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**Tullo Wind Farm
Laurencekirk
Aberdeenshire**

Post-Excavation Archive Report

Report No. 1787

CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

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1. INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in September and October 2009 during topsoil-stripping operations for a wind farm at Tullo Farm, near Laurencekirk, Aberdeenshire (NGR: NO 7550 7175 (centred)) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Natural Power on behalf of Eneco UK.

The wind farm development comprises seven wind turbines (Turbines 2–8) together with site compound and other associated infrastructure features. These features occupy the development area shown on Figure 1, which consists of undulating improved and partially improved farmland to the west of Tullo Farm. Altitude across the development area varies between c. 180m OD at Tullo Farm to 250m at the northern end of the site. The land use over the application area is largely pasture grassland used for sheep and cattle grazing.

During the course of the watching brief, a small concentration of five pits (Fig. 2) was identified within the location of Turbine 7. In response to this find, mitigation measures were agreed with the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeologist requiring the excavation of the features identified.

This archive report provides a summary of the fieldwork and details the results of the artefacts recovered from the excavated features. A short discussion then places the finds in their local context. Further details of the fieldwork are contained in CFA data structure report No. 1700 (Kirby 2009).

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and copies of reports will be lodged with the Aberdeenshire Council Sites and Monuments Record. Finds will be deposited according to Treasure Trove (SAFAP)

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SUMMARY

2.1 Background

A Cultural Heritage Assessment was undertaken by SUAT Ltd as part of an Environmental Statement (ES) for the wind farm. The Cultural Heritage Assessment identified 8 sites (Fig. 1) with the potential to be affected by this development. These consisted of The Cairn of Shiels (Site 8), four areas of rig and furrow (Sites 13 and 22–24) and three linear cropmarks (Sites 25–27). The layout of the turbines meant that direct impacts were possible in relation to Site 22 (Turbine 6), Site 23 (Site Compound) and Site 24 (Turbine 8).

The Cairn of Shiels is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM No. 5315) and is situated just outwith the wind farm area. A carved stone ball (NMRS No. NO NO77SE 23) (Fig. 1) was found at Tullo Farm, just outwith the proposed development area. Further prehistoric sites/finds within the surrounding area include Hillhead long cairn (SAM No. 4534; NMRS No. NO77NE 8), Erskine's Knap burial mound (SAM No. 5168; NMRS No. NO77SW 17), a polished stone axehead found at Powburn (NMRS No. NO77SW 18), a stone axehead found at Garvock (NMRS No. NO27SW 20) and a carved stone ball found at Garvock (NMRS No. NO77SW 29).

No previous invasive archaeological fieldwork is known to have taken place within the development area prior to this programme of archaeological works.

2.2 Archaeological features

No surviving remains of Sites 22, 23 or 24 (all rig-and-furrow) were identified within the areas of soil stripping (Turbine 6, Site Compound and Turbine 8 respectively). Upstanding remains of Site 22 were identified immediately to the east of the area stripped for Turbine 6, but deep scores within the subsoil of the stripped area suggest that areas of the rig-and-furrow had been removed by plough truncation. The surviving rig-and-furrow was aligned approximately NW by SE and measured c. 12m from crest to crest. Site 23 was identified as cropmarks only, which might relate to some large rubble field drains identified within this area. The location of the development features meant that the remaining sites were avoided.

During the watching brief a previously unrecorded concentration of five small pits was identified within the location of Turbine 7. The pits were located on a well draining natural terrace c.400m to the south of the Cairn of Shiels. This location offered excellent views over the low-lying farmland to the coast beyond.

Pit 003 (Fig. 3) was circular in plan with a diameter of c. 1m and a depth of 0.13m, and had shallow sloping sides and an irregular base. The primary fill (005) of the pit consisted of light yellowish grey sand and the upper fill (004) consisted of dark grey silt. There were no finds from this feature.

Pit 006 (Fig. 4) was rather irregular in plan, measuring 1.6m east to west by 0.8m north to south by 0.25m deep, and had sloping sides and a flattish base. The primary fill (008) of the pit consisted of reddish-brown sandy-silt and the upper fill (007) consisted of dark grey silt containing numerous rounded and sub-rounded stones

measuring up to 0.2m across. A single quartz flake and four fragments of heat-cracked cobbles were recovered from the base of fill 007. Details of the lithic finds are contained in Section 3.2.

Pit 009 (Fig. 5) was irregular in plan, measuring 3.1m east to west by 0.75m north to south by 0.1m deep, and had shallow sloping sides and an irregular base. The fill (010) of the pit consisted of light yellowish-grey sandy-silt. There were no finds from this feature but charcoal recovered from a soil sample taken for analysis produced radiocarbon dates of 3640–3370 and 3630–3360 cal BC at 2 σ . Details of the radiocarbon dates are contained in Section 3.4.

Pit 011 (Fig. 6) was sub-rectangular in shape, measuring 1.6m north-west to south-east by 0.55m by 0.17m deep, and had sloping sides and a flat base. The fill (012) of the pit consisted of dark grey silt containing numerous stones. The stones appeared to be considerably more angular than those contained in the surrounding subsoil and may have been fire cracked. There were no finds from this feature.

Pit 013 (Fig. 7) was irregular in shape, measuring 2.65m south-west to north-east by 1.25m by 0.17m deep, and had irregular sloping sides and an irregular base. An initial silting event (015) consisting of reddish-brown sandy silt had occurred at the south-western end of the pit prior to the remainder of the pit being back-filled by a dark-brown charcoal-rich deposit (014). Twenty-six sherds of prehistoric pottery and two flint flakes and fragment of flint platform core were recovered from deposit 014. Charcoal recovered from a soil sample taken for analysis produced radiocarbon dates of 3630–3360 and 3630–3360 cal BC at 2 σ . Details of the finds and the radiocarbon dates are contained in Sections 3.1–3.4.

3. FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

3.1 The Pottery by Melanie Johnson

Twenty-six sherds of handmade prehistoric pottery, weighing 637g in total, were recovered from pit 013. The sherds were sorted into sherd families and catalogued, according to dimensions, fabric, surface finish, decoration, and morphology. A full catalogue has been prepared for the site archive (Appendix 2).

Context 014, the fill of Pit 013, contained 26 sherds of Neolithic pottery, comprising 18 plain body sherds, six rim sherds from four different vessels, and one possible lug. Few of the pots have substantial portions of their profiles surviving. A minimum of nine individual vessels are represented. The diagnostic pottery falls into two groups, for which parallels can be found and are discussed separately below. Radiocarbon dates obtained from Pit 010 calibrate to 3640–3360 BC and from Pit 013 to 3630–3360 BC at 2-sigma.

The fabrics are generally fairly fine and well fired. Well sorted sand is prevalent in quantities up to 30% along with stones in quantities up to 5% and up to 10mm in size. The surfaces are generally smoothed. A few sherds have light sooting on the surfaces and some breaks along coil joins were noted. Wall thickness was variable, ranging from 6mm to 14mm. Colours tend to be browns and greys, and some examples of slips were present.

Cowie's Group 2

Part of a lug was recorded on P5 (Fig. 8); as the position of the sherd break had removed a large part of the lug it is not possible to establish the size or type of lug. The body of the vessel was globular. Lugs are known throughout the Neolithic but are less common in the Early Neolithic.

One of the rim sherds (P6) was a rounded thick rim on a vessel with a slightly open mouth, very slight neck and mainly straight walled. A joining rim and body sherd (P7) were from a vessel with a rounded rim with a slight internal bevel and a slight neck, from a globular bowl with closed mouth. These heavy bowls are thick walled but well made.

These vessels have ready parallels with Cowie's Group 2 (Cowie 1993), which has its ancestry in Early Neolithic Carinated Bowl and appears to be a precursor to Late Neolithic Impressed Wares.

For example, comparable forms come from Balfarg Riding School (Barclay & Russell-White 1993), in particular vessel P11 (*ibid*, illus 13) which provides a very good parallel for Tullo P7. Other forms include necked vessels, more straight necked vessels, carinated vessels and variants on the globular vessels. Lugs are also present.

At Balfarg Riding School (BRS), this type of pottery is associated with dates ranging between 3700–3360 BC (UtC-1302, GU-1903, GU-2606) which fits well with the dates obtained at Tullo; however, the Balfarg Riding School dates are from bulk

charcoal and earlier dates were also obtained and so these may not be entirely reliable. At BRS, they come from a small number of pits in fairly large quantities.

Proto-Unstan Ware

Vessels P8 and P9 (Fig. 8) both appeared to be collared, bipartite, wide bowls. P8 was plain but P9 was decorated on the collar with incised decoration.

P9 was a collared open bowl decorated with an incised motif on the collar comprising a panel of 6 vertical lines and an adjacent panel of 4–5 horizontal lines. Rilling was also noted on the collar interior. This vessel falls into the category of proto-Unstan ware, a later Neolithic variant of Unstan ware which is known from other sites in the north-east including Spurryhillock near Stonehaven (Alexander 2000).

P8 is an unusual vessel whose overall profile is difficult to determine. It is possible that it is a very wide shallow open bowl with a short upright collar, making it a variant on the type seen in P9. However, the collar is not decorated and the rim may instead be a short inturning rim on a long, slightly concave neck; the profile ends as the body starts to flare out again but no carination or shoulder is present. Two possible interpretations are shown in Figure 8.

Unstan bowls in their classic form are generally characteristic of the earlier Neolithic on Orkney and are also known from the Western Isles. There is, however, an increasing recognition of Unstan or what could be called proto-Unstan bowls, biconical or collared bowls recovered from pits in eastern and north-eastern Scotland. Radiocarbon dates (Kinnes 1985), suggest a date range of at least the mid fourth millennium to the earlier third millennium BC for the classic Unstan bowl; the radiocarbon dates from this pit suggest a mid-late third millennium BC date and so the vessels may be a local development or an adaptation from true Unstan ware.

Proto-Unstan bowls are known from sites in the east and north-east of Scotland. Pits at Grandtully, Perthshire (Simpson & Coles 1990) produced Late Neolithic pottery, of which one is Unstan-like in form; it is a bowl with a pronounced collar and internally bevelled rim, decorated with vertical and horizontal bands of stab and drag. The remainder of the assemblage is Impressed Ware. The radiocarbon dates, however, have extremely large standard deviations and there are serious reservations about their accuracy.

The vessel from the pit at Spurryhillock, Aberdeenshire (Alexander 2000), has incised decoration on the collar and may be considered to be a classic example of Unstan ware. No dates were obtained from the pit in which it was found, and very little other material. A pit at Brackmont Mill, Fife (Longworth et al 1967) produced decorated biconical and collared bowls with similarities to Unstan vessels, which were interpreted as being a local variant on Late Neolithic wares. It also has similarities to pots found at Douglasmuir (Cowie 1993, illus 2) from pit FAC.

Easterton of Roseisle and Easterton, Aberdeenshire, and Urquhart, Moray (Henshall 1983) also produced a small number of decorated and undecorated shallow collared bowls with similarities to Unstan ware. There are also decorated biconical vessels

from Balbridie (Ralston 1982) in an assemblage of Early Neolithic carinated bowls; Cowie (1993) suggested that these have a close relationship with Unstan bowls

Discussion

Finds of Neolithic pottery in this part of Scotland are not common; for the Early Neolithic they include Boysack Mills, Inverkeilor (Murray & Ralston 1997) and Douglasmuir (Kendrick 1995), although both of these assemblages are very small. Larger assemblages of modified Carinated Bowl were found at Dubton Farm, Brechin (Cameron 2002) and Newton Road, Carnoustie (White et al 2009), dating to about the same period as Tullo. Possible late Neolithic pottery was recovered during the evaluation/excavation at Carlogie (MacSween 2007).

Assemblages of Neolithic pottery are found in a small range of contexts (Sheridan 2007), which often includes pits, for example at Kintore (Alexander 2000; MacSween 2008), and Dubton Farm (Cameron 2002). Single pit finds are known Carzield, Dumfries & Galloway (Maynard 1993), and Ratho, Edinburgh (Smith 1995). Other contexts include timber halls and smaller timber structures presumed to be residential houses, mortuary structures such as long barrows and mortuary enclosures, and other monuments distinctive to the period such as cursuses.

3.2 The Lithics by Ann Clarke

A single flake of crushed quartz and four fragments of heat-cracked cobbles were recovered from Pit 006, and two small flint flakes and a flint core fragment were recovered from Pit 013. These finds are summarised in Table 1.

A single quartz flake came from the upper fill (007) of pit 006. It has a crushed platform indicating that it may have been detached from the pebble using the bipolar technique whereby the core is held on an anvil and hammered from above. This is a common method of knapping quartz pebbles and is not indicative of any particular prehistoric period. The four fragments of heat-cracked cobbles also from fill (007) must have been deposited in the pit after having been burnt.

Two tiny flint flakes and a fragment of a platform core accompanied the deposits of Neolithic pottery in the primary fill (014) of pit 013. The flint is not particularly diagnostic of period but the presence of knapping debris which included the small flakes would be consistent with an early Neolithic date and suggest that the products of flint knapping and the pottery are contemporary.

Table 1: Lithics Catalogue

Feature	Context	Size	Description
006	007	ML 28mm x MW 20mm x MTh 7mm	Secondary flake of pebble quartz with a crushed platform
006	007	N/A	Four fragments of heat-cracked cobbles
013	014	ML 10mm x MW 12mm x MTh 2mm	Small inner flake of toffee coloured flint
013	014	ML 10mm x MW 4mm x MTh 1mm	Small inner flake of toffee-coloured flint
013	014	ML 43mm x MW 40mm x MTh 17mm	Core fragment of Orange flint with large inclusion. Some attempt at flake removals from natural flat platform prior to removal for platform rejuvenation.

3.3 Plant macrofossils by Mhairi Hastie

Methodology

A system of flotation and wet sieving was used to separate the archaeological material, from the soil samples. Initially, the floating debris was collected in a 250µm sieve and, once dry, scanned using a low-powered microscope (magnification x10 to x200) to identify the archaeological material. Material remaining in the flotation tank was wet sieved through a 1mm mesh and air-dried before being sorted to identify any remaining significant material.

No charred cereal grains or other plant material apart from a small assemblage of wood charcoal was recovered from the samples.

Identifications were carried out on charcoal fragments at or greater than 2mm in diameter using a binocular microscope. Charcoal fragments less than 2mm in diameter were considered to be below the level of identification. Anatomical keys listed in Schweingruber (1990) and CFA Archaeology's reference charcoal was used to aid identification.

Results

The bulk of the charcoal recovered was very poorly preserved; much iron staining was present and in a lot of cases the microstructure of the charcoal was not sufficiently preserved to allow the identification of wood species.

Occasional fragments of small branchwood or roundwood were noted. Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) was the main species present along with small amounts of alder (*Alnus* sp.), birch (*Betula* sp.) and oak (*Quercus* sp.). A small quantity of what appears to be bark fragments were also recovered from Sample 3 (fill of pit 011). The results are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Composition of flots

Sample	Context	Feature	Sample vol (litres)	Hazelnut shell	Charcoal
1	004/005	Pit 003	10		1 x frag of alder/hazel
2	007/008	Pit 006	20	+	Hazel + Alder+ Birch + Vitrified and iron stained charcoal +
3	012	Pit 011	10		Hazel / Alder + Hazel + Birch + Oak + Vitrified and iron stained charcoal ++
4	010	Pit 009	20		Hazel ++ Oak + Birch (poss) +
5	014	Pit 013	20		Hazel +++ Vitrified and iron stained charcoal +

Key: + = rare, ++ = occasional, +++ = common and ++++ = abundant

3.4 Radiocarbon dates

Four samples were submitted to the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre (SUERC) for radiocarbon dating (Table 3). These consisted of two samples from Pit 009 and two samples from Pit 013. Charred hazelnut shell (*Corylus Avellana*) and birch (*Betula*) charcoal from Pit 009 produced dates of 3640–3370 and 3630–3360 cal BC at 2σ respectively (SUERC 28768 and 28769), while charred hazelnut shell (*Corylus Avellana*) and alder (*Alnus*) charcoal from Pit 013 produced dates of 3630–3360 and 3630–3360 cal BC at 2σ respectively (SUERC 28770 and 28771). These results suggest an Early Neolithic date, which is broadly in line with the type of pottery recovered.

Table 3: Radiocarbon dates from Pit 009 and Pit 013

SUERC Lab No.	Feature (Context)	Species	Date BP	Date BC (1σ)	Date BC (2σ)
28768	Pit 009 (010)	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	4720±35	3630-3380	3640-3370
28769	Pit 009 (010)	<i>Betula</i>	4690±35	3520-3370	3630-3360
28770	Pit 013 (014)	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	4680±35	3520-3370	3630-3360
28771	Pit 13 (014)	<i>Alnus sp.</i>	4685±35	3520-3370	3630-3360

4. DISCUSSION

The watching brief carried out at Tullo Wind Farm identified a cluster of five pits situated on the eastern flank of the Hill of Garvock, c. 400m to the south of the Scheduled Ancient Monument known as the Cairn of Shiels (SAM No. 5315). Situated on a natural free-draining south-facing terrace, this location offered panoramic views across the lower lying ground to the east and out to sea.

The material recovered from the pits consisted of quartz and flint flakes, a flint core, a small assemblage of prehistoric pottery, and plant macrofossils consisting of, alder, birch, hazel and oak. Radiocarbon dates obtained from charred hazelnut shell and birch charcoal indicated a date of c. 4700 BC and, along with the typology of the pottery, provides fairly secure evidence that the pits are Neolithic in date. Although pits of this nature are a common feature of the Neolithic period, finds of Neolithic pottery within this part of Scotland are not common, making this a particularly significant discovery.

Based on the available evidence, it is unclear if there is any direct link between the pits identified and the Cairn of Shiels. This monument is a prehistoric burial cairn measuring 20.5m in diameter by 1.5m, with the remains of what may be a second cairn lying 8m to the ENE. The cairn has never been excavated and consequently, it remains unclear if it was contemporary with the pits identified.

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APPENDIX 1: DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND ENTRY

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Aberdeenshire Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Tullo Wind Farm, near Laurencekirk, Aberdeenshire
PROJECT CODE:	TWIF
PARISH:	Garvock
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Magnus Kirby
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching brief
NMRS NO(S):	NO77SE 61
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Pit, Inorganic Material
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	Prehistoric Pits/Pottery
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NO 7550 7175 (centred)
START DATE (this season)	September 2009
END DATE (this season)	October 2009
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A watching brief carried out at Tullo Wind Farm identified a cluster of five pits situated on the eastern flank of the Hill of Garvock, circa 400m to the south of the Scheduled Ancient Monument known as the Cairn of Shiels (SAM No. 5315). Located on a natural free-draining south-facing terrace, this location offered panoramic views across the lower lying ground to the east and out to sea. The material recovered from the pits consisted of quartz and flint flakes, a flint core, a small assemblage of prehistoric pottery, and plant macrofossils consisting of, alder, birch, hazel and oak. Radiocarbon dates obtained from charred hazelnut shell and birch charcoal indicated a date of c. 4700 BC and along with the typology of the pottery provides fairly secure evidence that the pits are Neolithic in date. Although pits of this nature are a common feature of the Neolithic period, finds of Neolithic pottery within this part of Scotland are not common, making this a particularly significant discovery.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	N/A
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Eneco UK
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	The Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, East Lothian, EH21 7PQ
EMAIL ADDRESS:	cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	National Monuments Record for Scotland (NMRS) Aberdeenshire Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)

APPENDIX 2: POTTERY CATALOGUE

Pot	Ctxt	Feature	No. sherds	Wt (g)	Vessel part	Form	Fabric	Inclusions	Colour	Diam (cm)	Thick (mm)	Product	Firing	Exterior surface	Interior surface	Surface deposits	Decoration	Condition	Notes	
P1	014	Pit 013	3	84	Body		Medium, hard	30% sand, 1% small grit	Brown throughout, slightly greyer on interior		11		Oxidised	Smoothed	Roughly finished	Very slight charred residue on interior		Lightly abraded		
P2	014	Pit 013	3	44	Body		Medium, fairly soft	20% sand, 3% grit and stones	Light yellow-brown surfaces, grey core		7		Unoxidised	Slipped, smoothed	None visible	Light sooting on exterior		Very abraded		
P3	014	Pit 013	2	28	Body		Medium, hard	20% sand, 2% grit and stones	Red-brown exterior, grey core and interior		13	Coil join visible	Unoxidised	Smoothed	Smoothed			Lightly abraded	Sherds join	
P4	014	Pit 013	3	58	Body		Medium-coarse, hard	15% sand, 5% stone up to 7mm	Greyish-brown surfaces, grey to red core		14	Coil join visible	Unoxidised	None visible	Smoothed				Abraded	
P5	014	Pit 013	3	83	Body	Lug	Medium-fine, fairly hard	2-% sand, 3% grit and stone up to 10mm	Light brown surfaces, grey core		7		Unoxidised	Smoothed	None visible		Partial lug present, applied rather than pinched up	Abraded	Sherds join	
P6	014	Pit 013	1	49	Rim	Rounded thick rim, slightly open mouth, straight wall, very slight neck	Medium, hard	20% sand, 2% grit and stones	Brown surfaces, grey core	23	9		Unoxidised	Slipped, smoothed	Smoothed				Abraded	
P7	014	Pit 013	2	182	Rim	Rounded, slight internal bevel, slight neck, round bowl with closed mouth	Medium, hard	20% sand, 1% stone	Brown exterior, grey core and interior	24	11		Unoxidised	Smoothed	Horizontal wiping			Fair	Sherds join	
P8	014	Pit 013	5	76	Rim	Unusual shape - inturning rim (short reverse	Medium, hard	7% sand, 3% stone up to 6mm	Brown surfaces, dark grey		7		Unoxidised	Smoothed	Smoothed				Lightly abraded	Sherds join

Pot	Ctxt	Feature	No. sherds	Wt (g)	Vessel part	Form	Fabric	Inclusions	Colour	Diam (cm)	Thick (mm)	Product .	Firing	Exterior surface	Interior surface	Surface deposits	Decoration	Condition	Notes
						everted) on long slightly concave neck, profile ends as body starting to flare out again but no carination or shoulder present, could be a very wide shallow open bowl with upright rim rather than inturning			core										
P9	014	Pit 013	4	33	Rim	Collared, upright rounded rim on wide open bowl	Medium, hard	10% sand, 5% white stone	Dark grey		6		Unoxidised	Lightly polished	Lightly polished	Light sooting on exterior	Incised decoration on collar - panel of 6 vertical lines and adjacent panel of 4-5 horizontal lines. Rilling on collar interior	Fair	Rims join

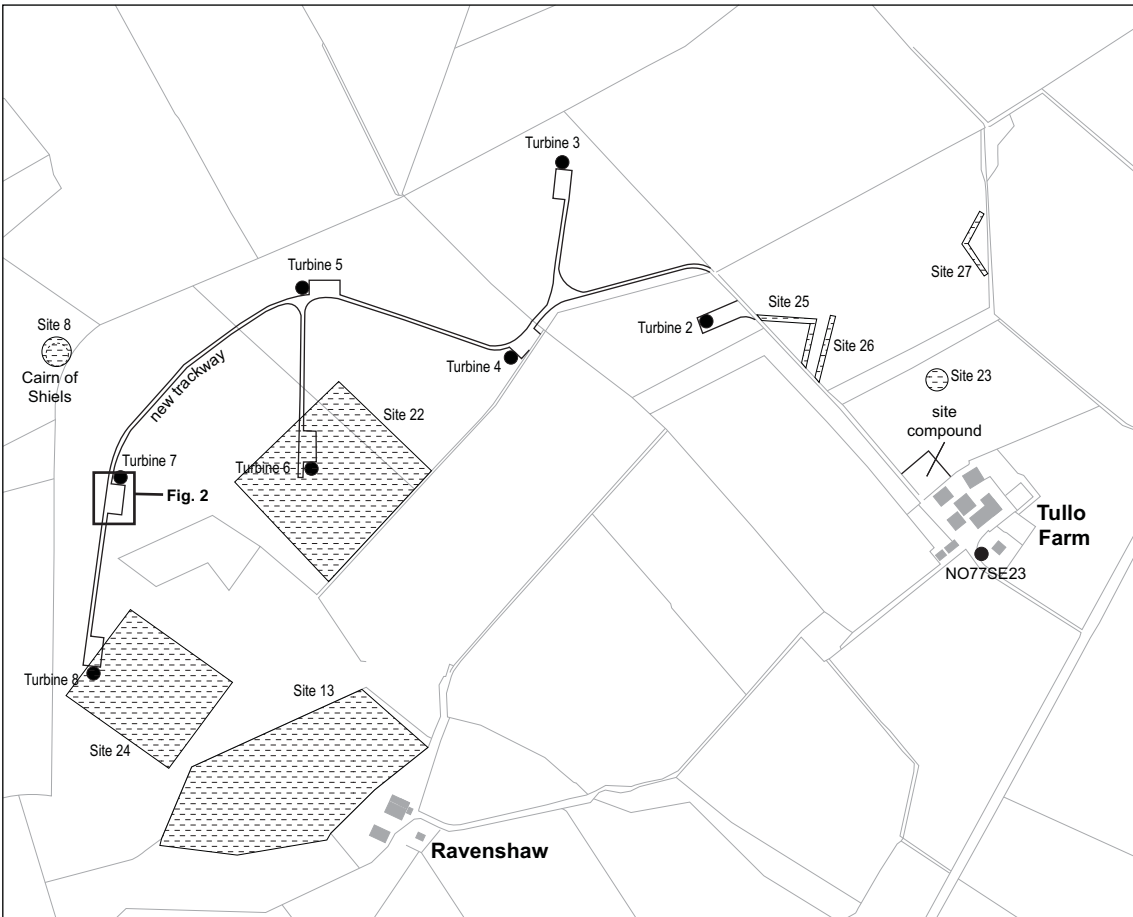
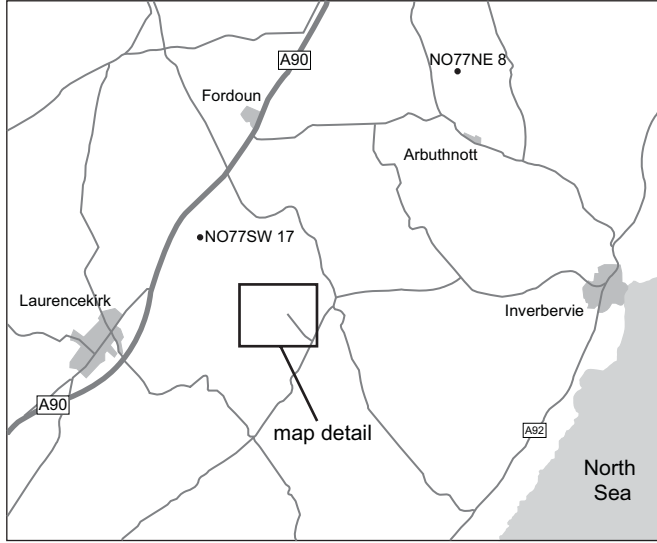
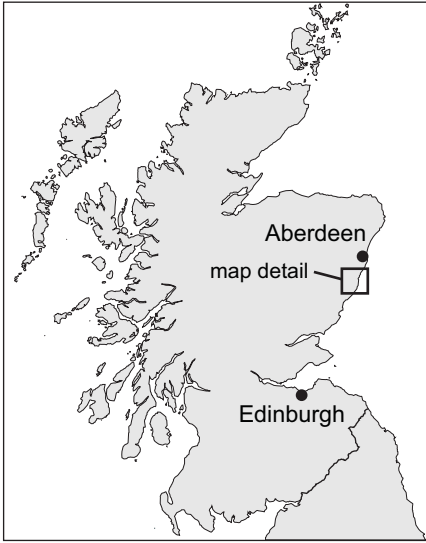


Fig. 1 Site location

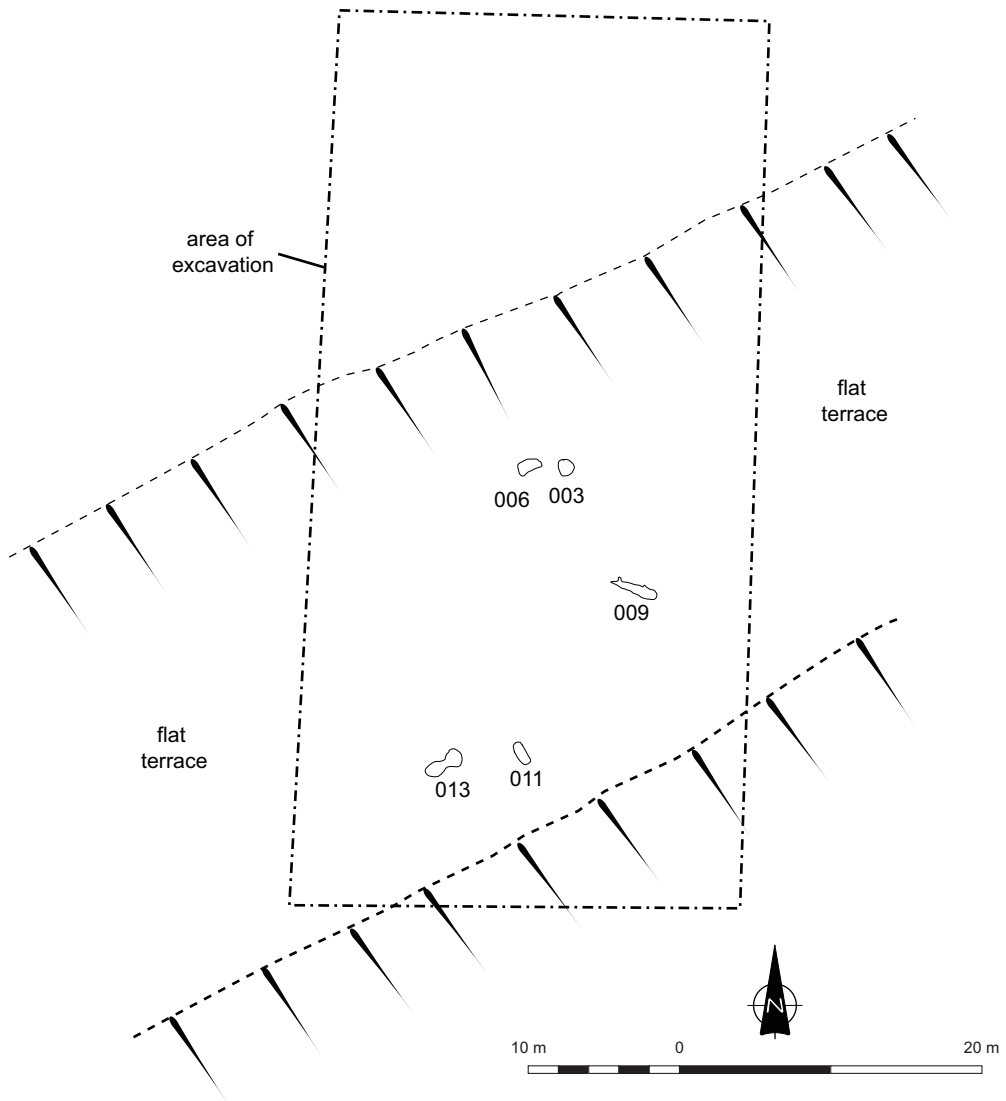


Fig. 2 Plan of prehistoric pits

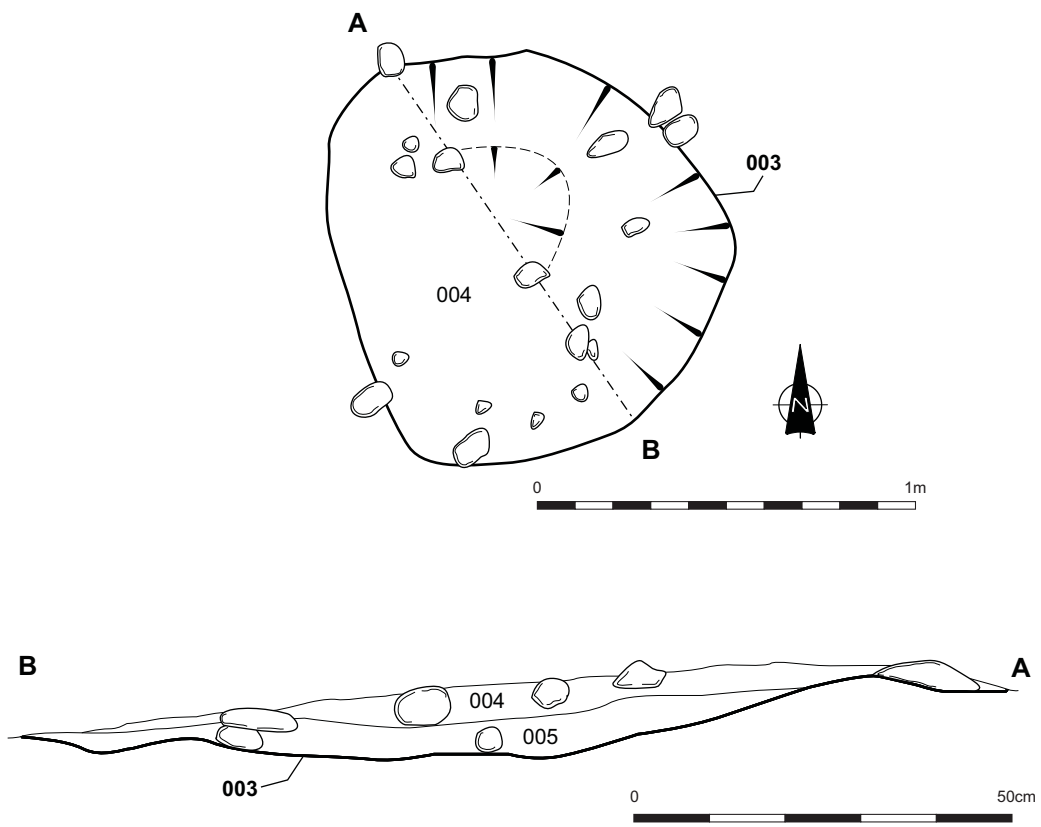


Fig. 3 Pit 003, plan and NE facing section

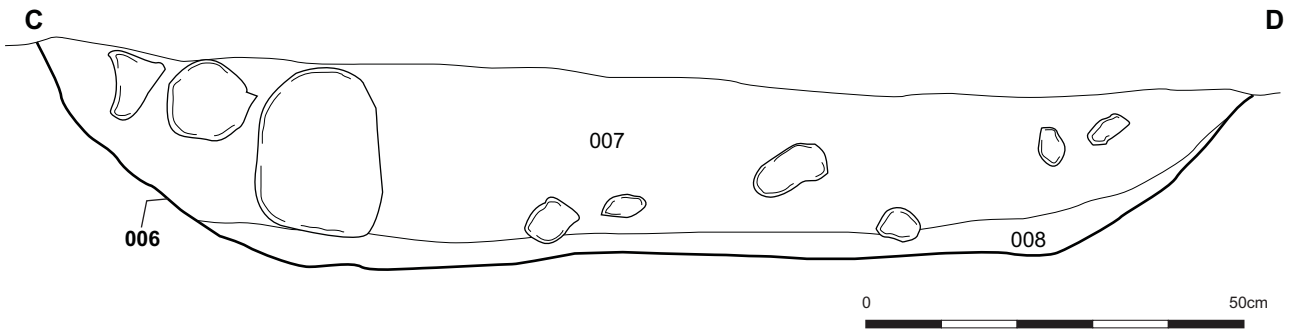
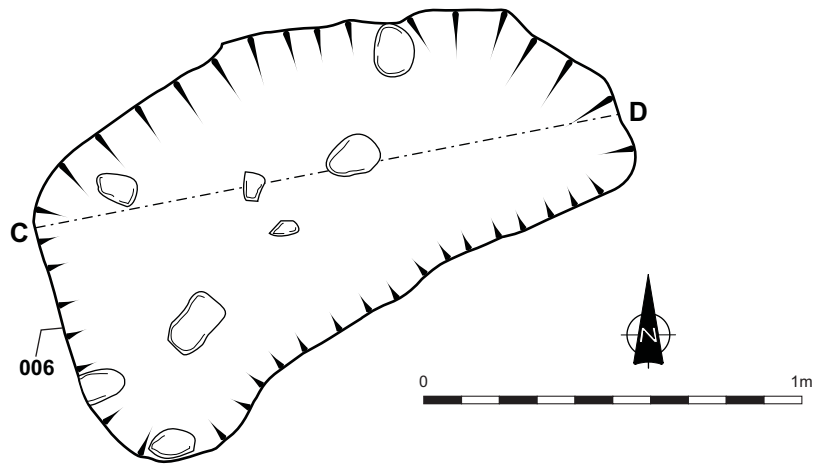


Fig. 4 Pit 006, plan and S facing section

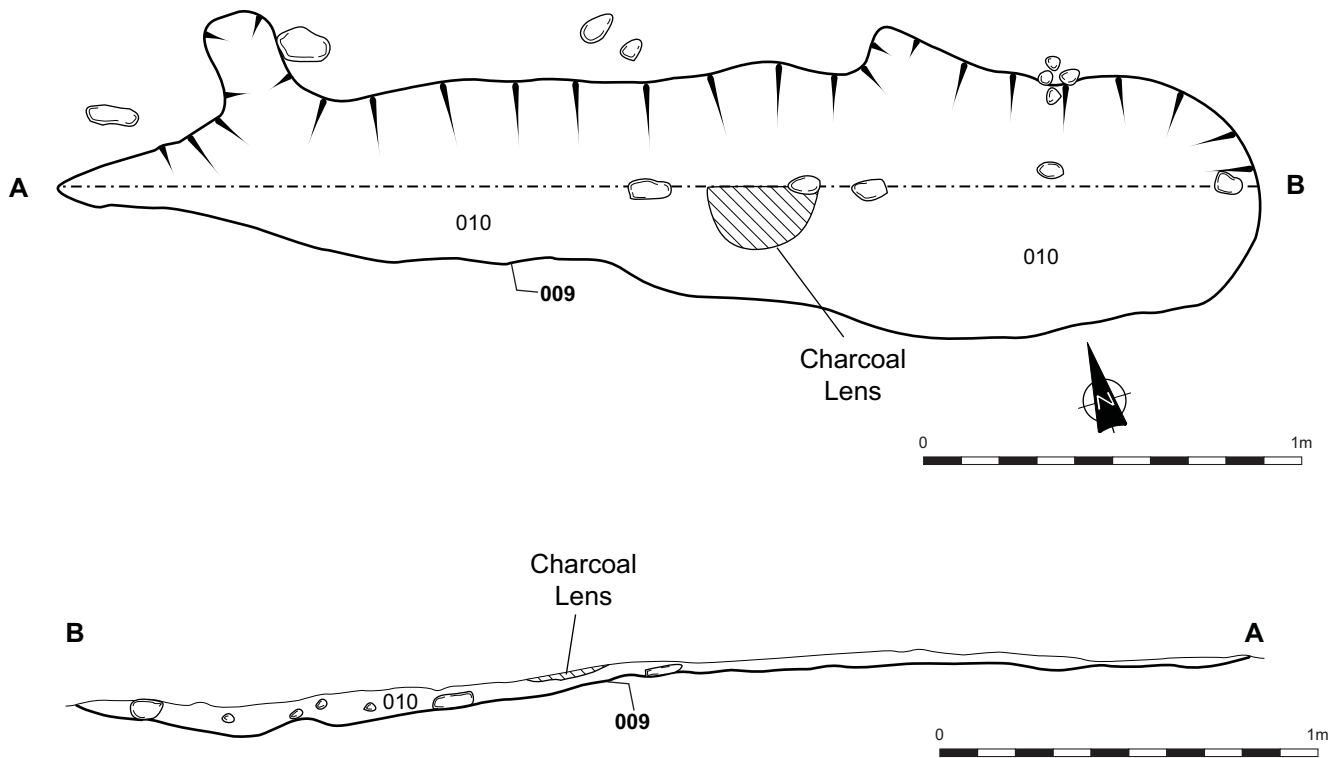


Fig. 5 Pit 009, plan and N facing section

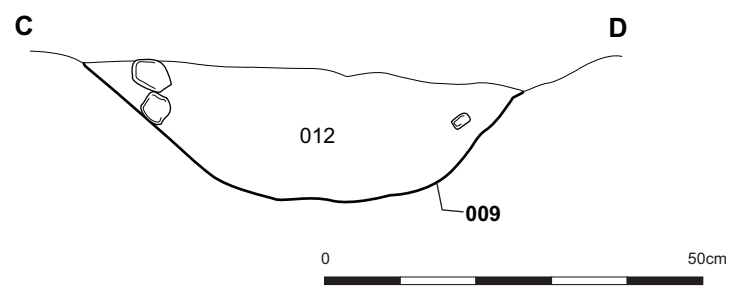
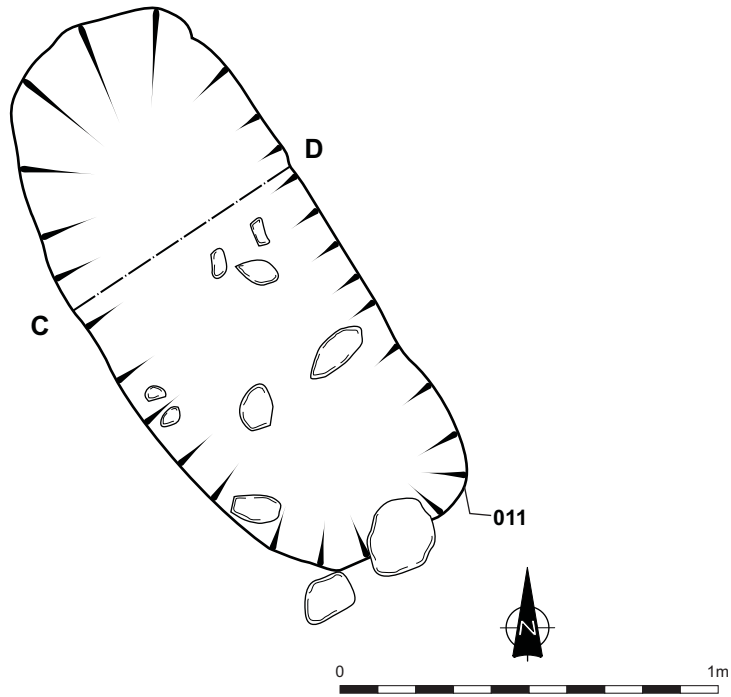


Fig. 6 Pit 011, plan and SE facing section

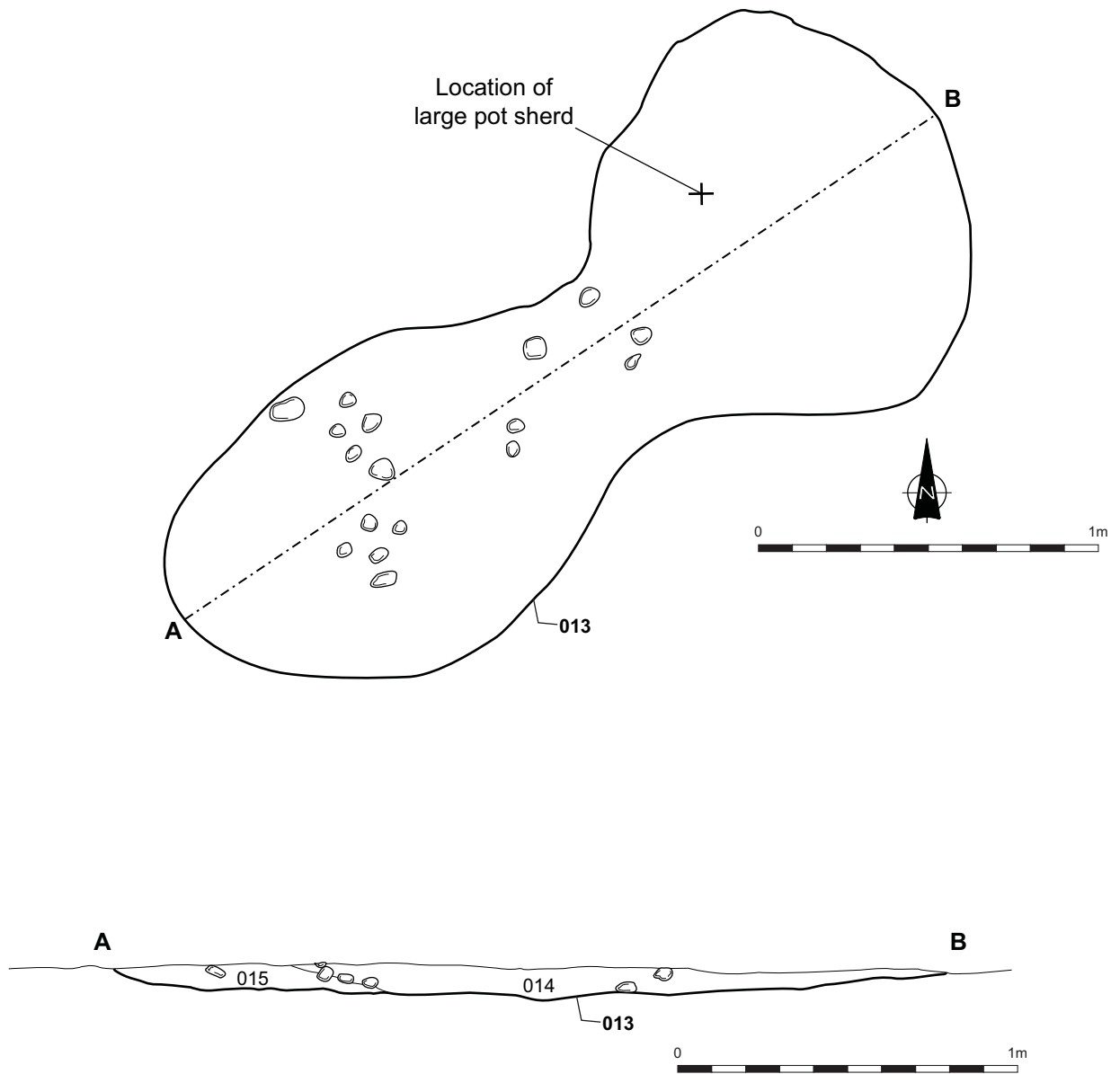


Fig. 7 Pit 013, plan and SE facing section

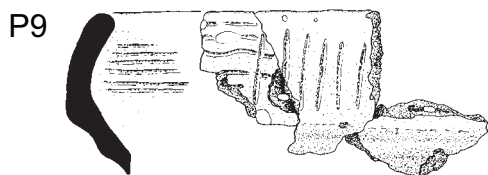
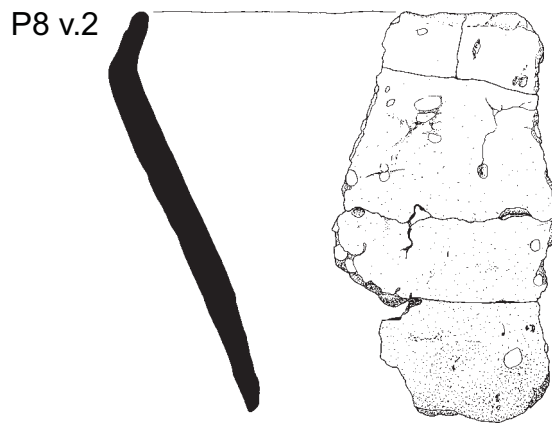
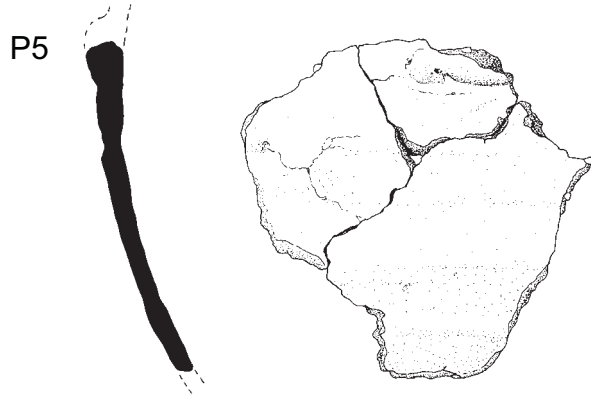


Fig. 8 Pottery