindrical, large, frit/fayence, orange brown, undecorated, vertical grooves, x2, DA 11998; **26.10** biconical, middle fine, opaque glass, black, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 11998; **26.11** oblate, fine, opaque glass, black, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 11998; **26.12** glass "shell", fine, translucide

glass, light chrome yellow, undecorated, vertical grooves, x6, DA 11998; **26.13** microbeads, small, translucent glass, cobalt, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 11998; **26.14** glass "shell", fine, heavily weathered glass, colour not identifiable/-badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 11998; **26.15** microbeads, small, opaque glass, orange yellow, undecorated, vertical grooves, x3, DA 11998; **26.16** short cylindrical, middle fine, mollusc shell, white, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 11998; **26.17** ring pendant, metallic, open, middle fine, iron, colour not identifiable/badly faded, undecorated, vertical grooves, x1, DA 11998

27 Bowl (Samad ?), rim sherd, h. 6.5, rim dm. 11.0 cm, DA 11989

excavation finished 03.10.1991

Grave Bu8

UTM coordinates of the long axis (a-b):

a. ⁶63908.6; ²⁶07373.7

b. ⁶63910.8; ²⁶07373.7

Azimuth of the long axis: 300 gon (=W-N)

L. of floor: 0.80 m

Br. of floor: 0.50 m

D. of floor b. surf.: 1.05 m

Height of floor: 3.92 m

Finds: Samad

Reuse proveable: n

Architecture: Samad

Grave type: SWg

This little grave also was sunk into bedrock and surrounded by a stone ring which lay snugly around, somewhat higher than the cantilever stones. Seen from above the roof was intact. The chamber contained 8 cm of debris which sickered in over the centuries. On top of this two pottery vessels lay. The grave was undisturbed. The SW corner was overlapped by a modern wall.

Long, flat mostly river stones wedged together tightly with smaller pebbles formed the roof. The chamber wall stood two to three courses high and was low inside. Atop the chamber wall roof support stones were in evidence. Differently shaped irregular stones were used for the chamber wall. At the E end of the floor stones protruded into the chamber.

At the W end of the burial chamber atop the filling a vase (1) lay on its side, probably floated up as a result of rain water which had sickered in. In approximately the centre a pot with tubular spout (2) was standing also apparently lifted out of its original context. The skeleton (LZ 193, 200) rested closest to the SW long chamber wall, partly beneath the vessel (2).

Anthropological identification

age: 1-2 years

sex: not determinable

Al-Bustan, Pre-Islamic Cemetery, excav. 3 Oct. 1991 report 14 August 1992

position: left-sided, contracted, head to the W, glance to the N

Finds:

- 1 Storage bottle (Samad), very little and fine serpentinite-temper, exterior light red (2.5YR 4/6), fabric light red (2.5YR 4/6) and very dark grey (2.5YR N3/), h. 20.0, br. 17.0, wall 0.5 cm, DA 12074
- 2 Bellied pot with tubular spout (Samad), wheel-turned, interior slip light red (2.5YR 6/8), light to middling amount of fine serpentinite-temper, h. 12.5, br. 15.9, 0.4 cm, old breaks, DA 12075

excavation finished 02.10.1991

Text figures:

- 1a Plan of the area around the surface excavated.
- 1b Plan of the immediate surrounding area.
- 2 Excavation plan prior to the lifting of the roof stones of the graves
- 3 Excavation plan after the lifting of the roof stones
- 4 Strayfinds delivered by Saef bin Muhammad al-Wahaybi to the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture in 1983.
- 5 Grave Bu1, grave
- 6 Grave Bu1, finds
- 7 Grave Bu2, grave
- 8 Grave Bu3, grave
- 9 Grave Bu4, grave
- 10 Grave Bu4, grave
- 11 Grave Bu4, grave and finds
- 12 Grave Bu5, grave and finds
- 13 Grave Bu5, grave
- 14 Grave Bu6, grave
- 15 Grave Bu6, grave, position of finds
- 16 Grave Bu6, burial 3 finds
- 17 Grave Bu6, burial 3 finds
- 18 Grave Bu6, burial 2, 1 or 2, attribution unknown finds
- 19 Grave Bu8, grave
- 20 Grave Bu8, grave and finds

Plates⁵:

- 1 The al-Bustan Hotel with the excavation site in the centre, viewed toward the south-east, 1991.
- 2 The excavation site seen toward the south-west, 1991.
- 3 The excavation was visited daily by the citizens of al-Bustan.
- 4 Ghassan Sayid al-Ghassani supervising the excavation.
- 5 Grave Bu1 just after the clearing of the surface, 1991
- 6 Grave Bu2 after its excavation.
- 7 Grave Bu3 following the clearing of the surface.
- 8 Grave Bu4 excavated.
- 9 Stone bowl DA 11980 from grave Bu4.
- 10 Grave Bu5 viewed following the removal of the stone debris. To the left a bar wall is visible.
- 11 Grave Bu5 viewed following the removal of the roof.
- 12 Grave Bu5 showing the floor just after its cleaning.
- 13 "Copper" bowl from Bu5 prior to its restoration. DA 11982.
- 14 Stone bowl (DA 11981), an heirloom of the second millennium in grave Bu5.
- 15 Graves Bu6 and Bu8 to the right prior to their excavation.

⁵ Credit line: Dr Paul Yule, Heidelberg.

Al-Bustan, Pre-Islamic Cemetery, excav. 3 Oct. 1991 report 14 August 1992

16 Graves Bu6 and Bu8 after excavation.

17 Grave Bu6 as seen just after the removal of the roof stones.

18 Stone bowl (DA 11990) from Bu6. The bowl is an heirloom, and dates to the second millennium BC.

19 & 20 Stretched pitcher (DA 11985) from grave Bu6.

21 Grave Bu8; the roof of the grave is intact.

22 Grave Bu8 just following the removal of the roof stones.

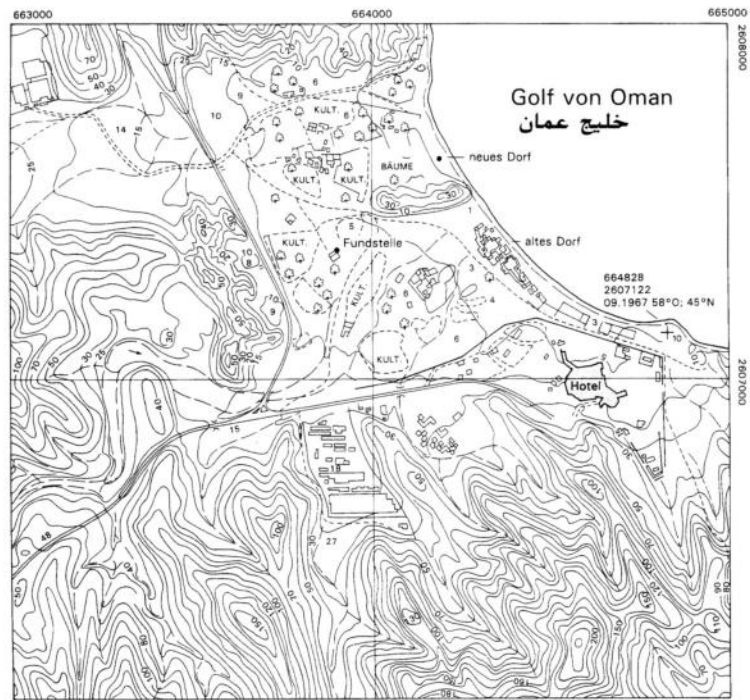
23 Aerial view of the excavated site, 1991.

Heidelberg University

Department of Antiquities/Ministry of National Heritage and Culture

Muscat

Paul A. Yule



Al Bustan

البستان

Deutsche Archäologische Oman-Expedition
 البعثة الألمانية للحفريات الأثرية في عمان
 Min. für das nationale Erbe und Kultur
 وزارة التراث القومي والثقافة
 nach Plan no. 1657, Sheet 5505 (1984)

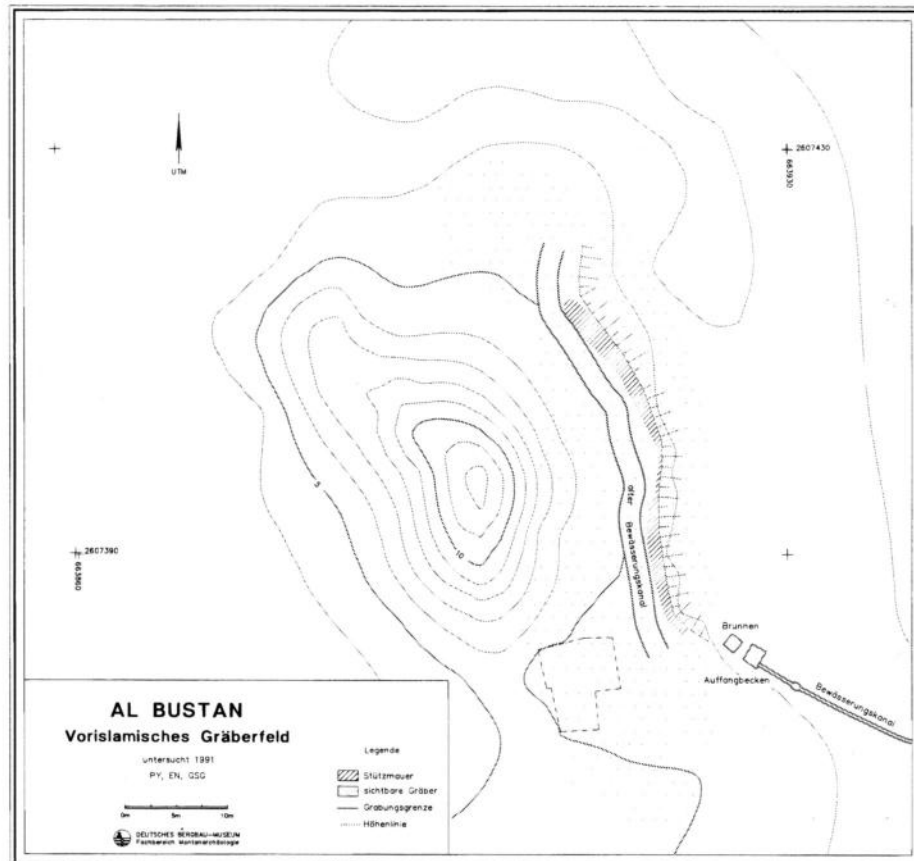


Fig. 1a Plan of the area around the surface excavated
 Fig. 1b Plan of the immediate surrounding area

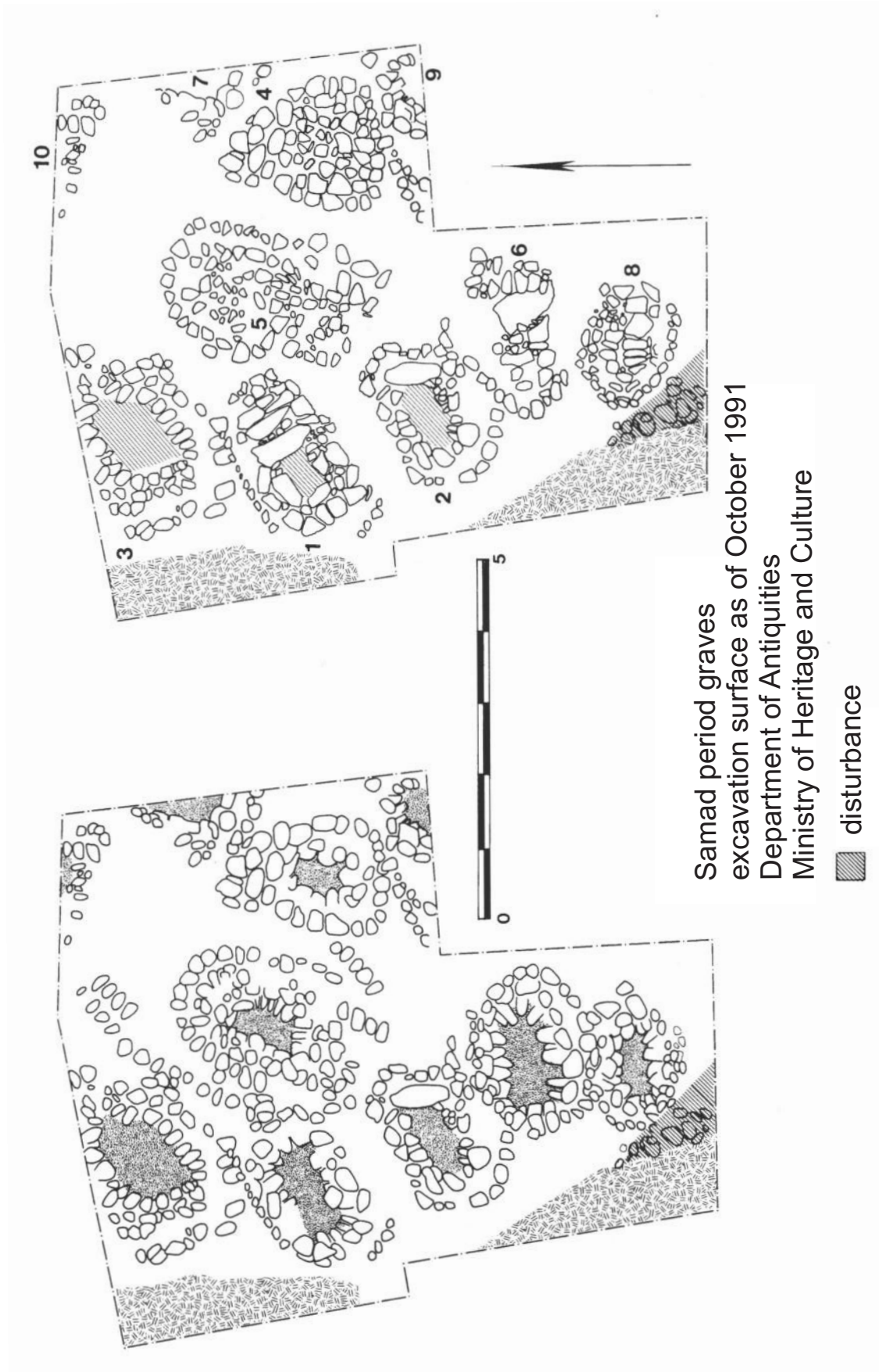


Fig. 2 Excavation plan prior to the lifting of the roof stones of the graves
Fig. 3 Excavation plan after the lifting of the roof stones of the graves

T
al Bustan

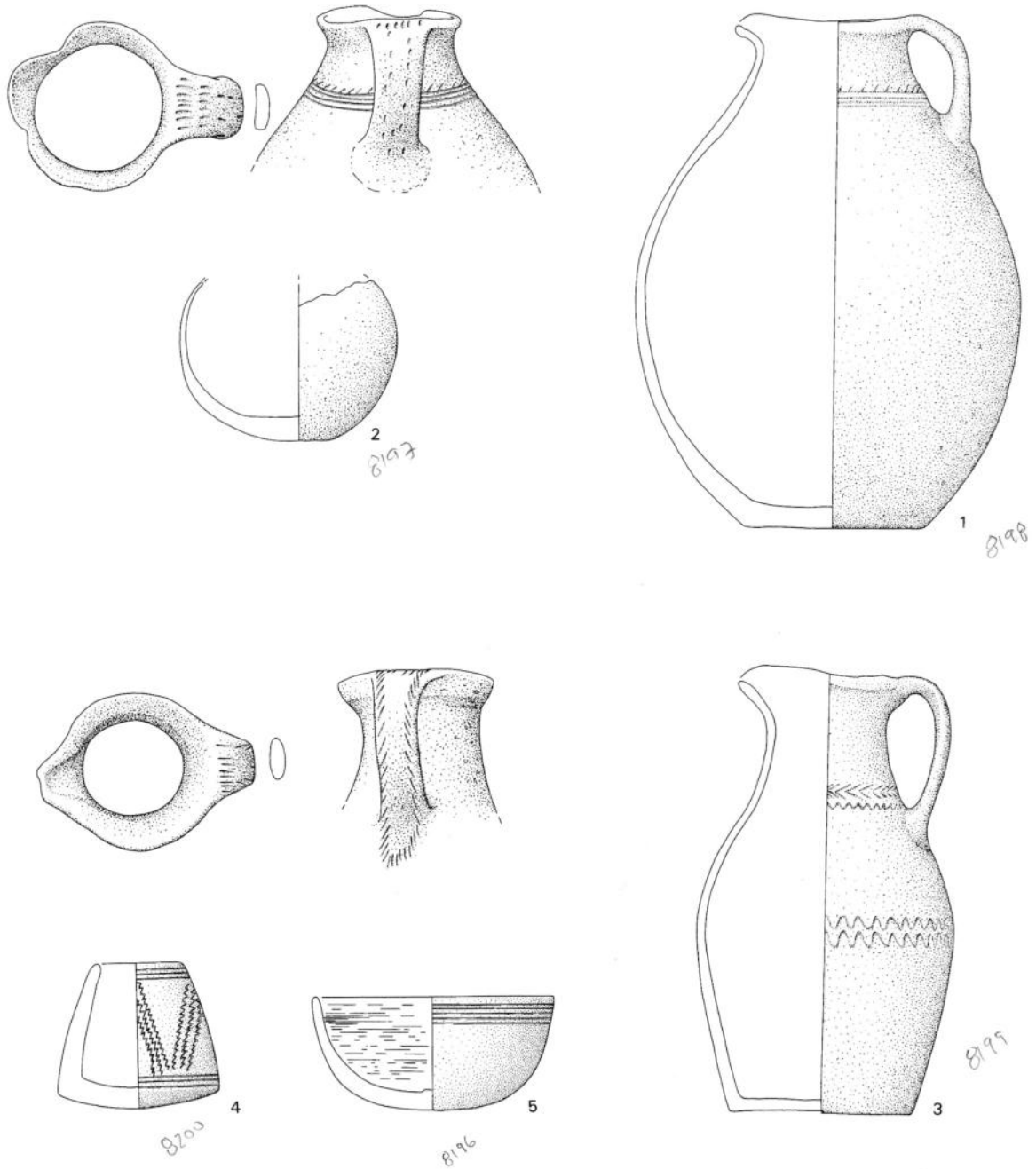


Fig. 1 scale 1:4 otherwise 1:3

Fig. 4 Strayfinds delivered by Saef bin Muhammad al-Wahebi to the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture in 1983

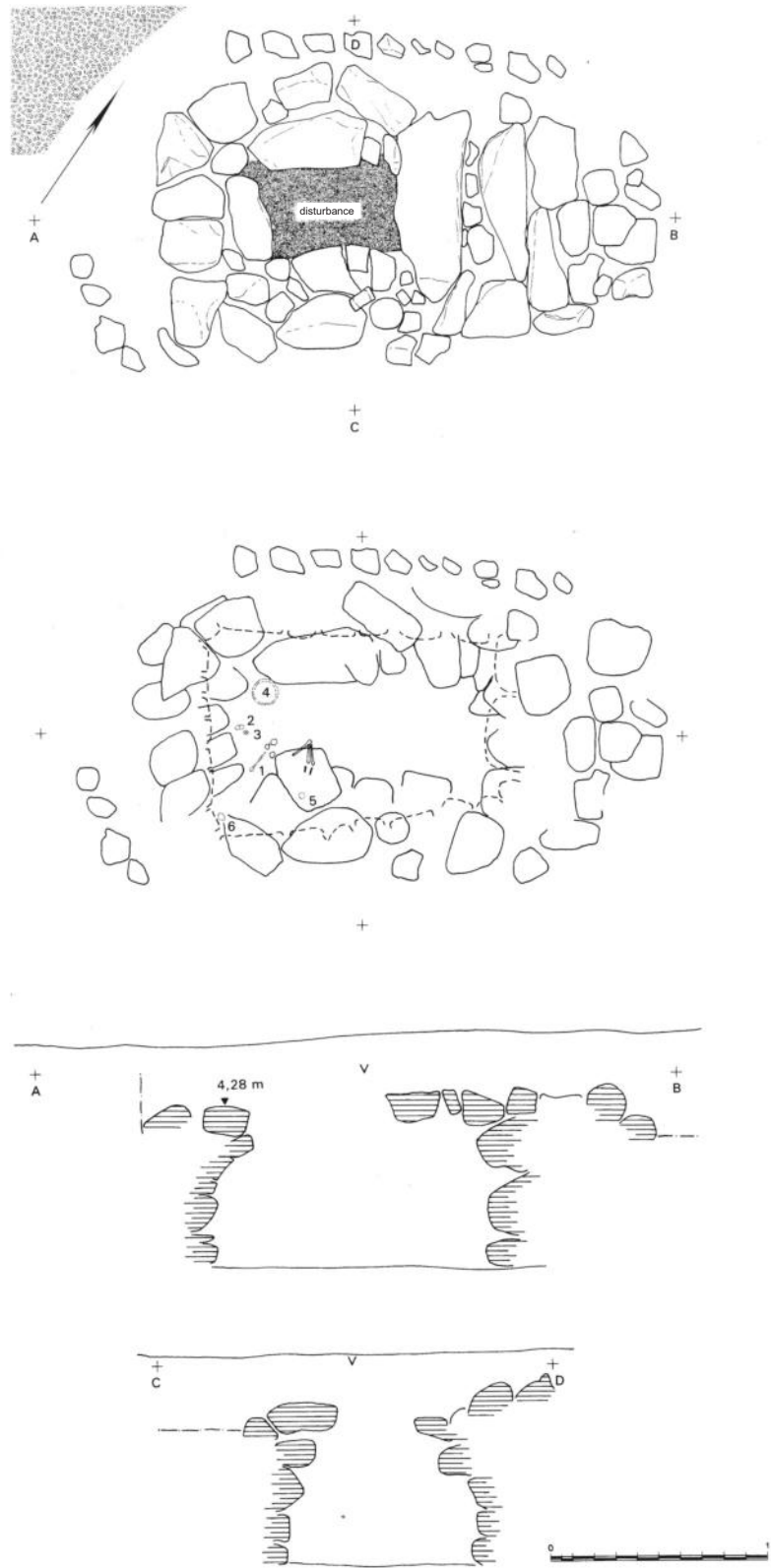


Fig. 5 Gr. Bu1, grave

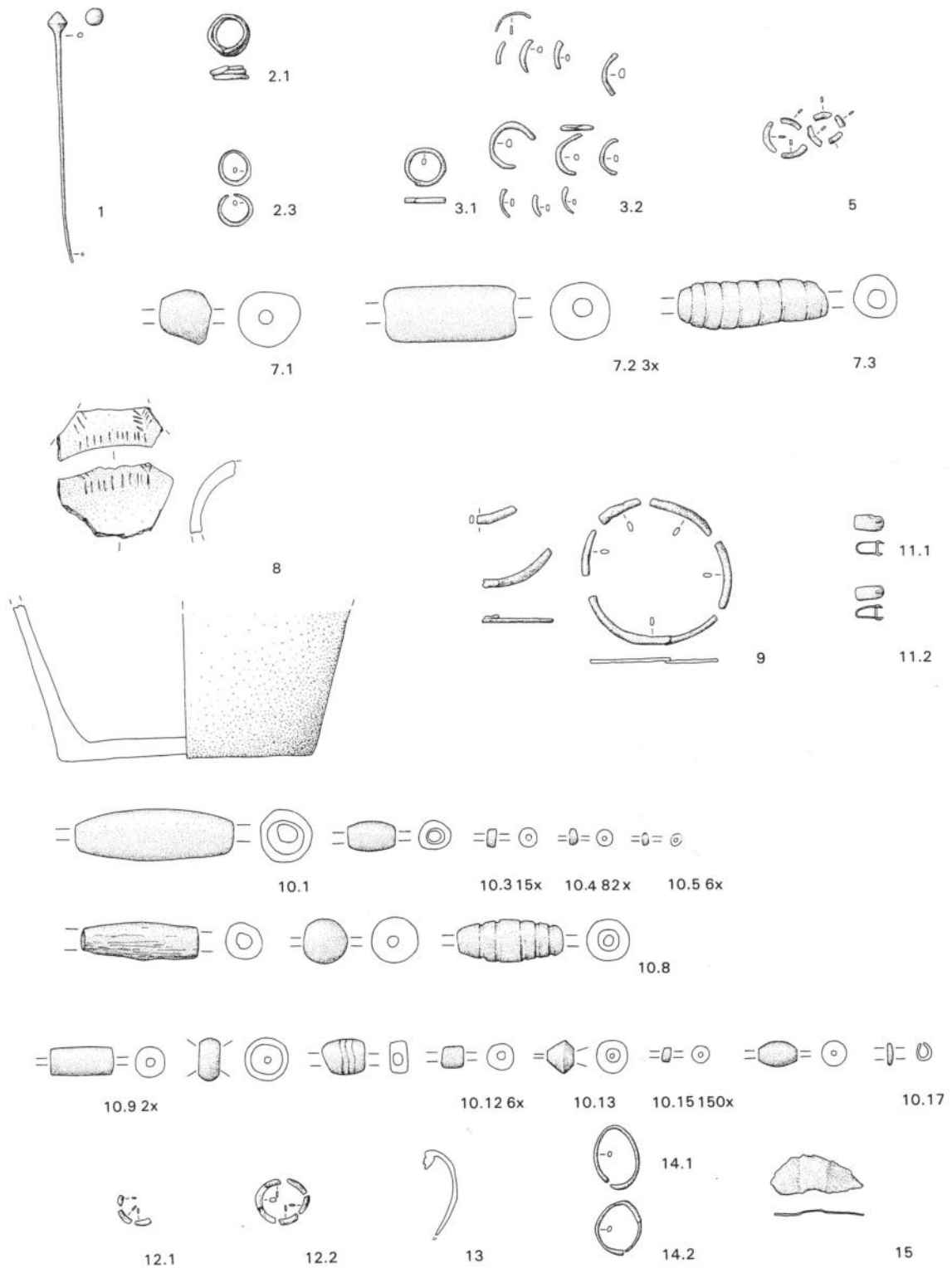


Abb. 7, 10 M. 1:1 sonst M. 1:3

Fig. 6 Gr. Bu1, finds

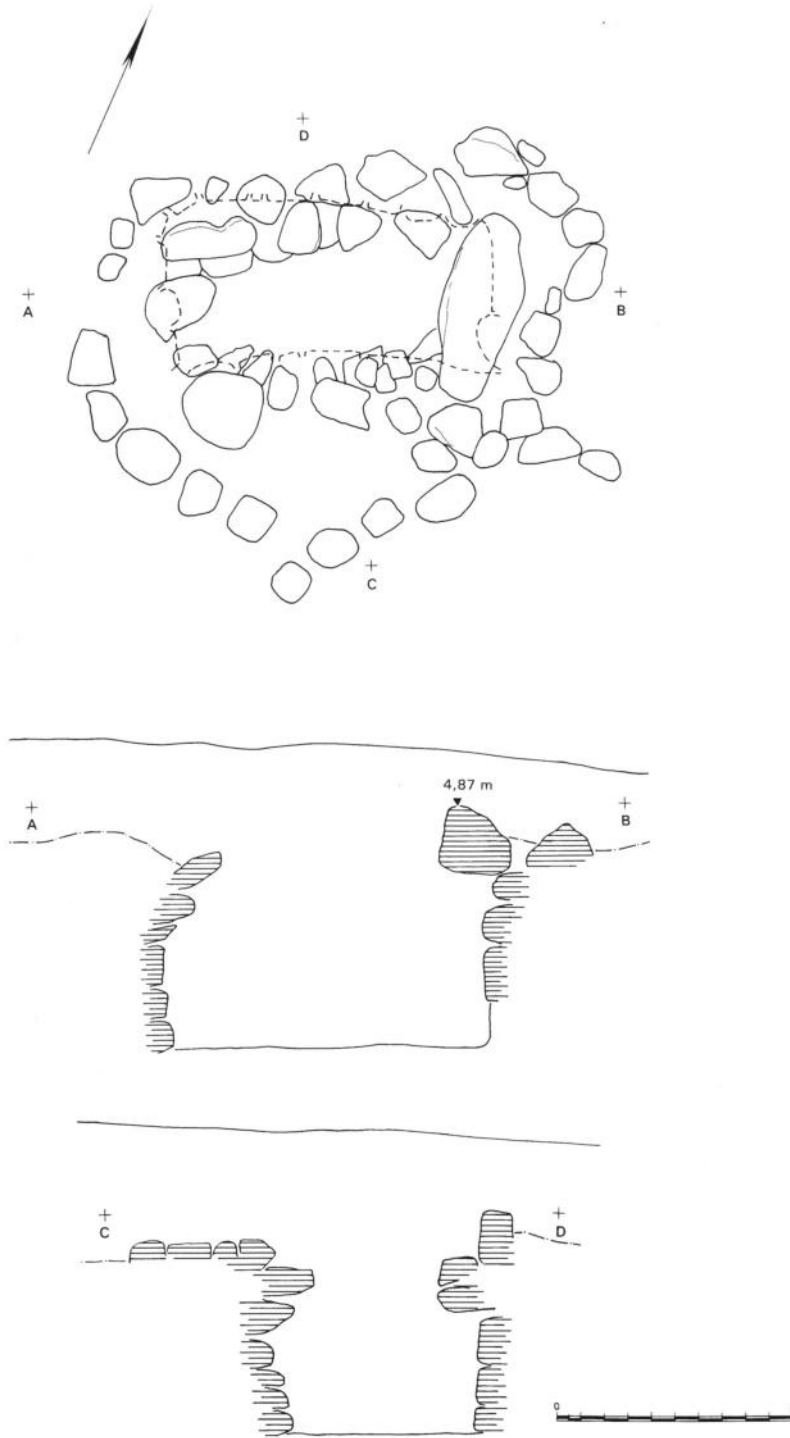
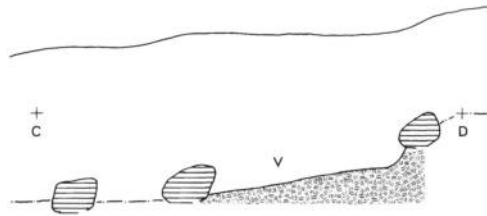
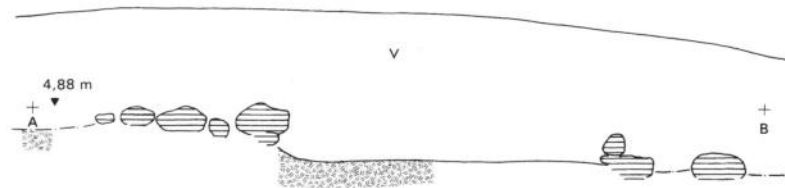
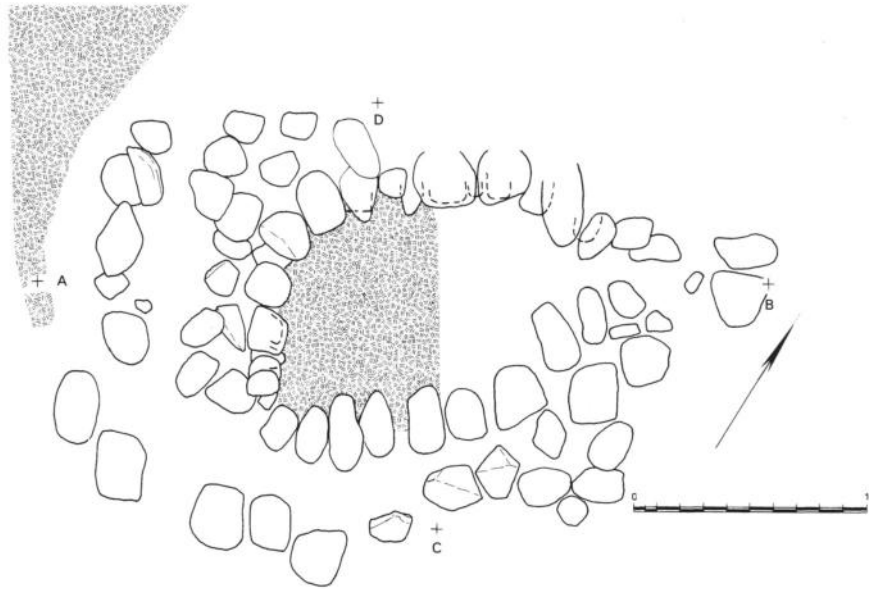


Fig. 7 Gr. Bu2, grave



⊙:⊙

scale 1:1

Fig. 8 Gr. Bu3, grave

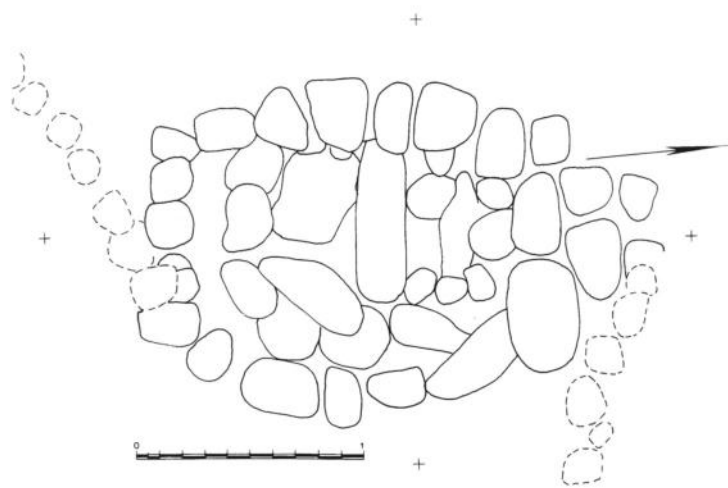
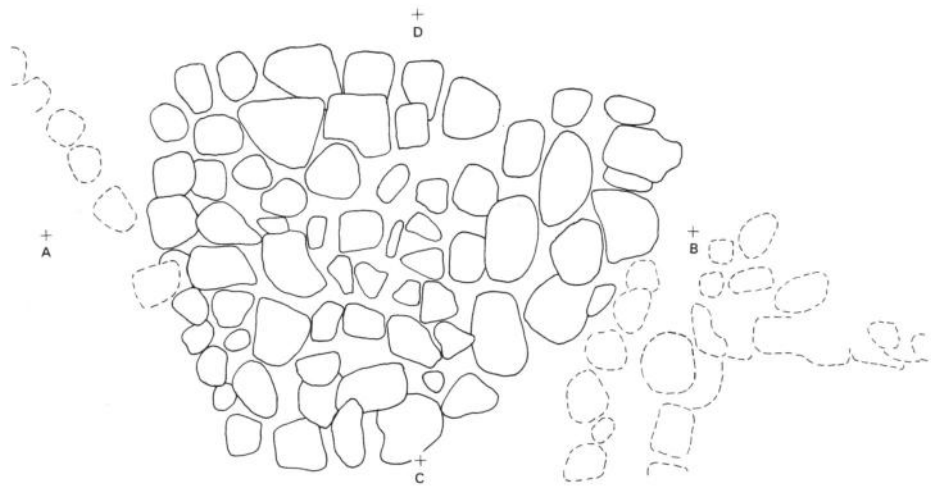


Fig. 9 Gr. Bu4, grave

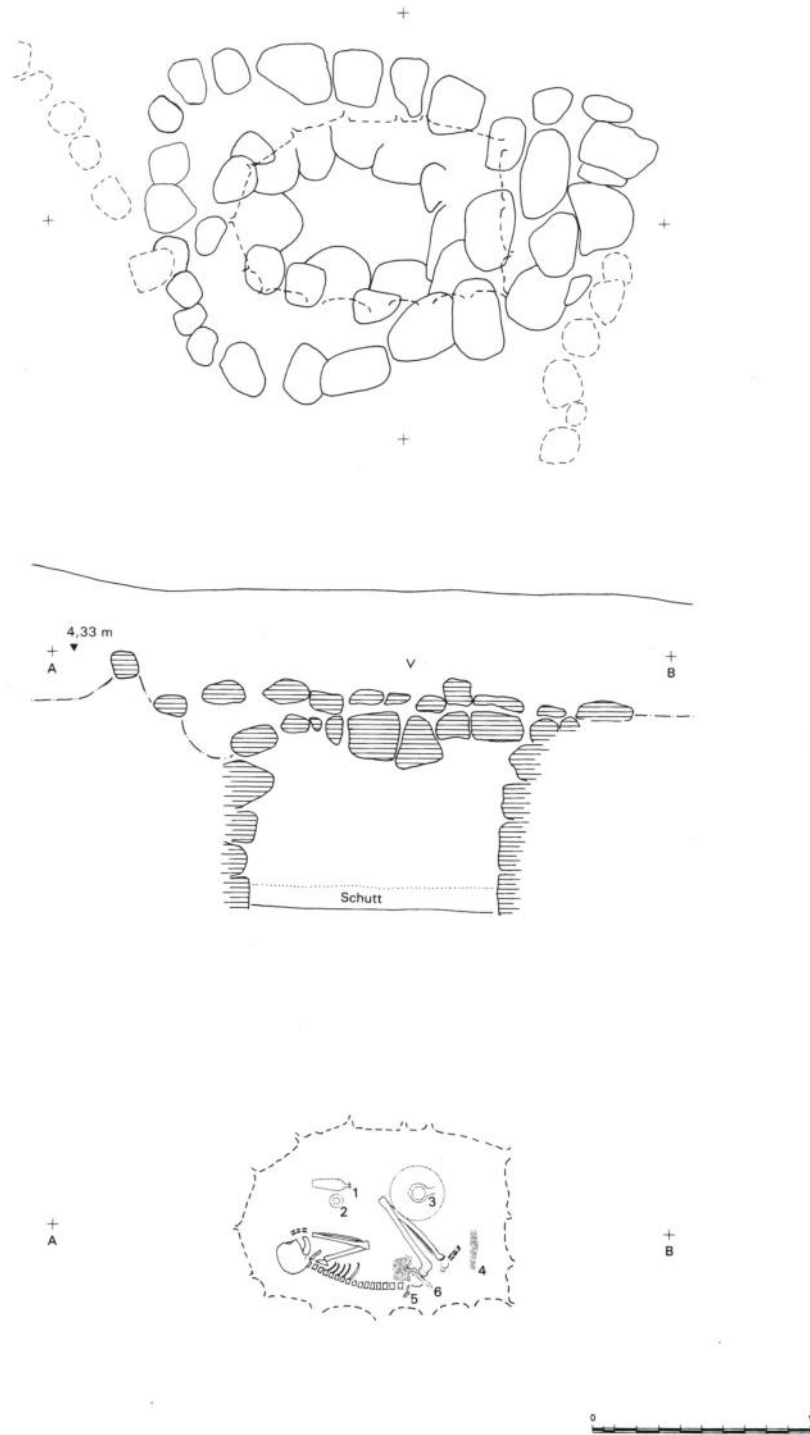


Fig. 10 Gr. Bu4, grave

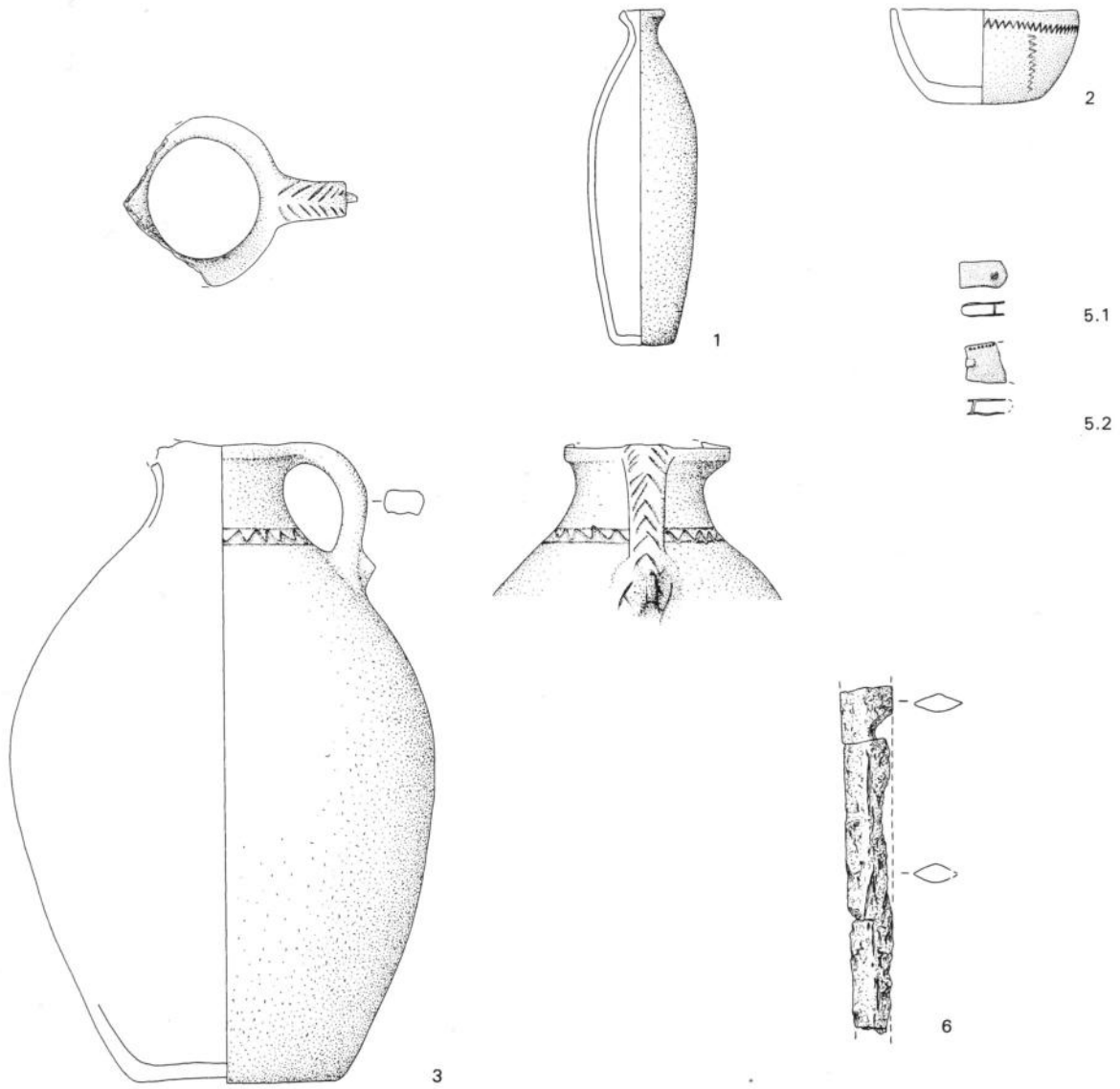
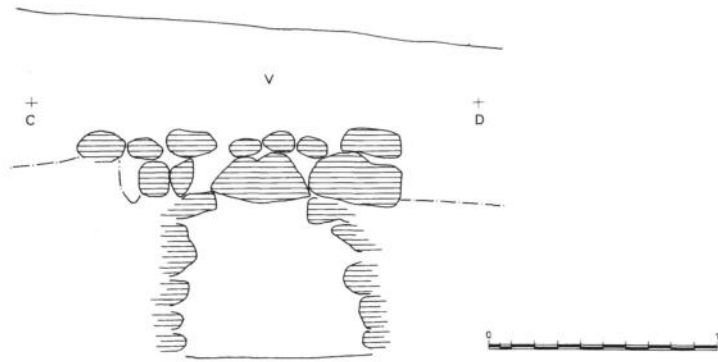
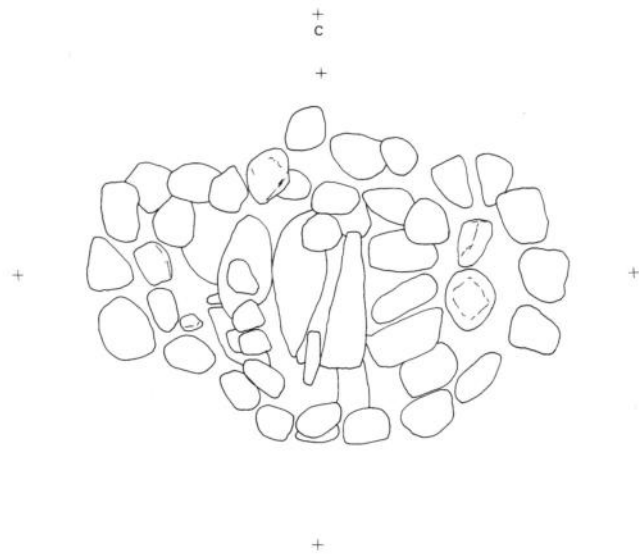
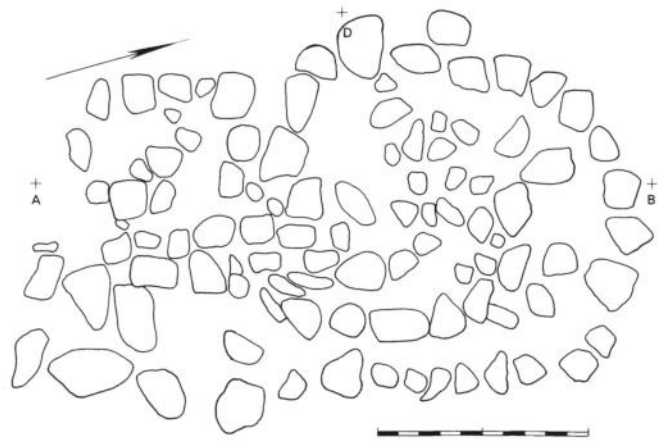
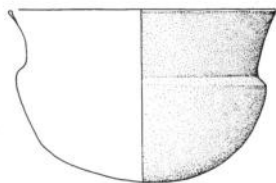


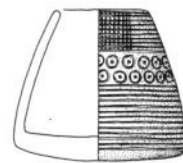
Fig 11 Gr. Bu4, graves and finds



1



2



3

M. 1:3

Fig. 12 Gr. Bu5, grave and finds

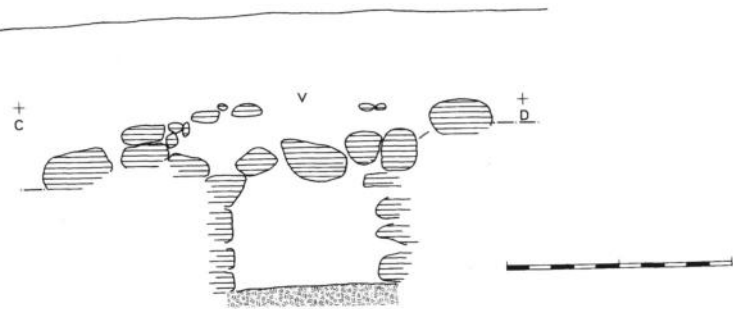
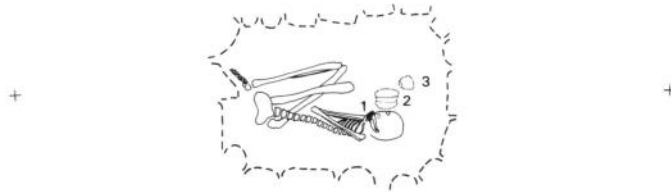
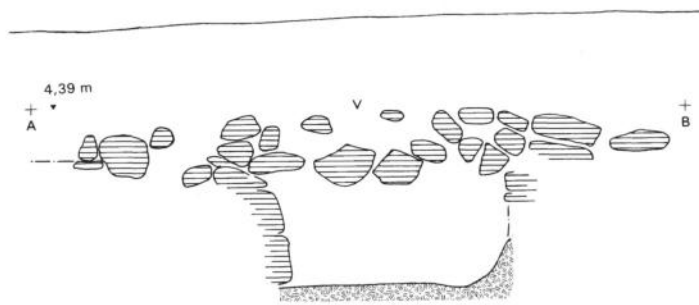
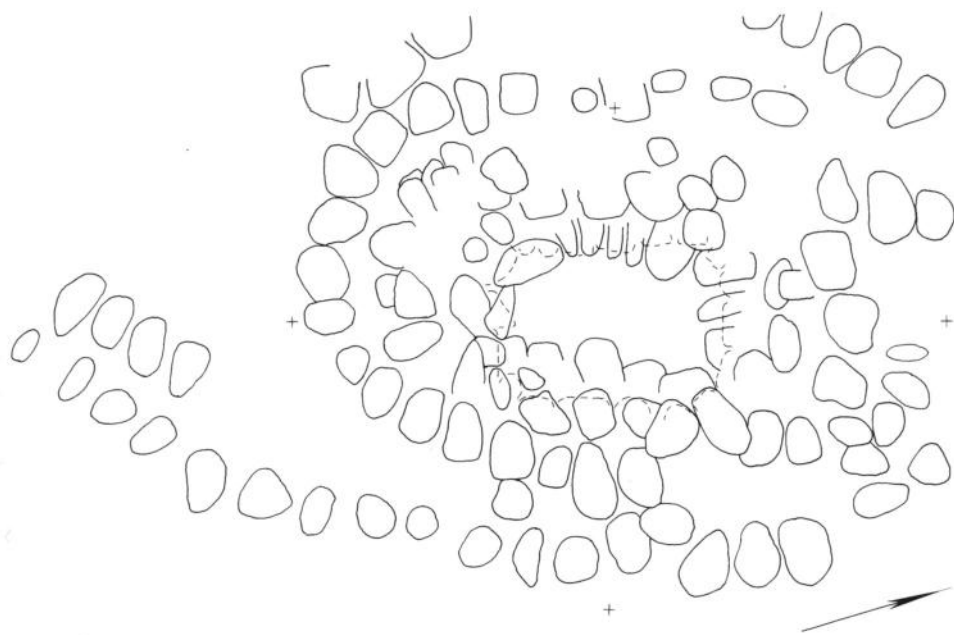


Fig. 13 Gr. Bu5, grave

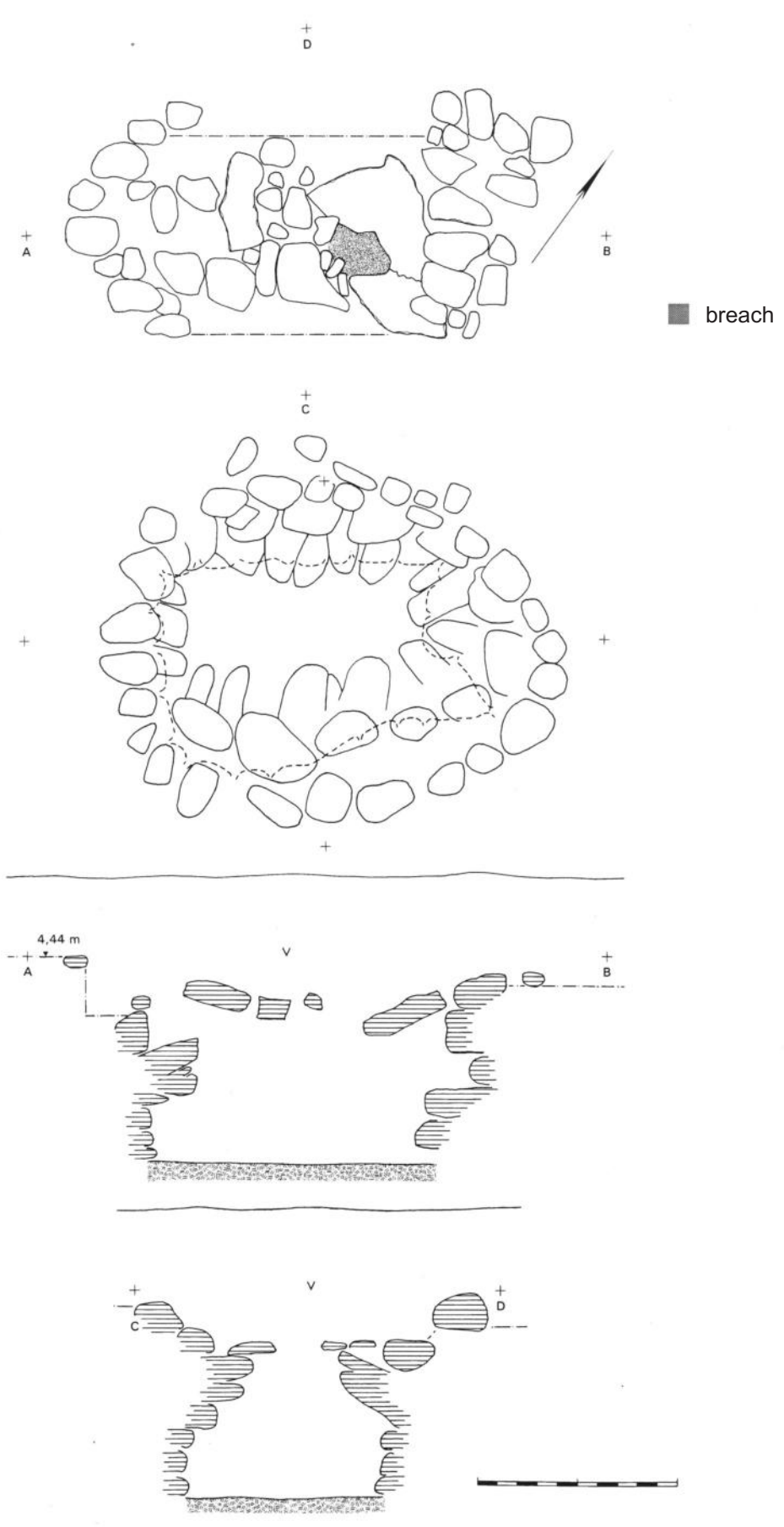
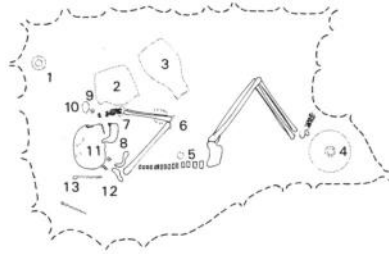
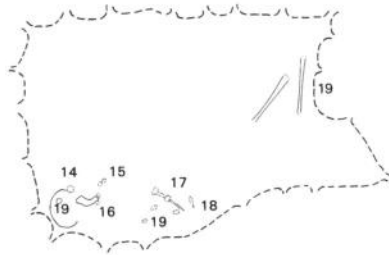


Fig. 14 Gr. Bu6, grave

burial 3



burial 2



burials 1 & 2 (skel. 1)

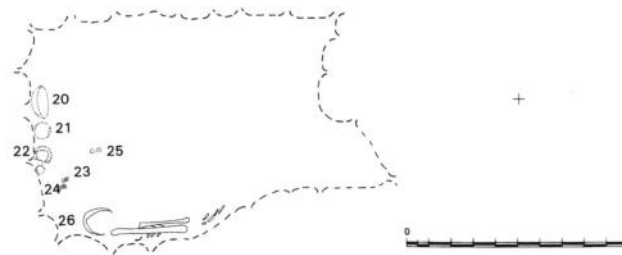


Fig. 15 Gr. Bu6, grave

burial 3

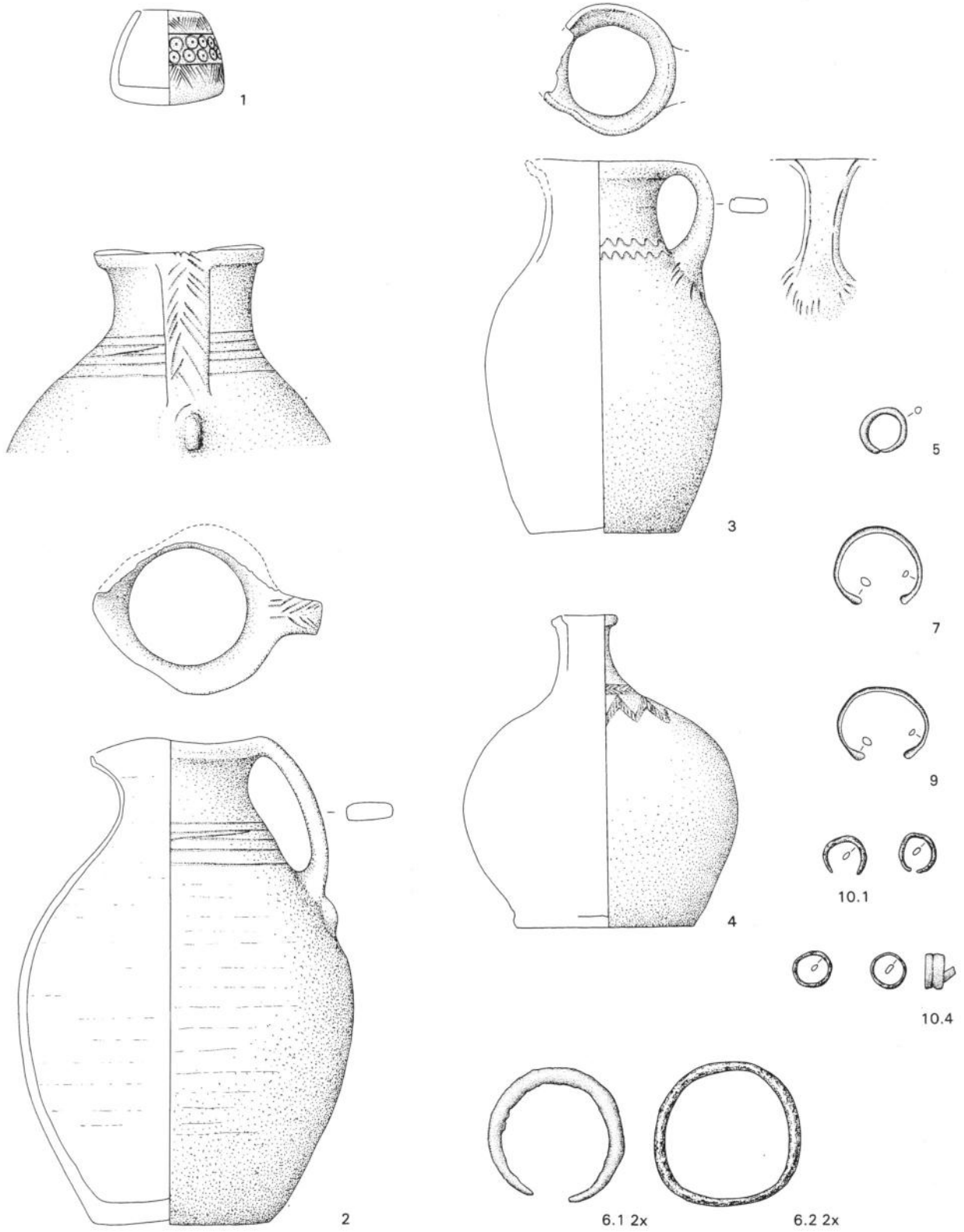


Fig. 16 Gr. Bu6, burial 3 finds

burial 3

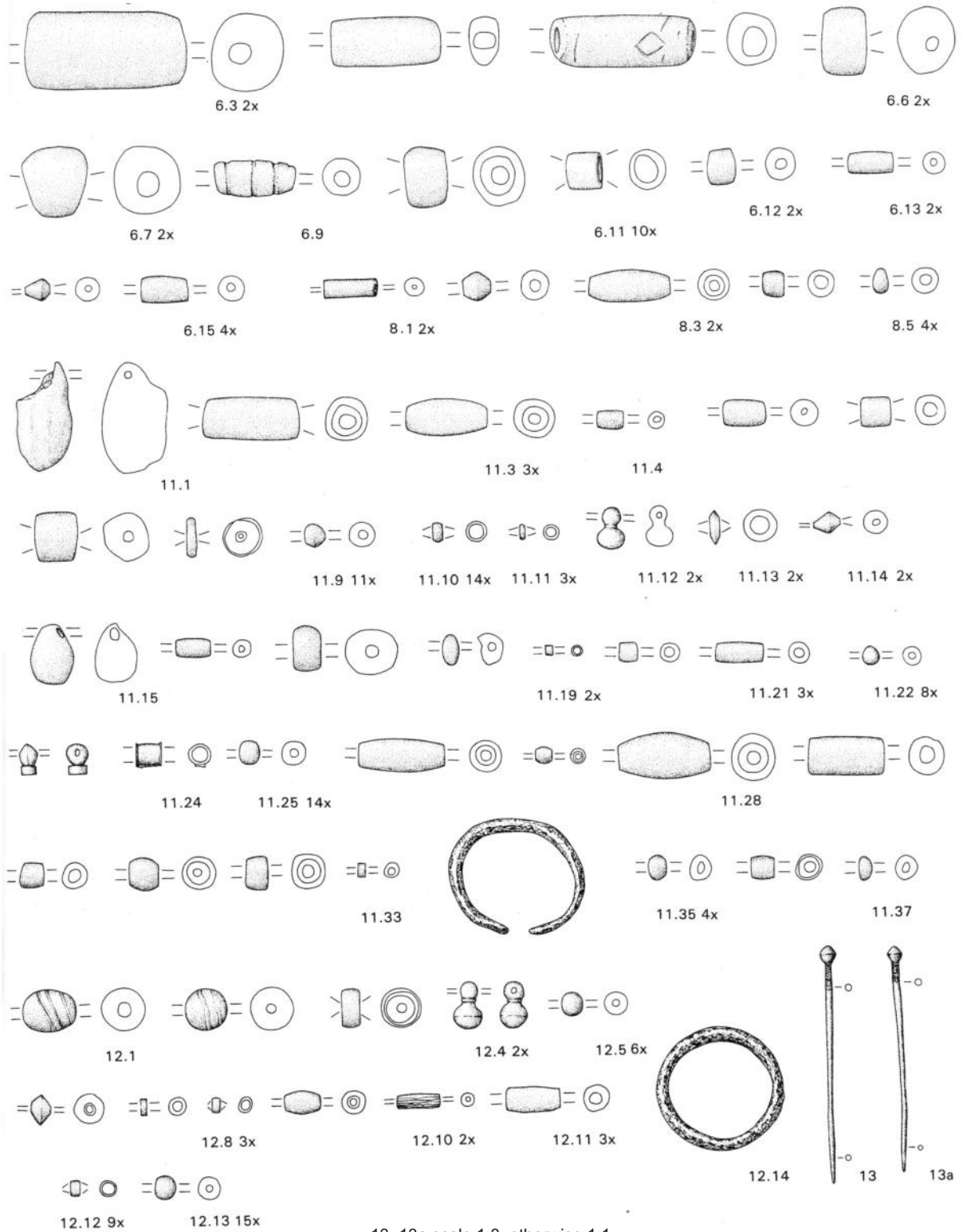


Fig. 17 Gr. Bu6, burial 3 finds

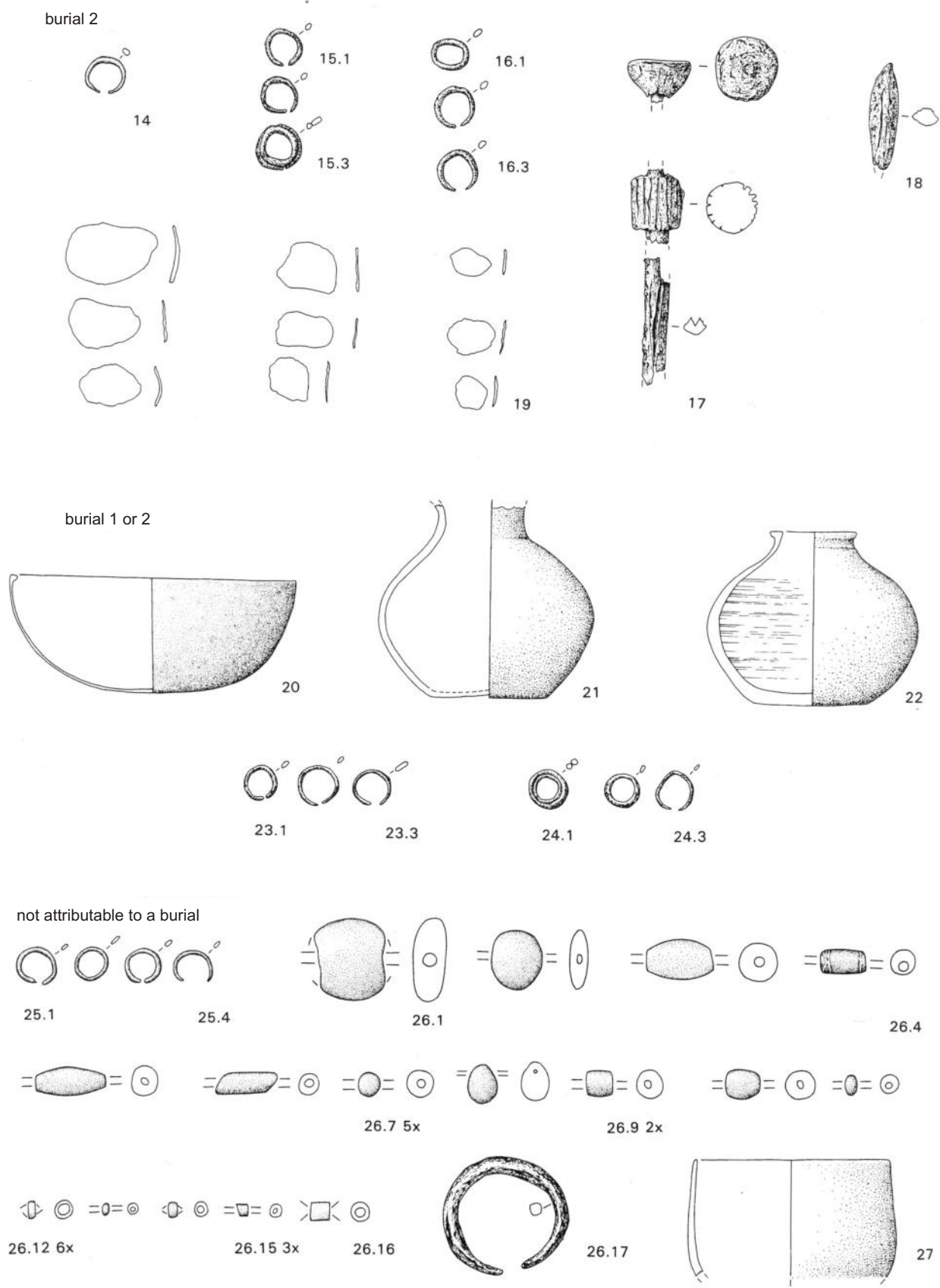


Fig. 26 scale 1:1, otherwise 1:3

Fig. 18 Gr. Bu6, burial 2, 1 or 2, attribution unknown finds

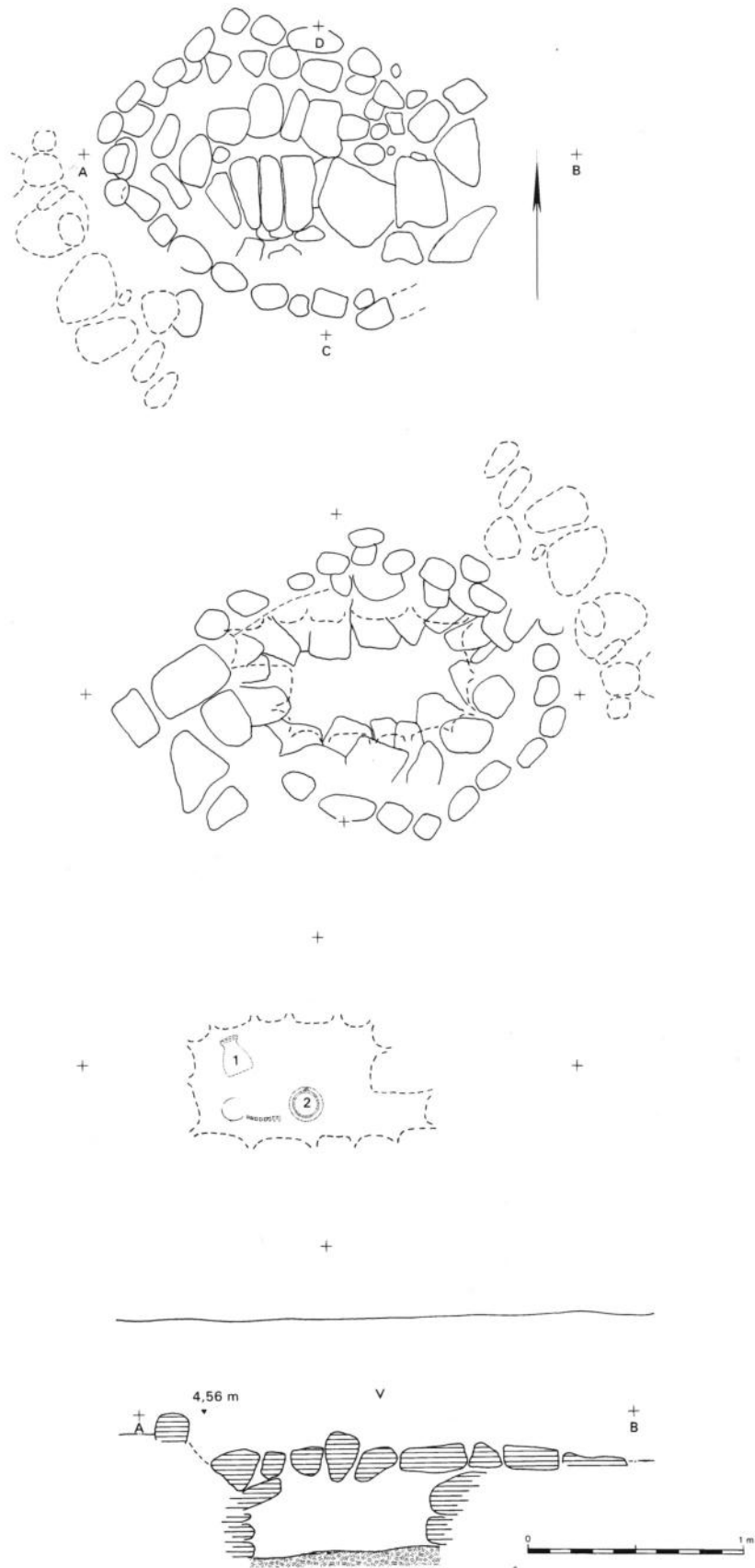


Fig. 19 Gr. Bu8, grave

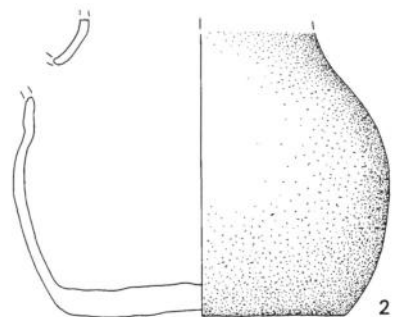
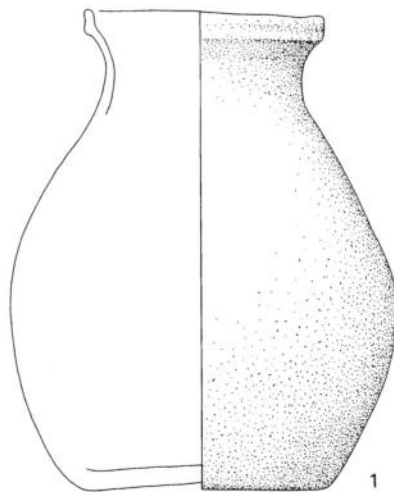
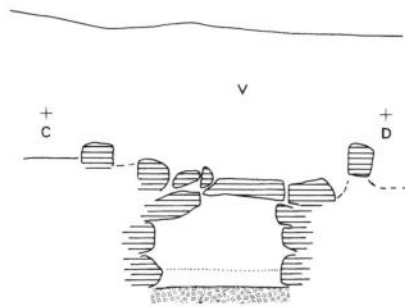


Fig. 20 Gr. Bu8, grave and finds



1



2

1 The al-Bustan Hotel with the excavation site in the centre, viewed toward the south-east, 1991.
2 The excavation site seen toward the south-west, 1991.



3



4

3 The excavation was visited daily by the citizens of al-Bustan.
4 Ghassan Sayid al-Ghassani supervising the excavation.



5

5 Grave Bu1 just after the clearing of the surface, 1991



6

6 Grave Bu2 after its excavation.



7

7 Grave Bu3 following the clearing of the surface.



8



9



8 Grave Bu4 excavated.
9 Stone bowl DA 11980 from grave Bu4.



10

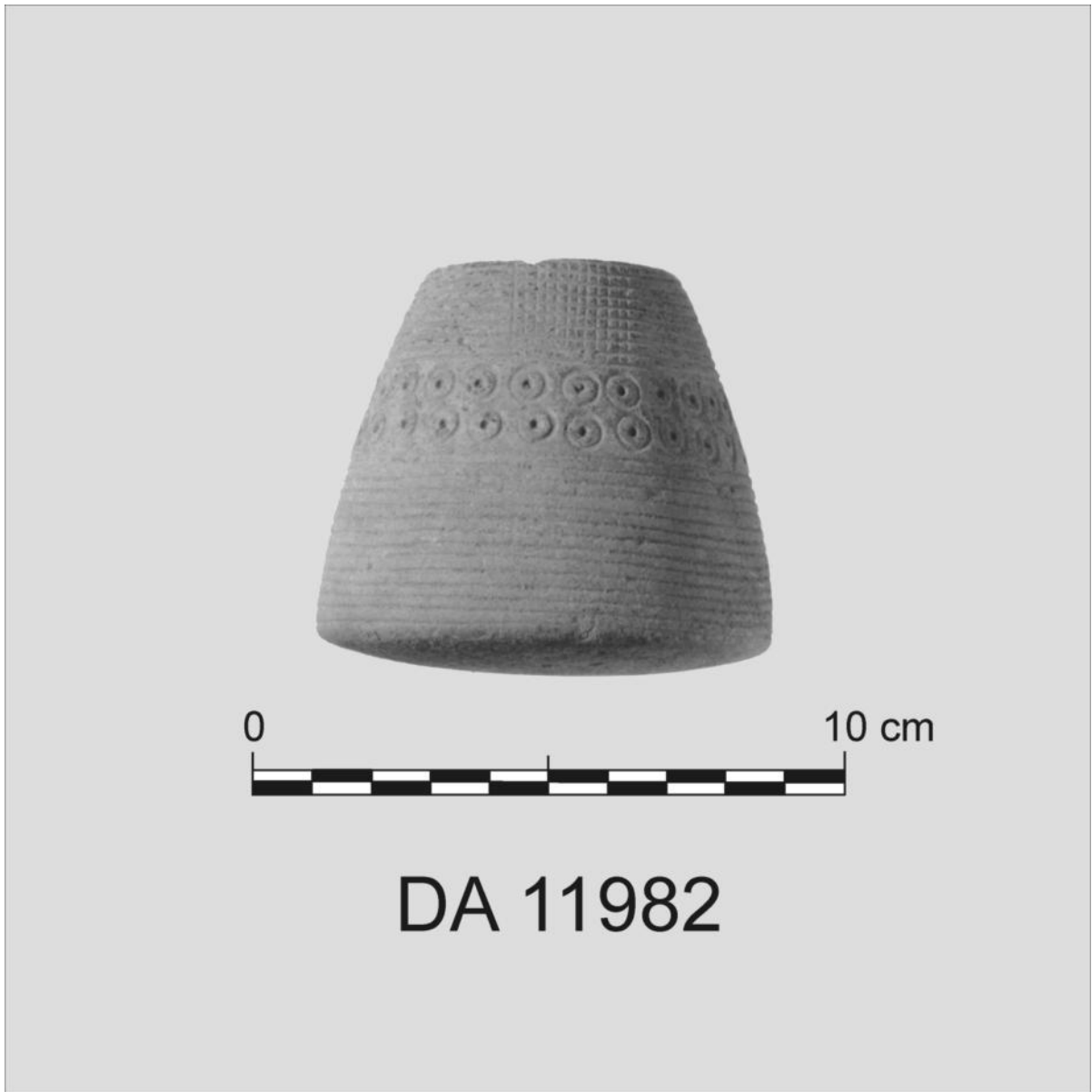


11

10 Grave Bu5 viewed following the removal of the stone debris. To the left a bar wall is visible.
11 Grave Bu5 viewed following the removal of the roof.



12 Grave Bu5 showing the floor just after its cleaning.
13 "Copper" bowl from Bu5 prior to its restoration. DA 11982.



14 Stone bowl (DA 11981), an heirloom of the second millennium in grave Bu5.



15



16

15 Graves Bu6 and Bu8 to the right prior to their excavation.
16 Graves Bu6 and Bu8 after excavation.



17

17 Grave Bu6 as seen just after the removal of the roof stones.



18

18 Stone bowl (DA 11990) from Bu6. The bowl is an heirloom, and dates to the second millennium BC.



19



20

19 & 20 Stretched pitcher (DA 11985) from grave Bu6.



21



22

21 Grave Bu8; the roof of the grave is intact.
22 Grave Bu8 just following the removal of the roof stones.



23

23 Aerial view of the excavated site, 1991.