THE ARCTURUS MYGGBUKTA EXPEDITION NORTH-EAST GREENLAND AUGUST 2001

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT BY RAY WOOLMORE & JEAN STENICO

CHELTENHAM & BRUXELLES 2002

THE ARCTURUS MYGGBUKTA EXPEDITION, NORTH-EAST GREENLAND AUGUST 2001 LEADERS: NEVILLE AND KATHLEEN CARTWRIGHT

REPORTS, PHOTOGRAPHS, FIELD SKETCHES ON THE INUIT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES KNOWN AS MYGGBUKTA."A" AND "C", AND TWO OTHER NEARBY SITES WITH INUIT STRUCTURES

by

Ray Woolmore & Jean Stenico

Introduction

The expedition of thirteen persons was transported to Myggbukta, at the head of Mackenzie Bugt, from Mestersvig (having flown out from Akureyri, Iceland) in two separate flights by Twin Otter on 3 August 2001, and from Myggbukta, again on two flights, back to Mestersvig on 16 August 2001.

Among the objectives of the expedition were the recording of the flora and fauna of the Myggbukta area (Rod Corner, aided by David Shaw, prepared a report on the flora, comparing their 2001 records with 1900 (Gredin) records and 1929 and 1930 (Jacob Vaage) records) - and the recording, surveying and resurveying (Woolmore had surveyed the Myggbukta "C" site on the Erskine Expedition to Hold-with-Hope with Robert Burton in 1989) of the two main archaeological sites, Myggbukta "A" and "C", plus any other sites found in the general area. The site known as Myggbukta "B", some 18 kms to the north overlooking the southern end of Loch Fyne (briefly visited by Woolmore, Burton and the late Dr Hugh Lang in 1989) was not visited in 2001.

On this expedition, the archaeological survey and recording was undertaken by Woolmore and Jean Stenico. For both sites "A" and "C", surveys were undertaken, and plans produced, using Stenico's 360^o compass, his goniometer with 90^o sighting pins mounted on a pole, and his 20 metre measuring tape. (In 1989 Woolmore and Burton had used more "makeshift" survey methods for Site "C" ie measuring foot paces, a compass, a rule and a short measuring tape.) For the two other sites identified by Woolmore in 2001, recording was just by field sketches, compass, rule and photographs.

Unfortunately, the authors have been unable to obtain, or consult, other archaeological research covering the Myggbukta area. Robert David's "Survey of Eskimo sites from Mestersvig to Kuhn Island, NE Greenland" (Polar Record 31 (179): 389-398 (1995)), covering his visits from 1990 to 1994, significantly excludes the area, but presumably P V Glob's 1946 Gazetteer (quoted extensively by David), "Eskimo settlements in NE Greenland - Meddelelser om Gronland 144(6): 1-40", which has gathered together the results of Danish archaeological activities in the 1920s and 1930s, covers this area; and should have been consulted. D Mcl Johnson, the archaeologist on J M Wordie's 1926 Cambridge East Greenland Expedition, did, however, visit Mackenzie Bugt, and he

Section C is Woolmore's brief report, with photographs and field sketches, on the two additional sites he identified in the area, (i) the group of three (probably more) structures found on the northernmost of two isolated and prominent "roches-moutonees" in Badlanddal, about 6 kms WNW of Myggbukta Hut, and, (ii) a single isolated structure found on a terrace on the eastern side of the river, shown as "Huselv" on the Norwegian map in the Myggbukta Hut, about 4 km NNE of the Hut itself.

SECTION A Myggbukta Site 'A' by Jean Stenico

MYGGE BUGTEN SITE "A"

Description

The site lies at about 1 km East of the old Norwegian radio and weather station, Myggbukta, on the North side of Mackenzie Bugt.

The site is disposed on both sides of the ridge created by the seasonal river, so aptly named HUSELV (the river by the house) on the old Norwegian maps (1932) since the Western branch of the river runs close to the Norwegian station.

The river cuts deeply in the form of a gorge through a series of shelving morainic terraces. From the foot of the ridge a river delta has gradually developed and is extending further into the sea with fresh alluvial material.

Today, point "A" that lies close (12m) to the bifurcation of the present course of the Huselv is only 520m from the seashore.

While mapping the site, we inspected the old river bed(s) extending to the East of the present course and discovered in the flat but stony beginning of the delta some structures that are barely distinguishable from the accumulation of alluvial debris.

The ridge itself is exposed to erosion by the elements and is sparsely covered by grasses and Arctic willow, making it difficult to distinguish clearly what is man-made from the action of natural agents.

The morainic terraces, East of the "A" to "A1" line, instead, enjoy a rich soil coverage favouring grasses, sedge, rushes and woody creeping dwarf vegetation such as willow, Arctic birch and dryas. It is on this side of the ridge that we recorded most of the sunken structures.

Mapping

For the purposes of this mapping exercise we chose as our point of departure point "A" which has a three-satellite GPS reading, viz: Long 21°32'.3"W Lat 73°29'.5"N

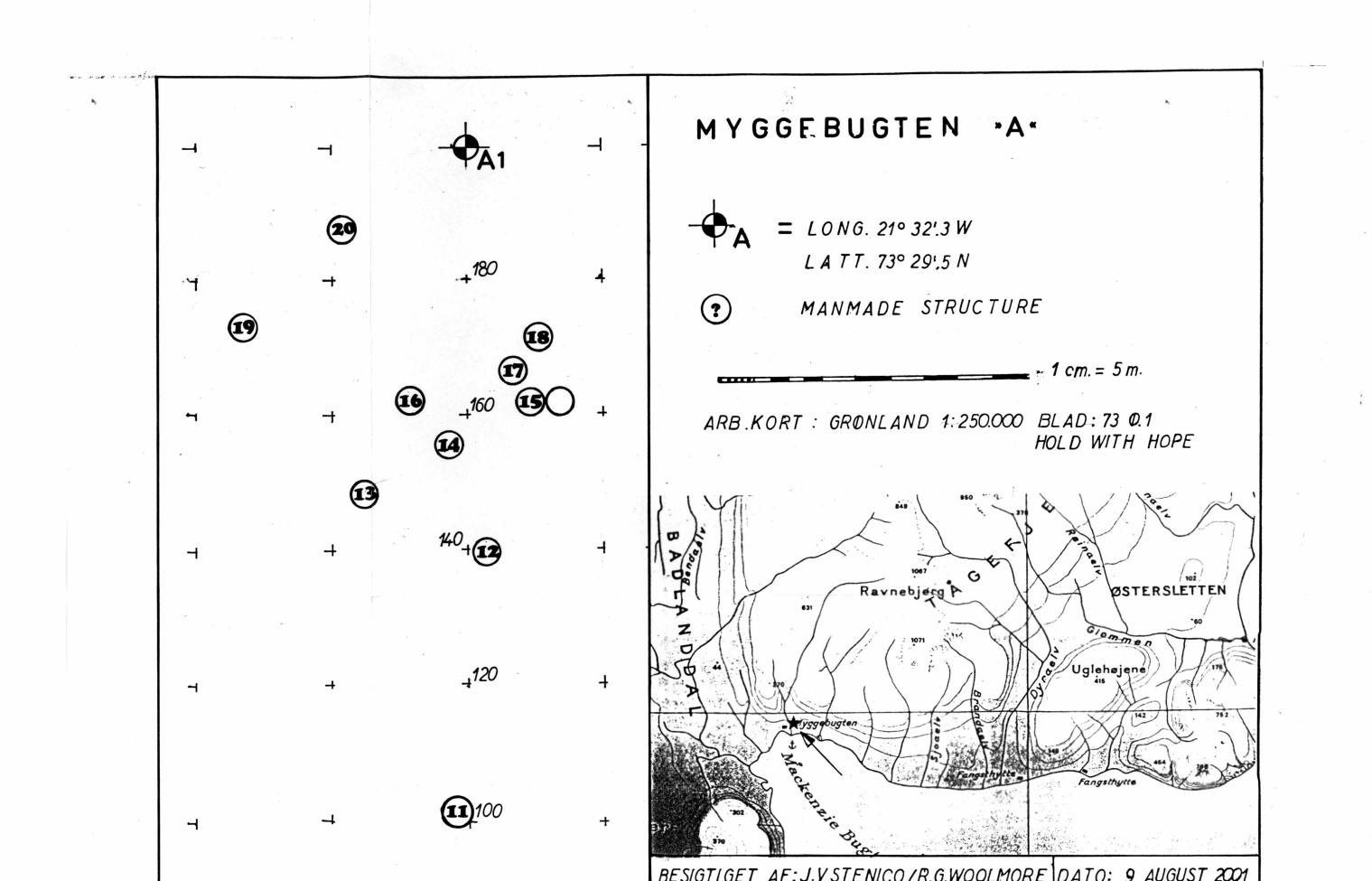
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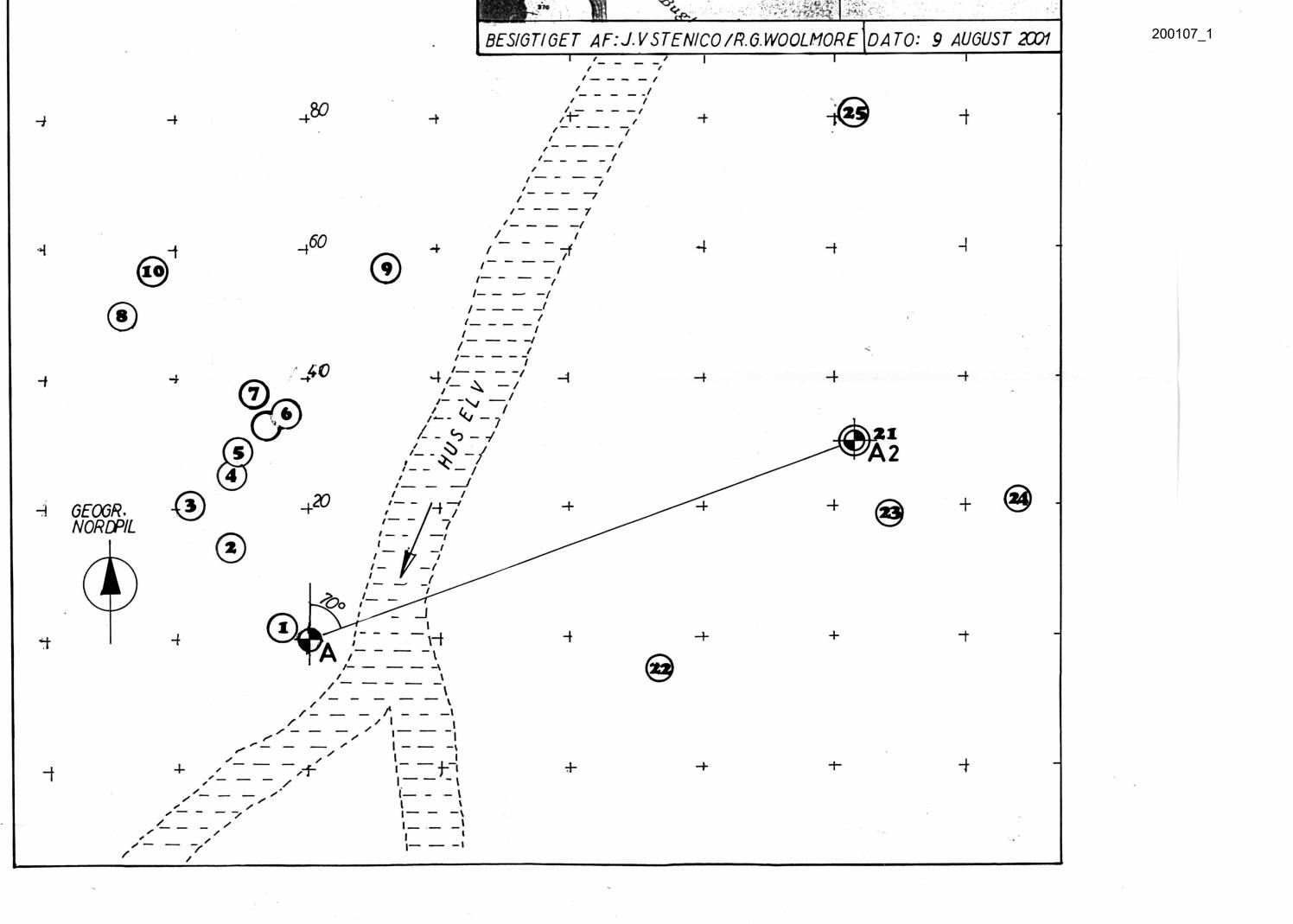
While surveying the site, we had the clear impression that this had already been the object of an investigation, whether by ethno-archaeological specialists or by amateur plunderers in search of Eskimo artefacts. Some of the sunken structures Nos 4, 5 and perhaps 6, appear to have been searched because some of the collapsed stones had been removed from the interior. This would have happened quite a few years ago, maybe during the permanent occupation of the nearby station. The grasses in fact would have had time to grow again and cover the stones of the original structures.

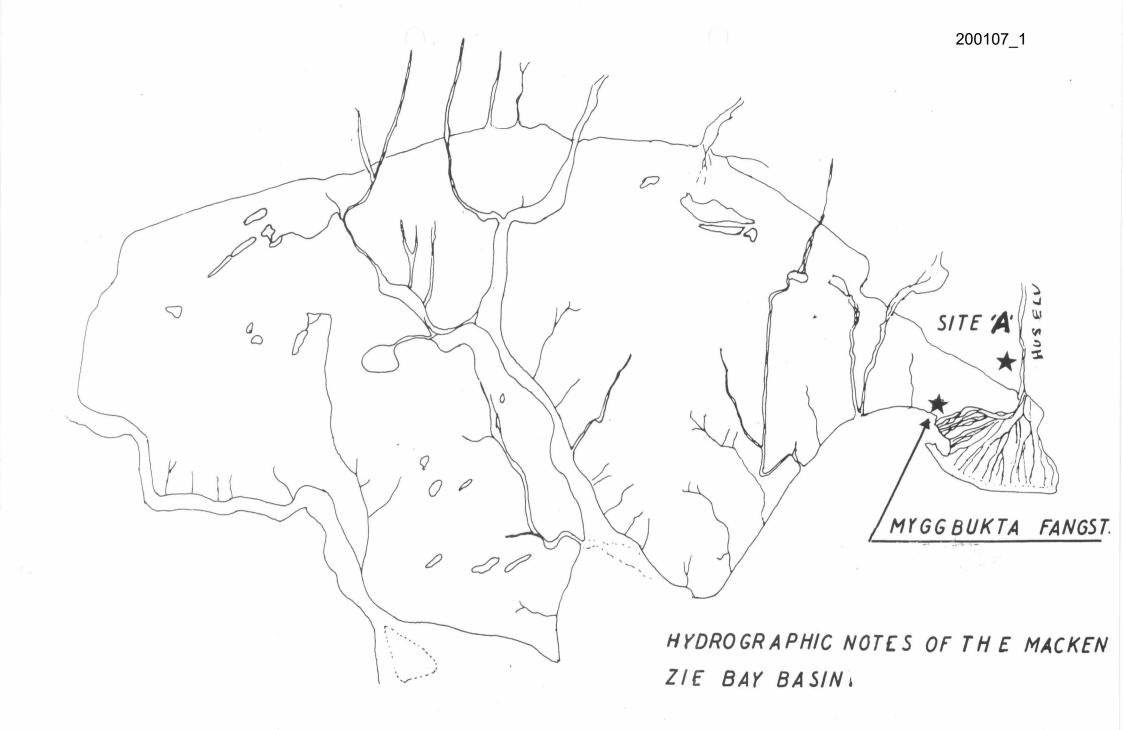
Three of the small structures Nos 18, 19, 20, while clearly man-made, do not have sufficient scattered stones around to indicate their use. Moreover, in structures Nos 19 and 20 the surface has recently been disturbed, whether by man or beast, taking away vegetation.

Another point worthy of note is the relative absence on the ridge of bones or cracked bones that could be expected in such a closely colonised settlement. On the other hand, on the West-facing, sheltered, slopes, grass and vegetation could conceal kitchen midden deposits. The only bones present, both on ridge and slopes, are recent musk-ox bones.

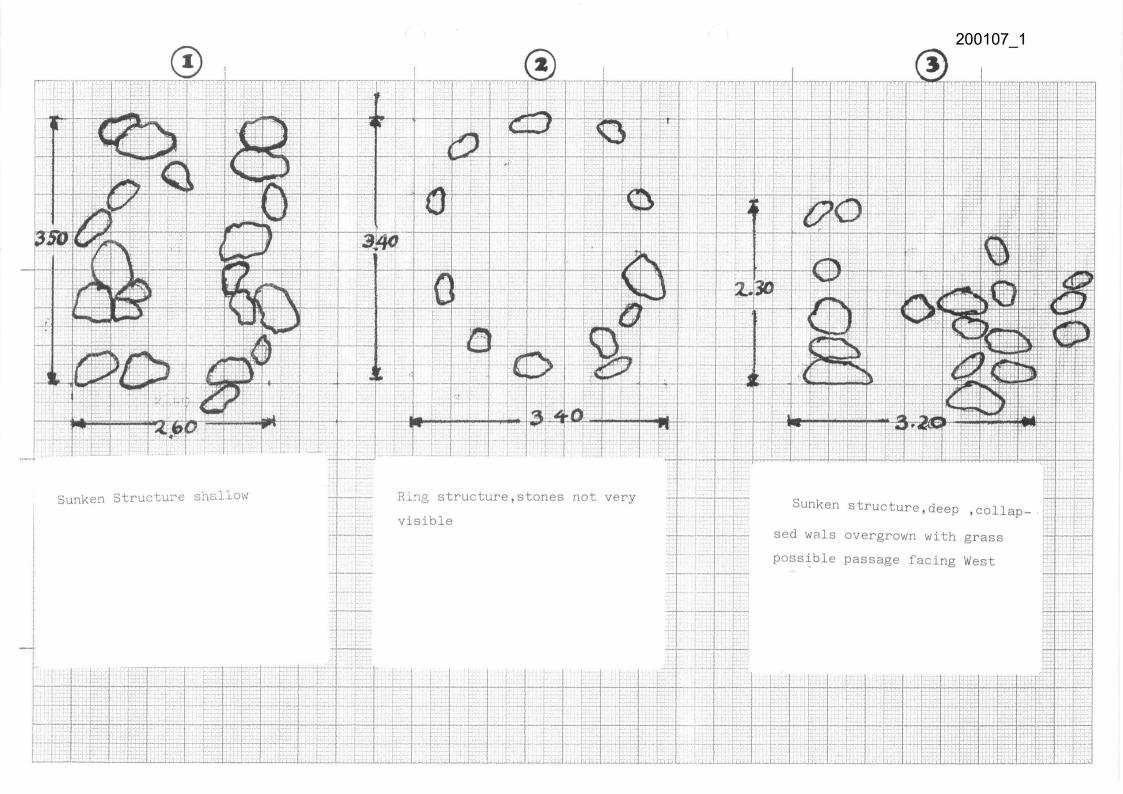
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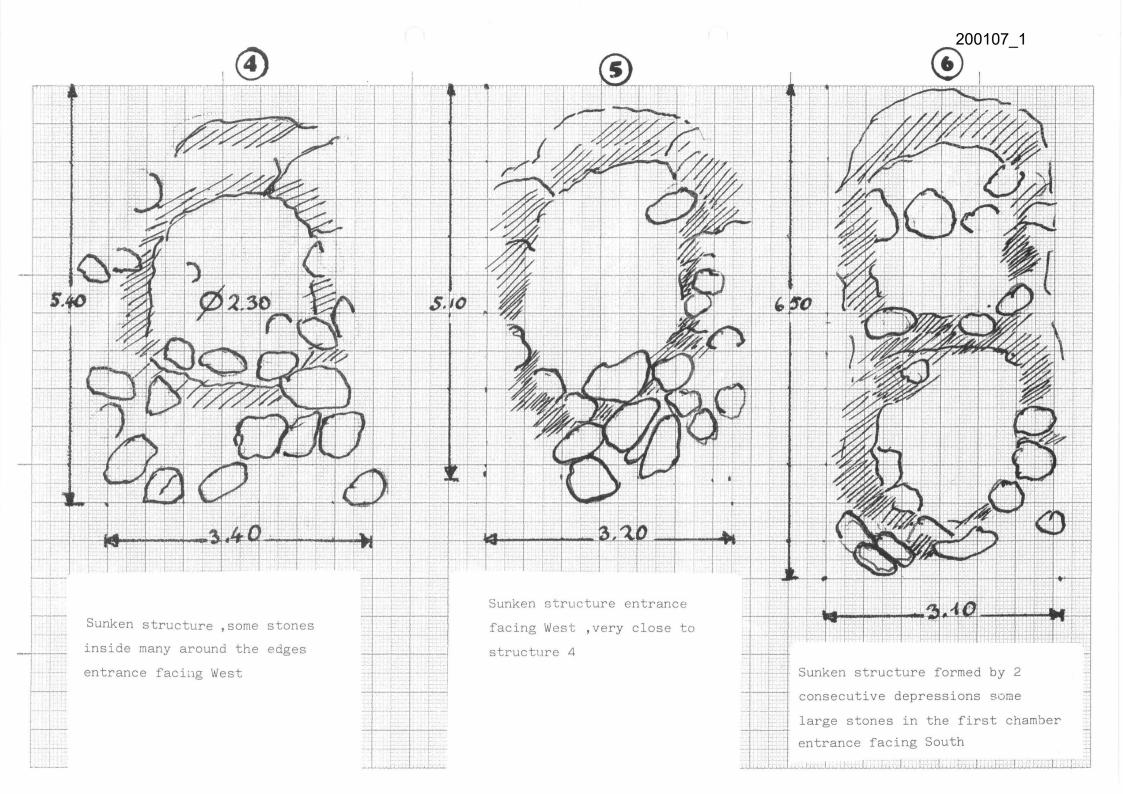


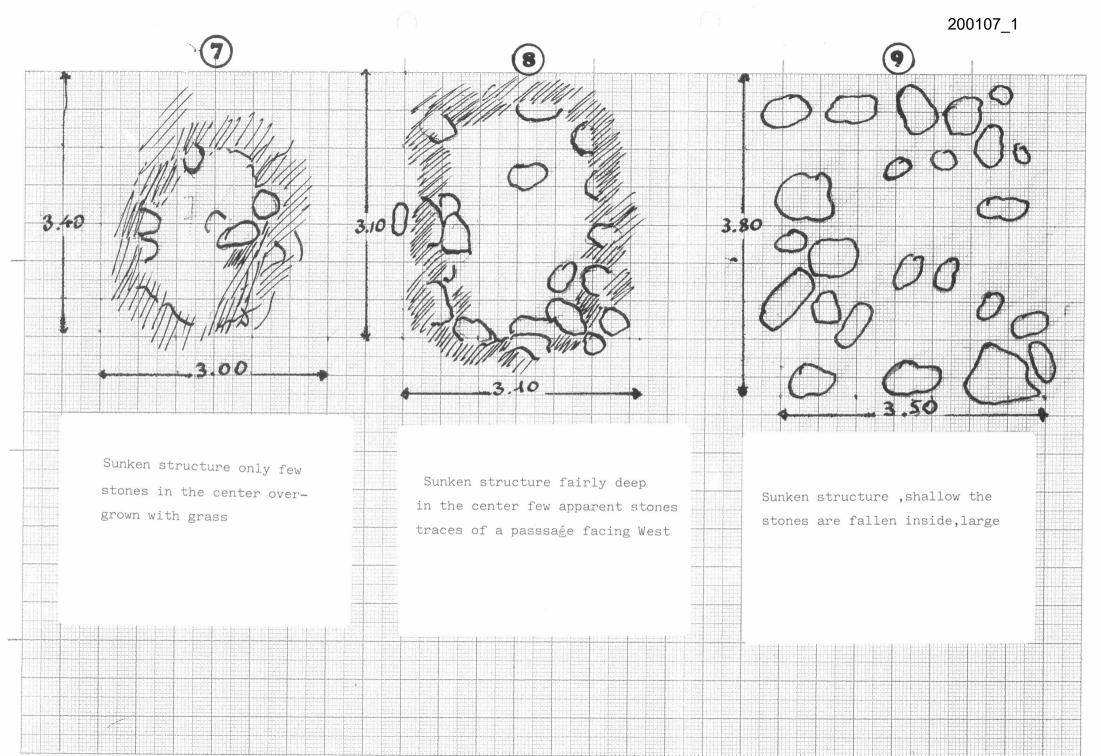


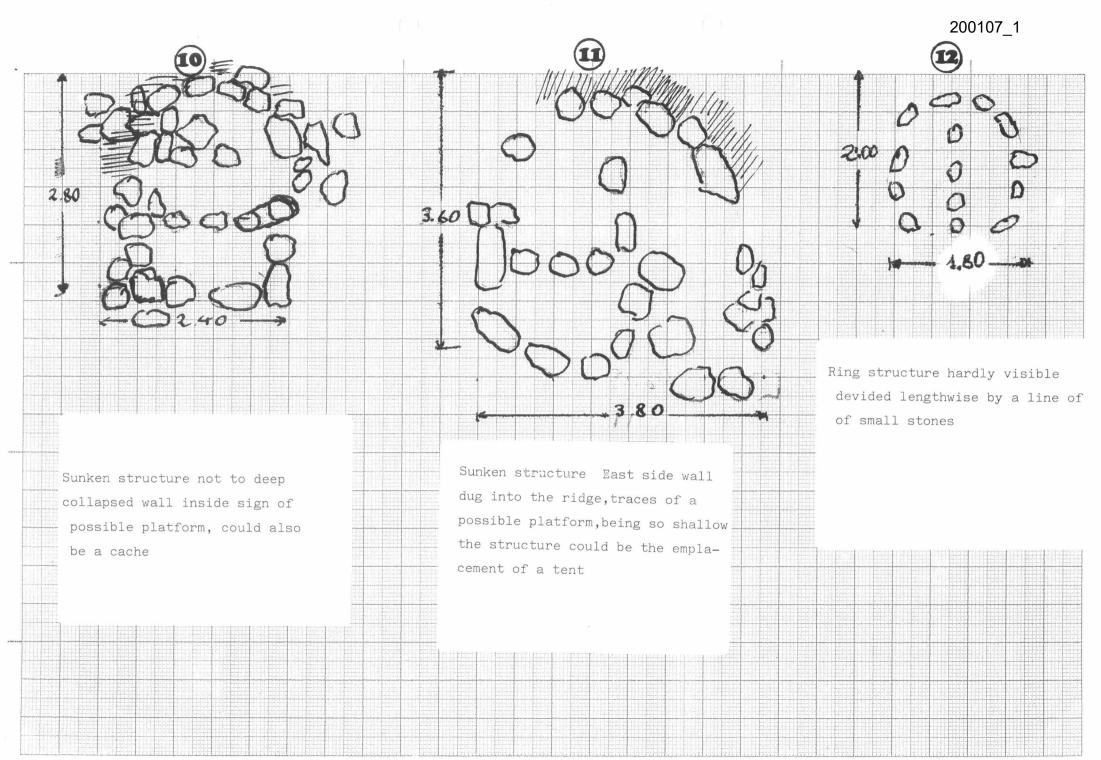


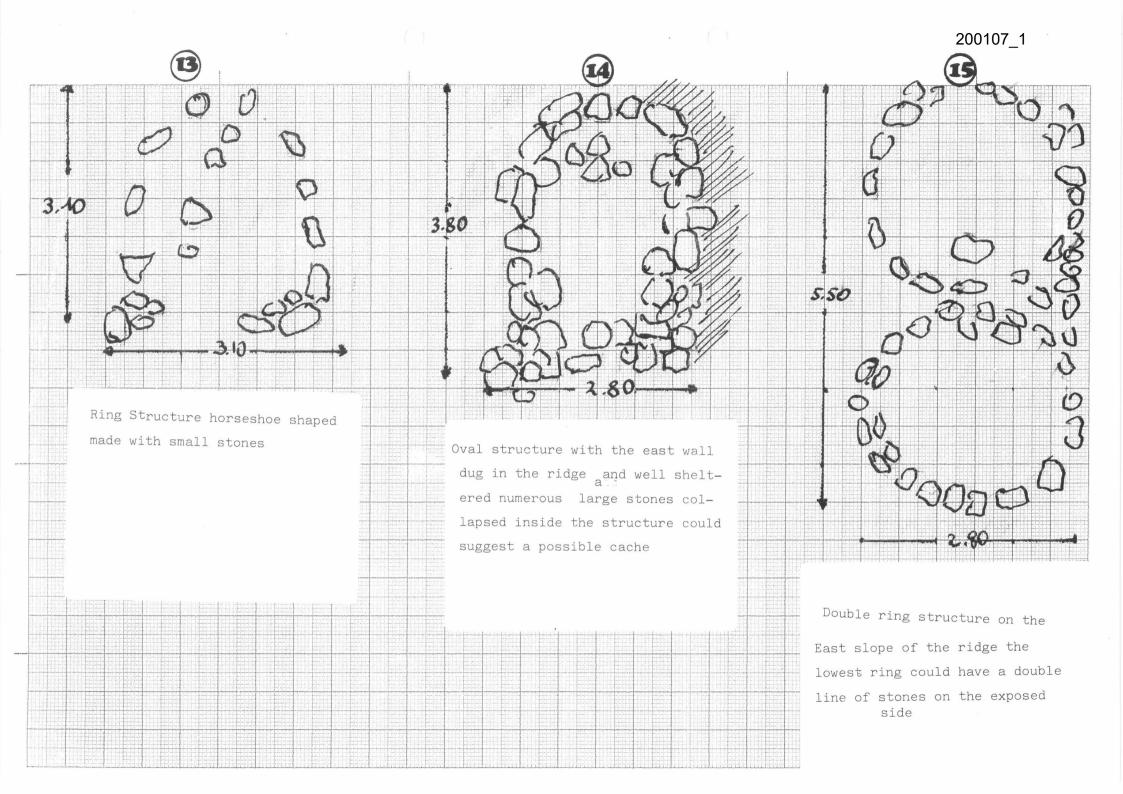
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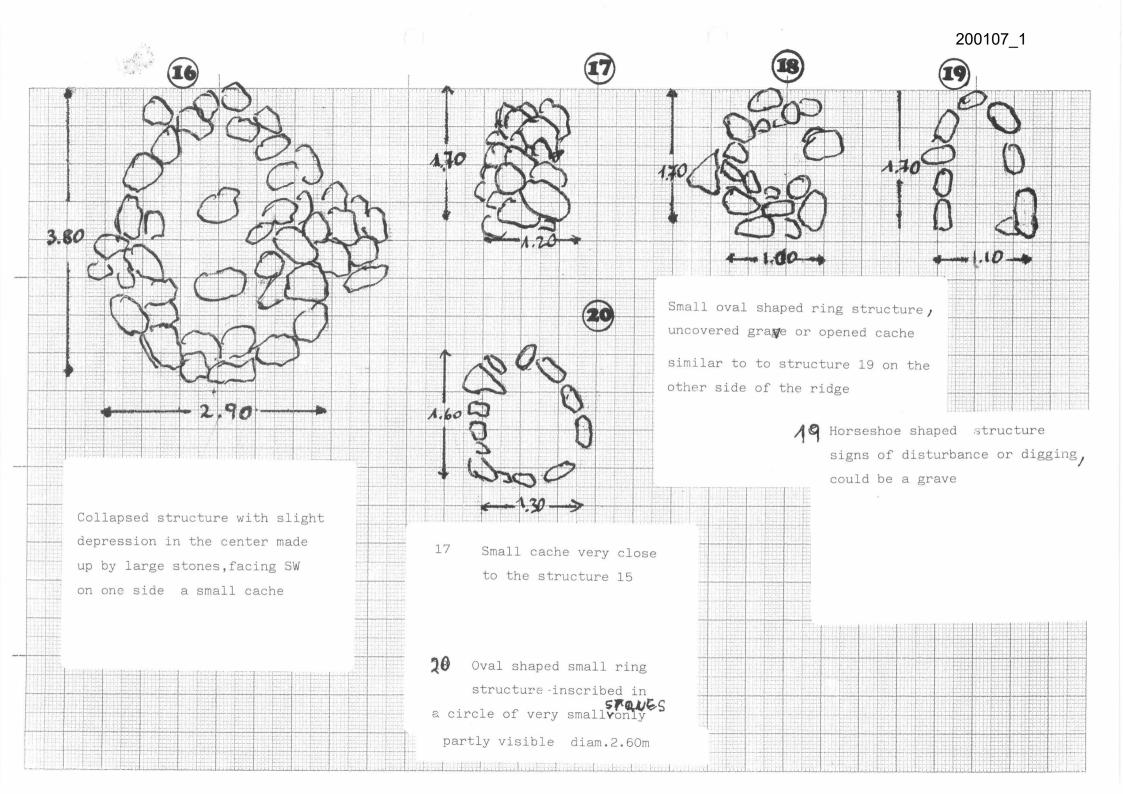


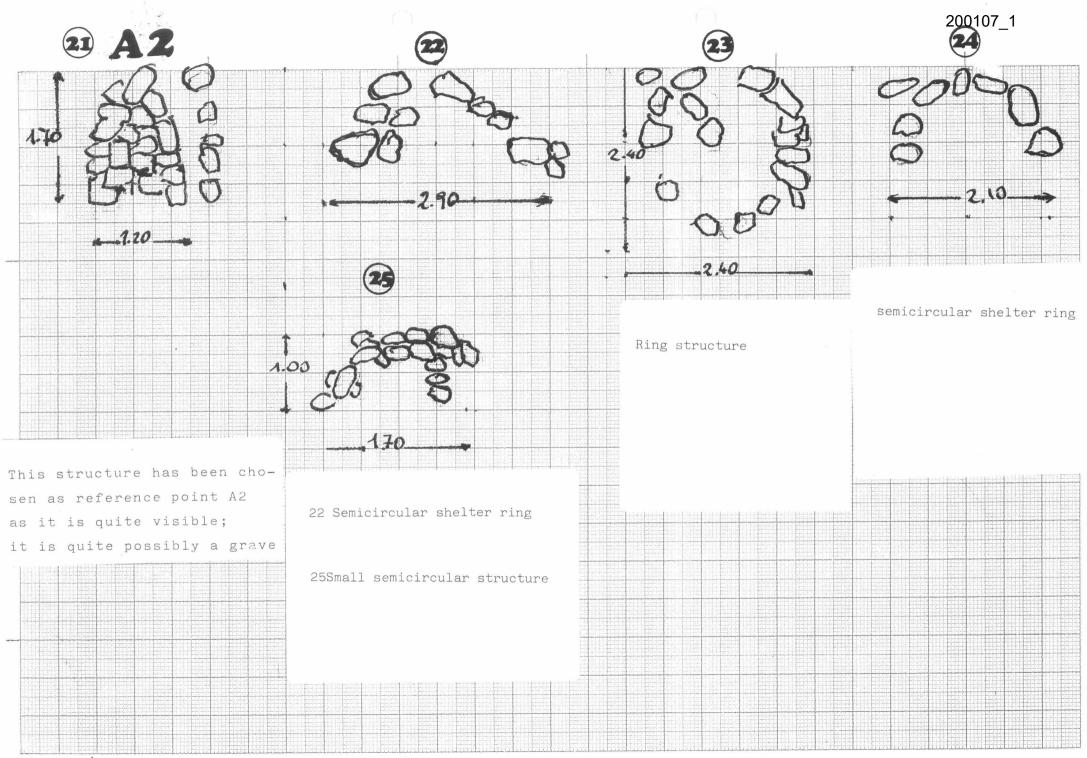






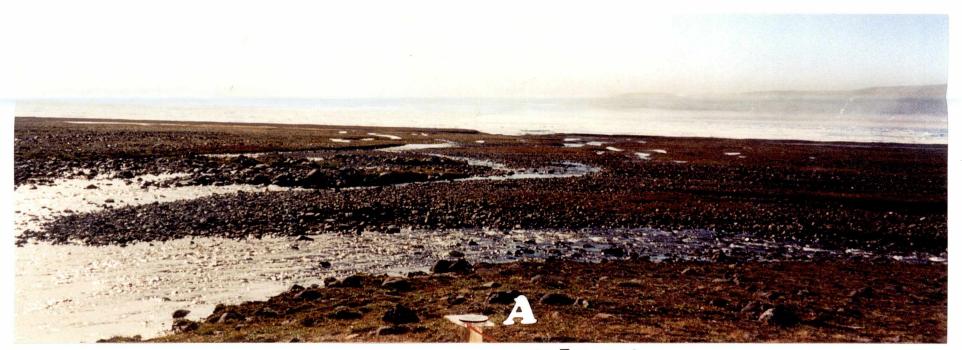






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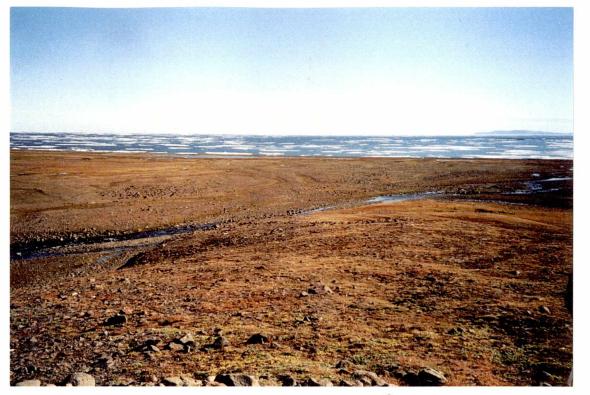




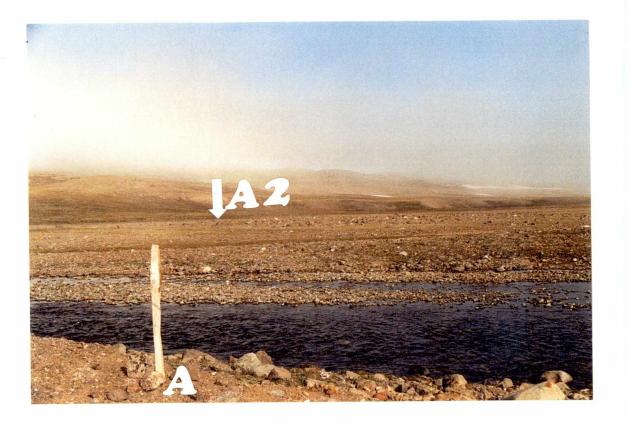
HUSELV'S DELTA



THE RIDGE



NORTH TO SOUTH







MYGGE BUGTEN

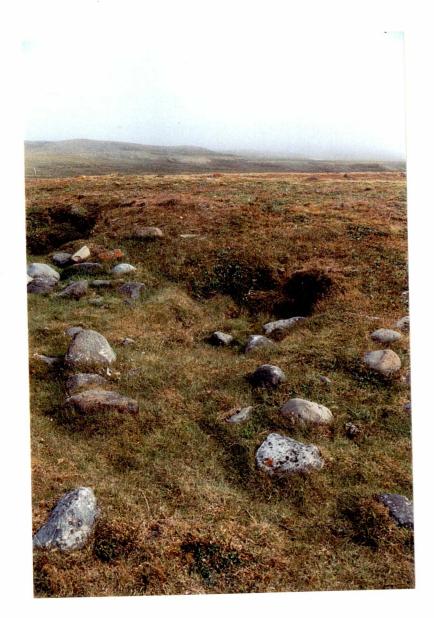
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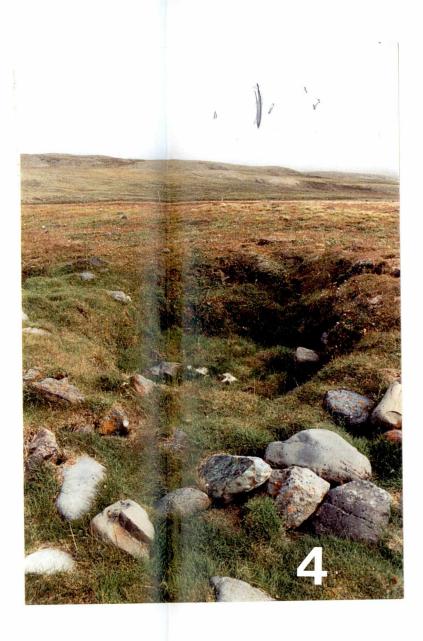






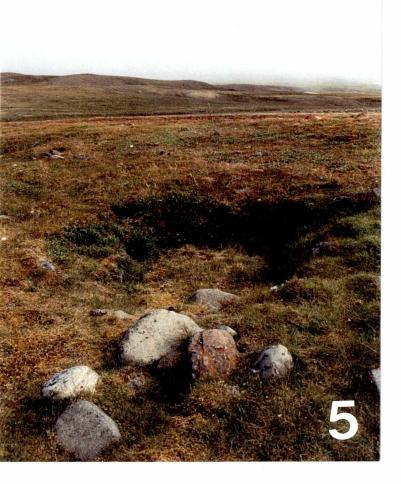






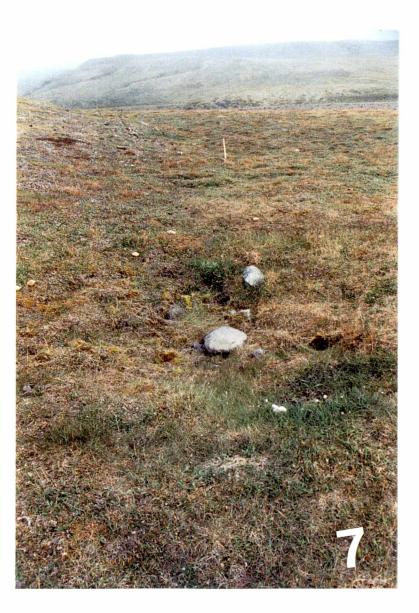


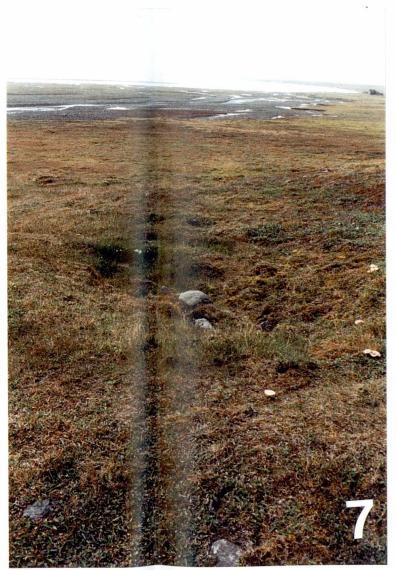


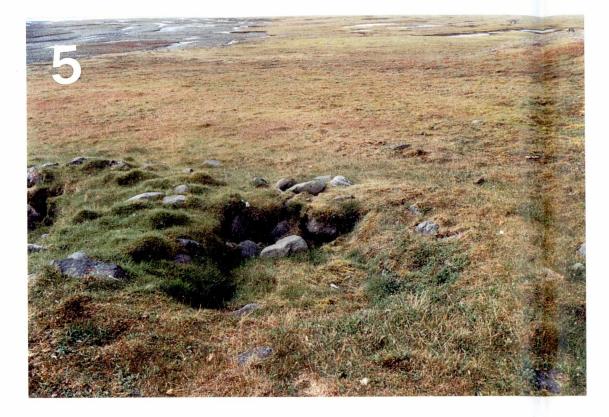








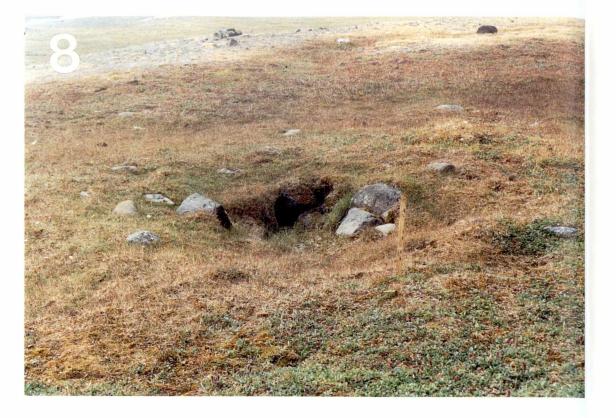








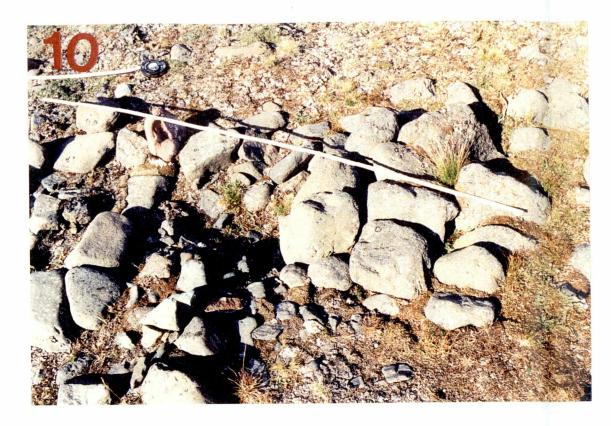


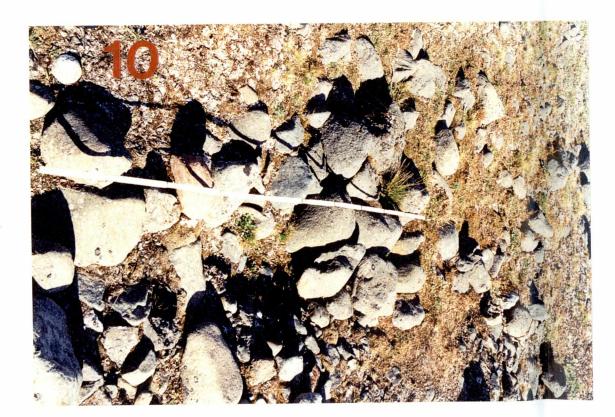








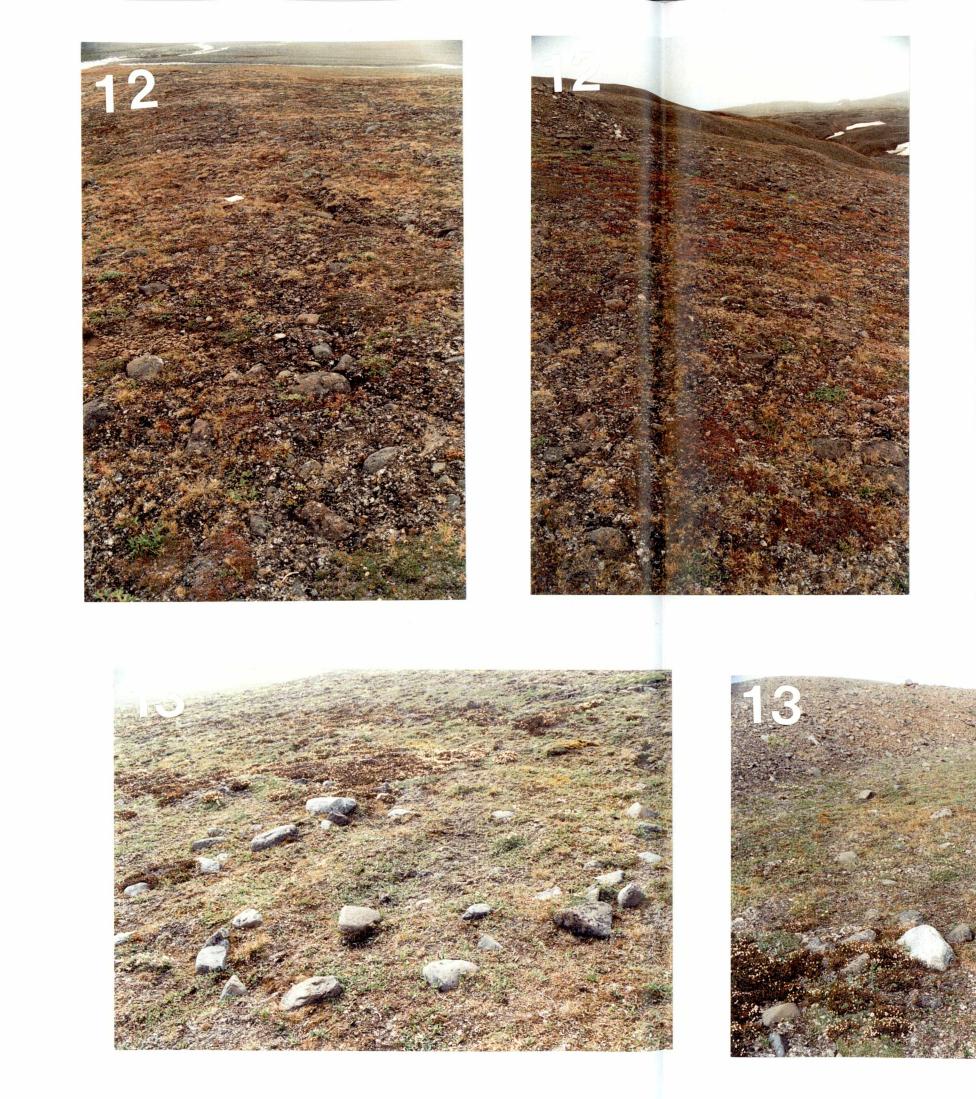








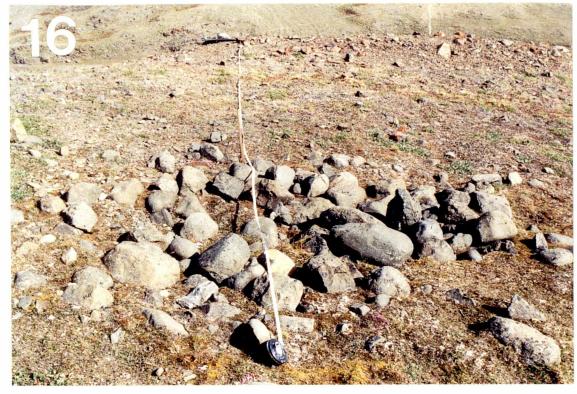




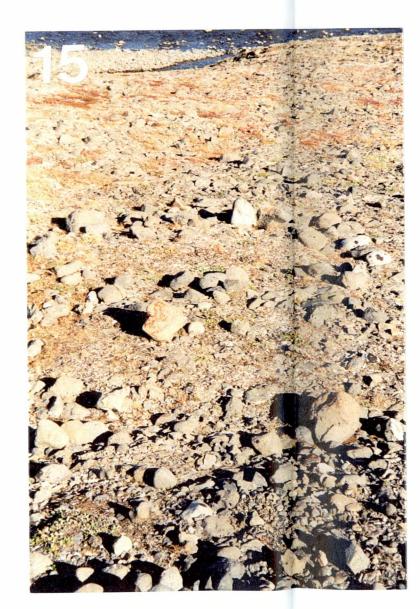


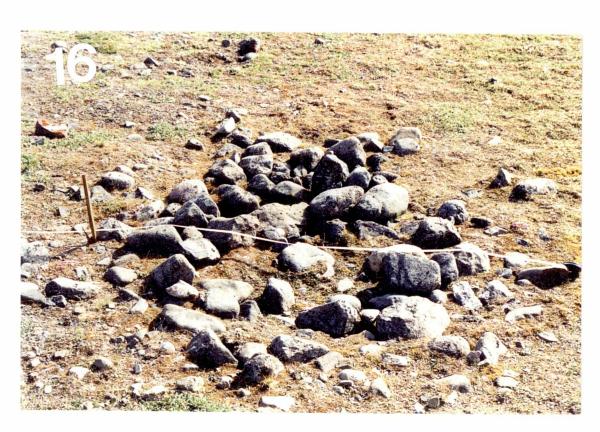








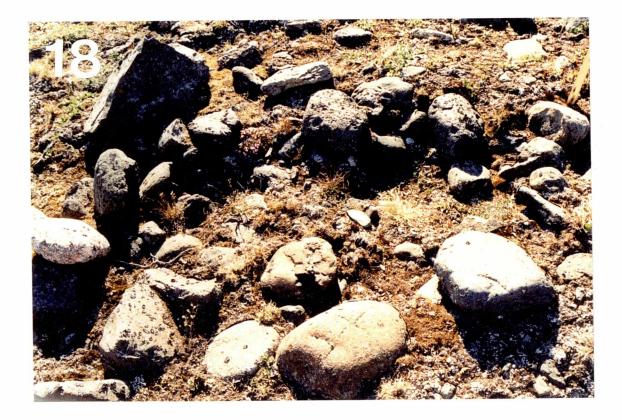






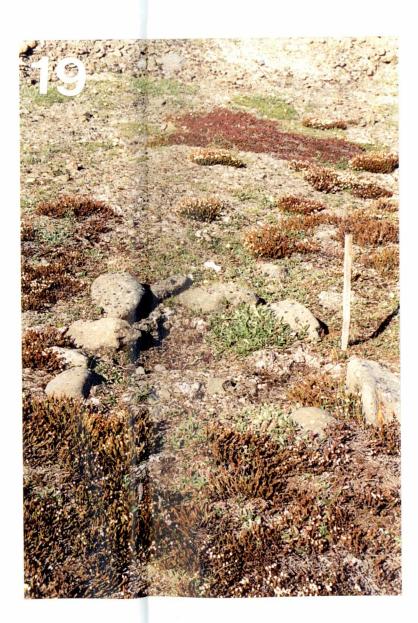




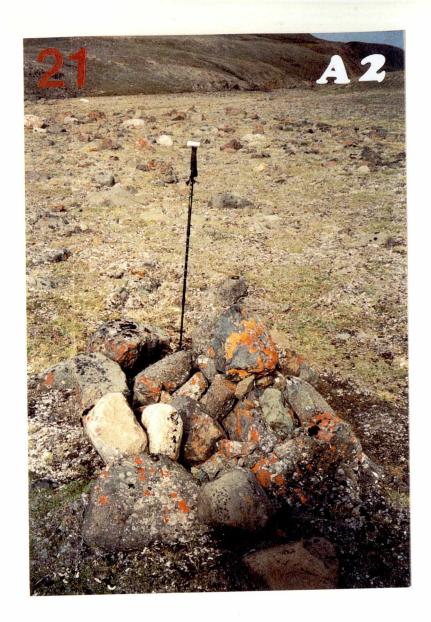


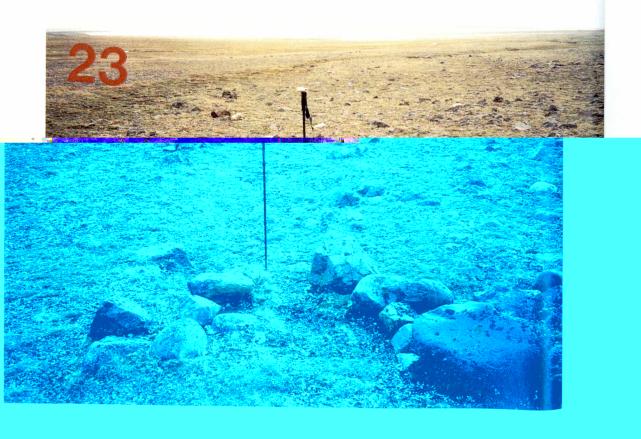




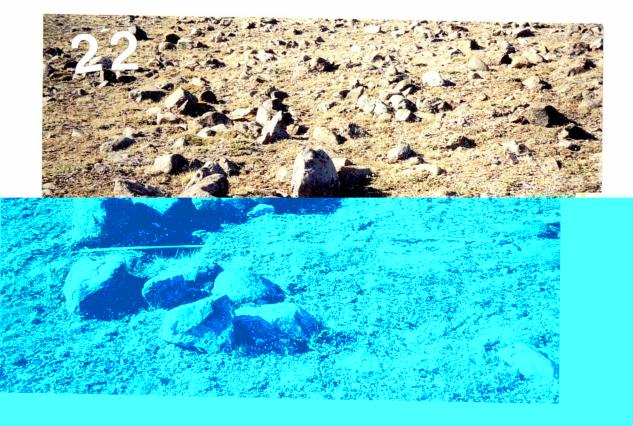


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SECTION B Myggbukta Site 'C' by Ray Woolmore

Myggbukta Site 'C'

Site Description. Stenico's Plan shows the location of the site only two kilometres eastward along Mackenzie Bugt (GPS - Lat 73^o 28.9'N, Long 21^o 26.1'W), rather than being a few kilometres further eastward as shown in Woolmore and Burton's 1989 plan (Annex B1). However, although the GPS, when combined with the Greenland 1:250,000 map, places Site 'C' literally on the delta of the Tree-elv river, this was clearly not the case on the ground, with the actual site being a kilometre or so eastward on raised, but rocky, terraces above the low deltaic plain.

In 1989 Woolmore described the site as being on "two levels of terrace"; he now acknowledges the existence of a third lower terrace on which Structure 17 (only 40 metres from the shore) was found in 2001. The middle terrace (the location for most structures, and just conceivably Johnson's 1926 "colony of eight" tent-rings), flat but strewn with rocks, and generally well-vegetated, was about 70 metres from the shore, which it overlooked to the south-west; while the upper terrace, containing only two structures, 13 and 14, was some 150 metres from the shore at a height of approximately 30 metres above sea level.

In 1989 Woolmore and Burton also identified Structures 15 and 16 around a large gabbro boulder or outcrop 150 metres to the ESE of Structure 1 on the middle terrace. These outlying structures were not shown on their plan (Annex B1), and similarly were not included on Stenico's plan. Indeed, in 2001, Woolmore estimated that the structures were 250 metres, not 150 metres, ESE of Structure 1. Also in 2001, Woolmore identified a new composite structure, Structure 20, based around a large rock outcrop some 80 metres due east of Structures 15 and 16. Like the aforementioned structures, this is not shown on Stenico's plan, but is described below.

There follows a description of each structure, as numbered on Stenico's Plan, with cross-references to Photographs and Drawings (from rough field sketches).

Structure 1 - Tent Ring (Photo 1 and Field Sketch (FS) Annex B1). This large, 4 metre diameter, ring, with mainly angular rocks lying on the surface, has a possible central aisle and is generally well vegetated.

Structure 1A - Small cache or enigmatic pile (Photo 2 and FS Annex B1). A small feature lying between Structures 1 and 2.

Structure 2 - Tent Ring (Photos 3 and 4, FS Annex B1). A very large ring (4.3m) with mainly angular rocks of mixed size, though more embedded than Structure 1. It also has a central aisle and is well vegetated.

Structure 3 - Tent Ring (Photo 5, FS Annex B1). The southernmost ring of a linked chain of three rings; 3.4m diameter, with mainly angular rocks of mixed size, fairly well-embedded, has well-vegetated floor, but with no central aisle.

Structure 4 - Tent Ring (Photo 6, FS Annex B1). The middle, and largest (4.1m) ring, in the chain of three; like the other rings in the chain, has angular rocks of mixed size, well-embedded and has well-vegetated floor, and no central aisle.

Structure 5 - Tent Ring (Photo 7, FS Annex B1), northernmost ring of the linked chain, and like the other two rings, has well-embedded angular rocks of mixed size, with a well vegetated floor and no central aisle.

Structure 6 - Tent Ring (Photos 8, 9, 10, 11, FS Annex B1). The most visible, largest, (4.9m) and striking of all the rings, with angular rocks of mixed size, which although wellembedded, stood up some 15 cm to 25cm above the floor which was well-vegetated and had no trace of a central aisle.

Structure 7 - Tent Ring (Photo 12, FS Annex B1). This 3.2 metre diameter ring, with mixed size angular rocks, 20 cm to 25 cm above the surface and well-embedded, has a vegetated floor with a well-embedded central aisle (probable?).

Structure 8 - Tent Ring (Photo 13, FS Annex B1). A 4 metre diameter ring of mixedshape rocks, 20cm to 25cm above surface, but less well-embedded. It has a wellvegetated floor but no central aisle. There are, however, signs of an inner ring.

Structure 9 - Tent Ring (Photo 13, FS Annex B1). This 3.8m diameter ring of mixed shape, often angular, rocks up to 25 cm above the surface has both a suggestion of a central aisle and an inner ring. Generally the rocks are less well-embedded, while the floor is well-vegetated.

Also within the general grouping of Structures 6-9, but only identified in 2001, is another similar tent ring, 10 metres west of Structure 6, described as Structure 18 below and a small double shelter, 15 metres west of Structure 5, described as Structure 19 below.

Structure 18 (Photos 26 and 27, Drawing 3). A 4 metre diameter ring, with mixed size rocks, 10cm to 30cm above the surface. It also has a suggestion of both a double ring and central aisle.

Structure 19 - Double shelter (Photo 28, Drawing 4). Like Structure 18, this small structure (lying 15 metres west of Structure 5), was not identified until 2001. It consists of what could be small D-ring shelters, found on either side of a large 60cm high rock outcrop with a N-S axis. The shelter on the eastern side is 50cm to 90cm wide by 110cm long, and has a willow vegetated flat floor. Some of the ring boulders are up to 20cm high. On the western side of the outcrop is a similar D-ring shelter, slightly smaller, 40cm

wide by 70cm long, with ring boulders up to 30cm high. Clearly an enigmatic structure, but linked to the main middle terrace grouping of tent-rings.

Structure 17 - Tent Ring (Photos 24-25, Drawing 2). This 4 metre diameter ring was only identified in 2001, on a separate lower terrace, much nearer the shore, 30 metres west of Structure 9. Its 15cm to 30cm wide square shaped rocks are so well-embedded that they stand virtually at ground level. This ring was the only feature found on this lower terrace so near to the shore (40 metres away from the tidal strand). Its almost completely embedded nature makes it comparable to only one of the structures on the middle terrace, Structure 12, which is itself well removed from the main group of rings.

Structure 10 - Sunken dwelling, (Photos 15, 16 and 17, FS Annex B1). The only sunken dwelling found at this site is built into the northern end of the middle terrace. Andreasen believed this was a "Thule" Culture winter house. The earth hollow of the house is approximately 2.9 metres in diameter. Its remnant walls, 35cm to 60cm high, on its southern entrance side are comprised of mainly large blocks. There are also wall remnants in front of the southern entrance, and immediately to the south-west, and these are comprised of large angular blocks 15cm to 30cm in diameter.

Structure 11 - Cache or enigmatic structure (Photo 18, FS Annex B1). A simple pile of mainly small, but squarish blocks (15cm diameter) over larger blocks. The structure measures 1.6m N-S, and is 5 metres to the west of the sunken dwelling.

Structure 12 - Tent Ring (Photo 19, FS Annex B1). This very well-embedded ring of sunken rocks is 3.6m diameter, and, like the other very "sunken" ring (Structure 17) is well-removed from the main group of rings on the middle terrace (20 metres from Structure 9). It is, however, located on the middle terrace, while Structure 17 is on the terrace below. This is also the ring which, in 1989, Claus Andreasen found "difficult" to interpret from the Woolmore/Burton Report (Annex B1).

Structure 13 - enigmatic "horseshoe" structure? (Photo 20, FS Annex B1). A

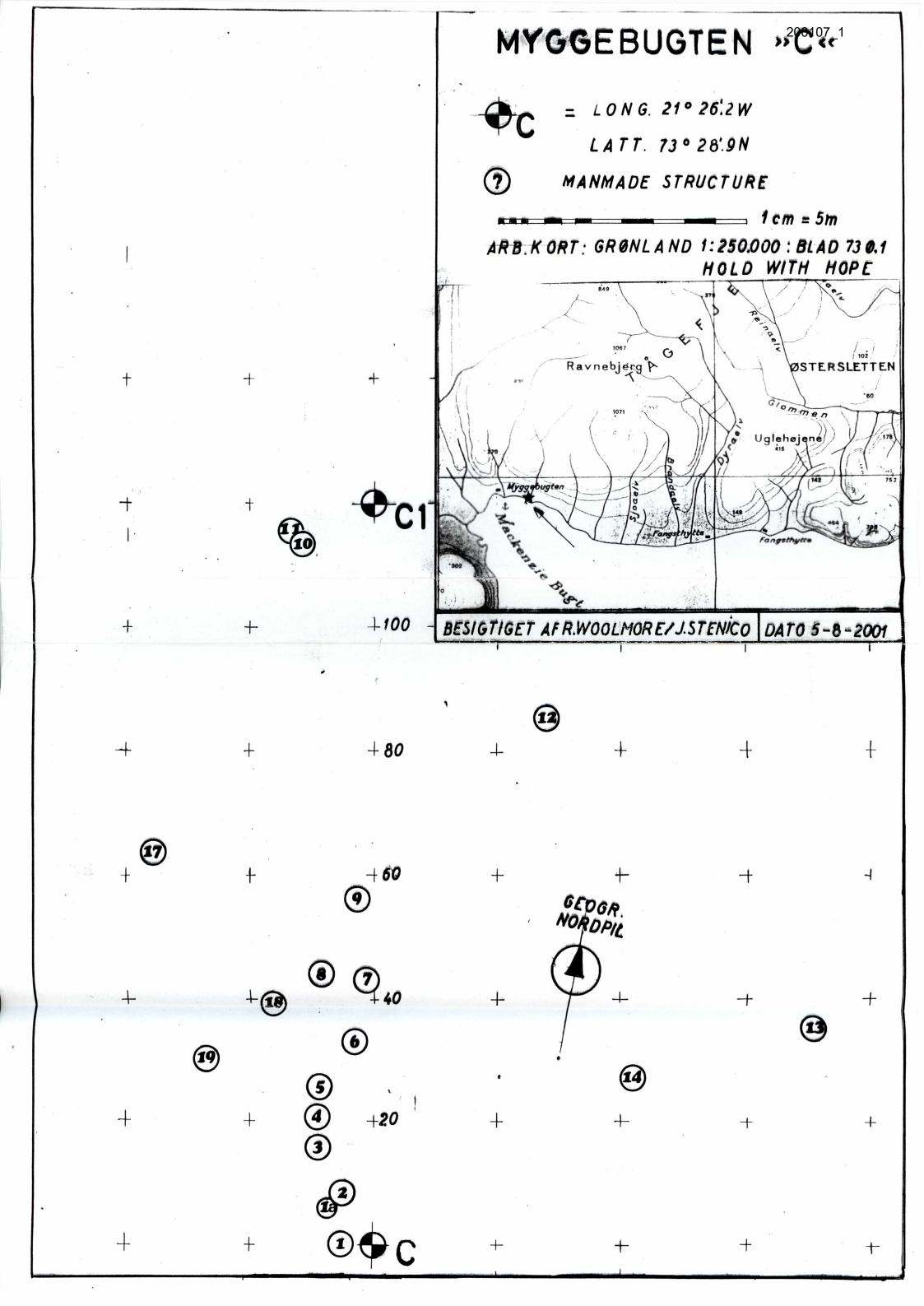
"Horseshoe" structure (2.6 metres diameter) of side walls made-up of lower, wellembedded large blocks (up to 30cm diameter) topped by smaller angular blocks (up to 15cm diameter). Its floor is well-vegetated, and has an internal structure of three large boulders, possibly a hearth (though it could just be boulders fallen from the side walls!?). Located on a third, higher terrace, over 70 metres E of the main grouping of rings on the middle terrace, it is clearly linked in function to the similar nearby "horseshoe" Structure 14.

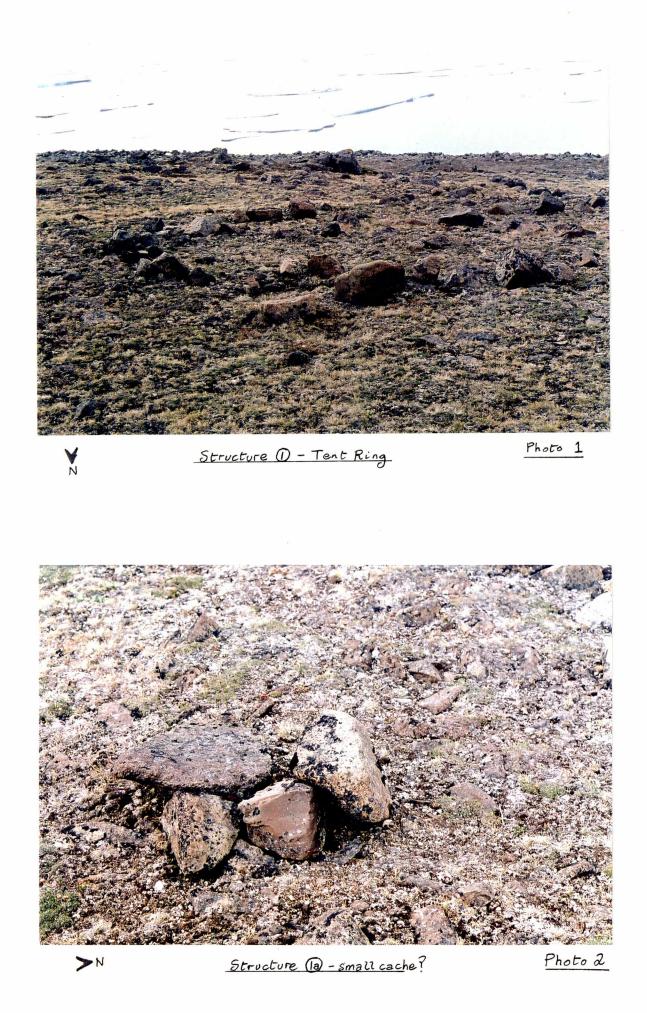
Structure 14 - "horseshoe" structure (Photo 21, FS Annex B1). Another enigmatic "horseshoe" of side walls, which are much higher on their SE side, but elsewhere almost constitute a 2.6 metre ring, with a well-vegetated floor. Andreasen found the interpretation of this structure "tricky", but wondered whether it could be either the remnant of a house or a tent-ring.

Structure 15 -D Ring Shelter (Photo 22, FS Annex B1) Andreasen believed that this feature was most probably a typical shelter, most likely of Thule Culture. It is some 250m ESE of the main middle terrace grouping of rings, and like Structure 16 lies under a large gabbro boulder or outcrop. The D ring is 1.2m wide and 2m long, and is clearly linked to Structure 16, round the corner (NE) of the large gabbro boulder.

Structure 16 - Shelter/cache (Photo 23, FS Annex B1). This structure is more enigmatic than Structure 15, and while it could be a shelter, it could be a remnant cache, with large angular rocks scattered under the NE face of the large gabbro boulder.

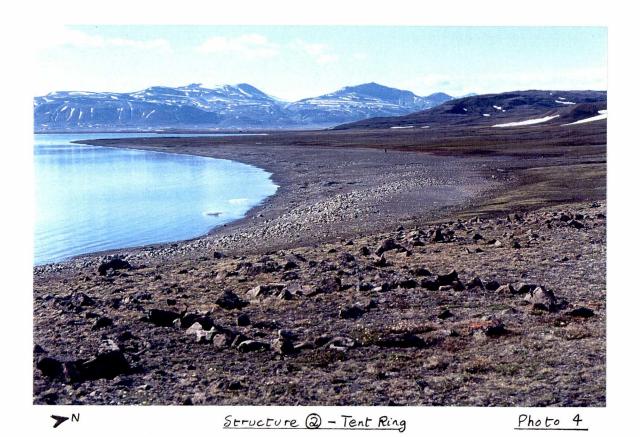
Structure 20 - Tent ring and shelter (Photo 29; Drawing 1). An interesting composite feature, 80 metres due east of Structures 15 and 16, and only identified in 2001. It lies on the eastern side of a large 90cm high and 4m wide rock outcrop. Drawing 1 shows an enigmatic structure, with a large ring (5m diameter N-S) made up of mainly large embedded rocks, including one very large rock outcrop 40cm high and 160m long. In the NE corner of the possible ring is a possible store or fireplace. The floor is well-vegetated - perhaps the whole structure could be a very palatial D-ring shelter based on the large 90cm rock outcrop?





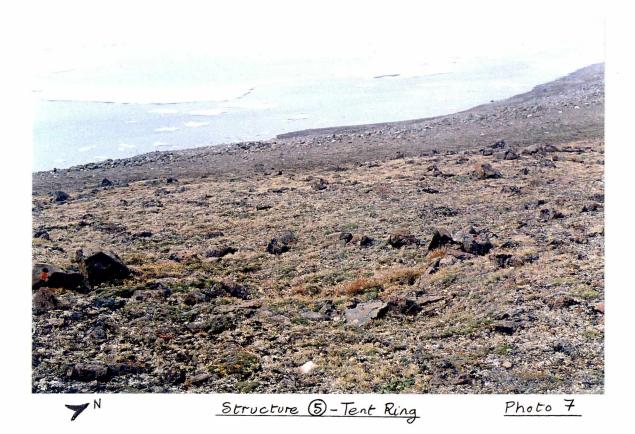


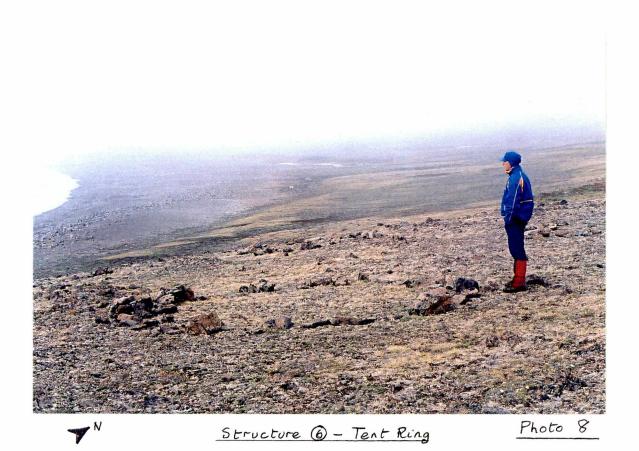
Structure 2 - Tent Ring Photo 3



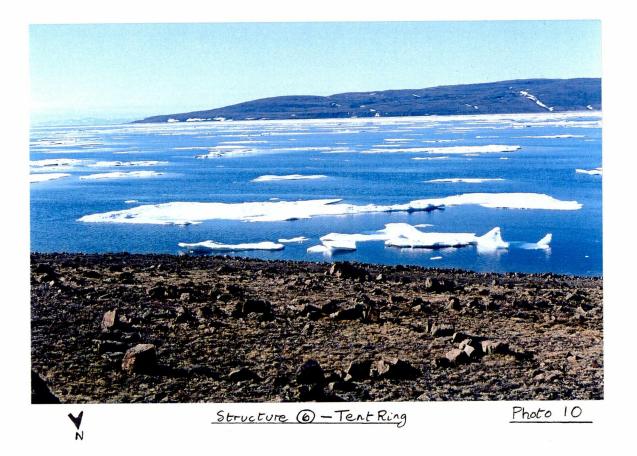






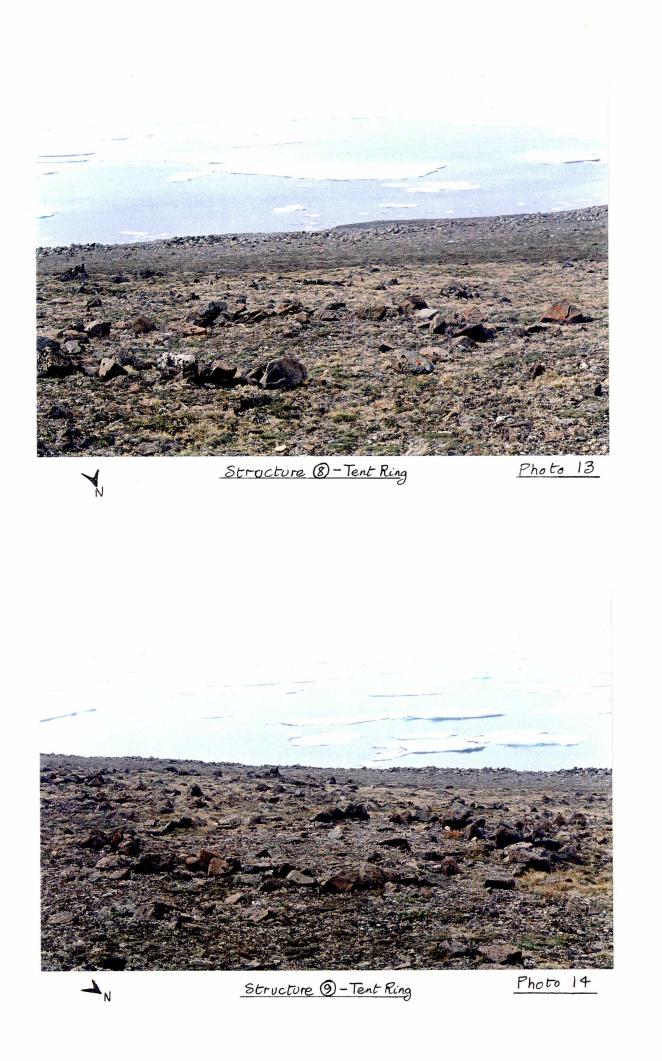












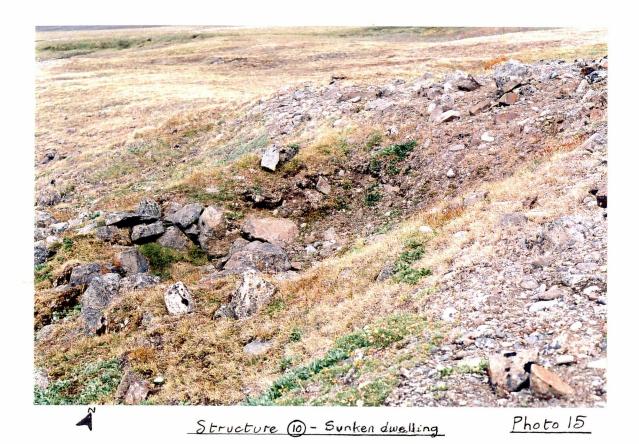
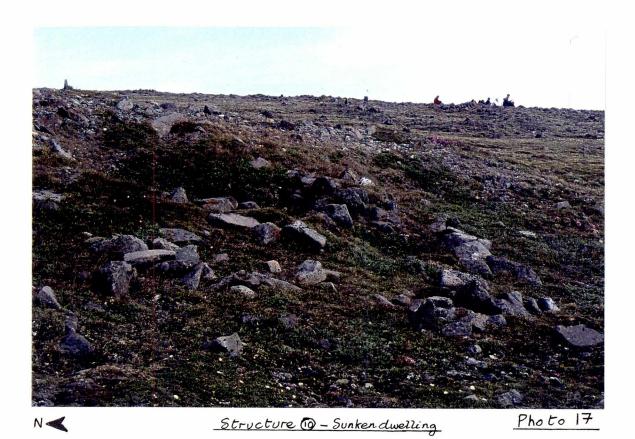


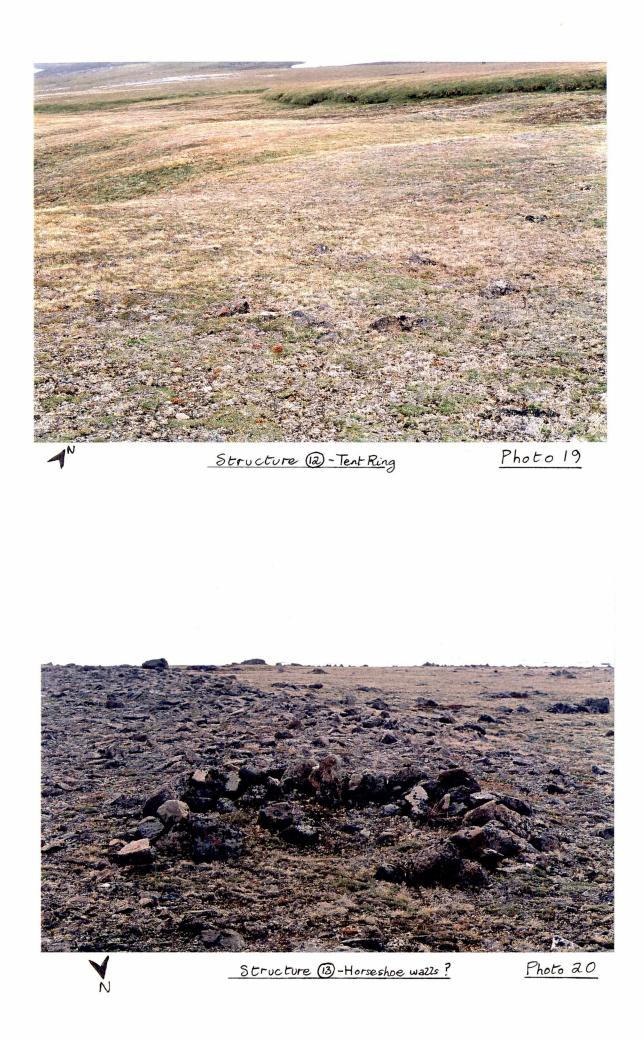
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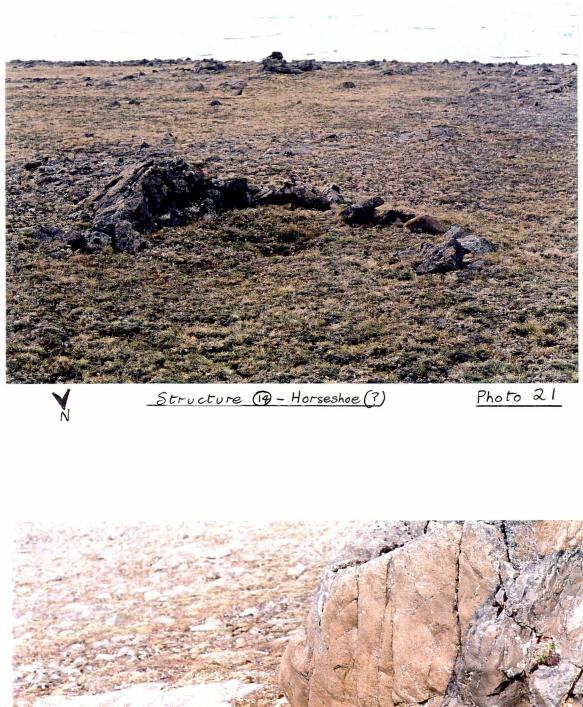




Structure (1)-cache?

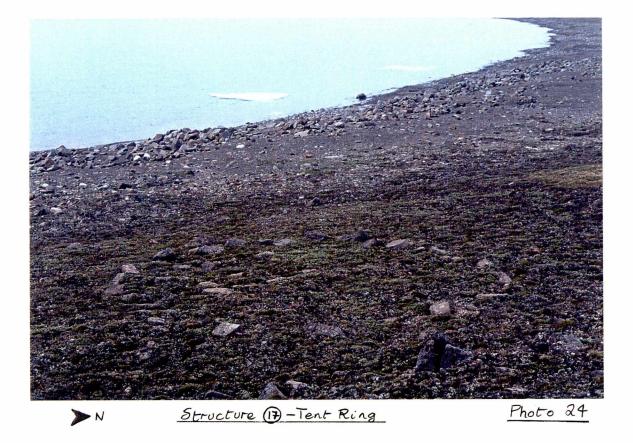
Photo 18

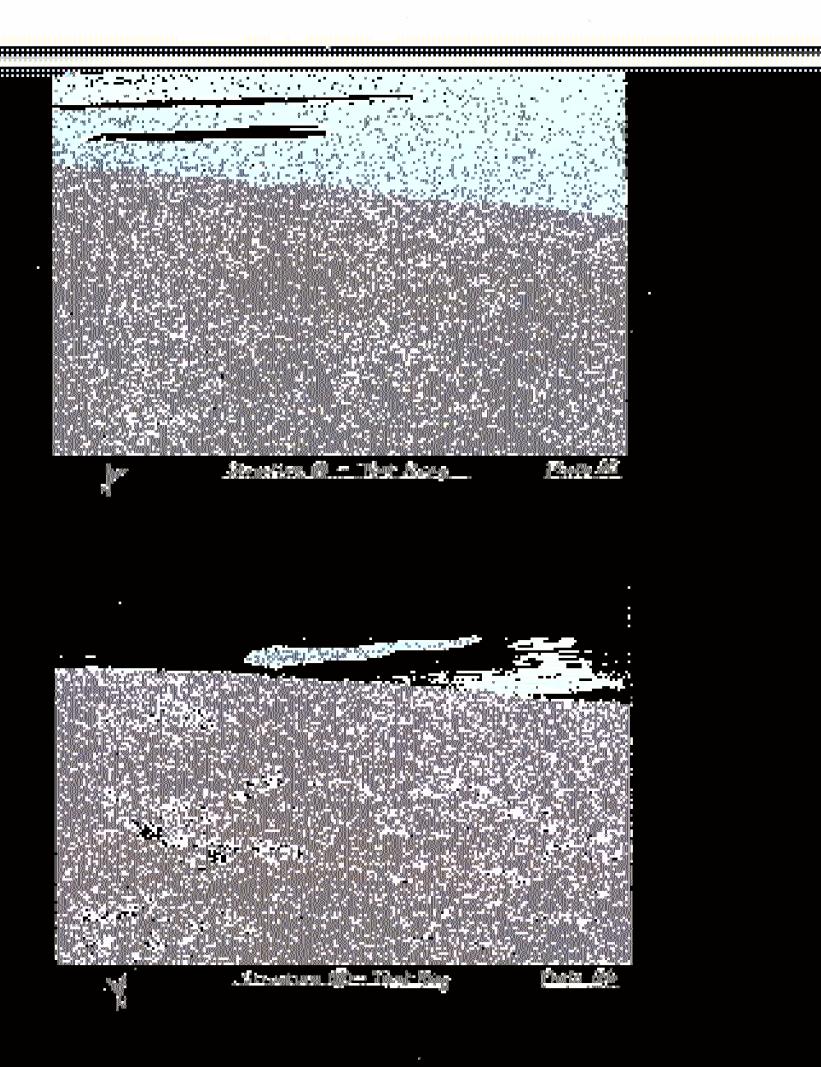


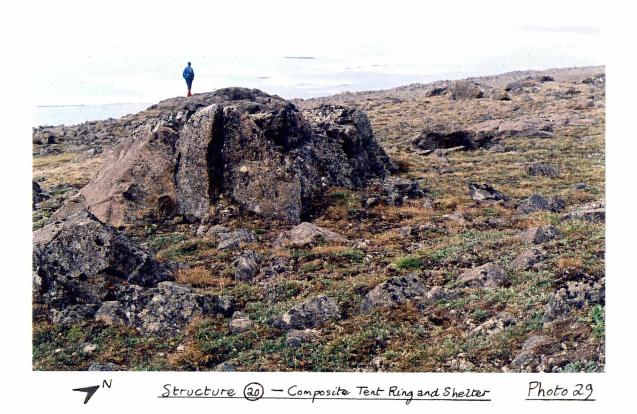


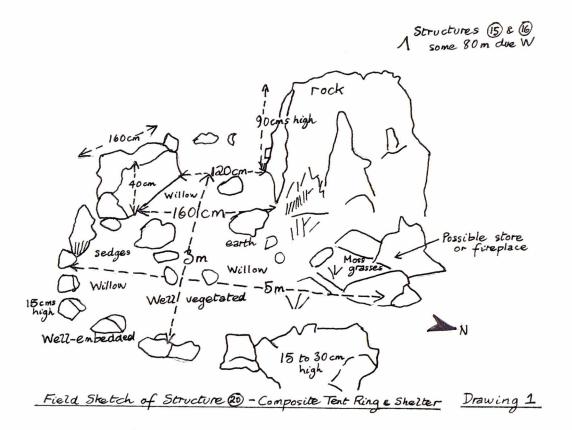


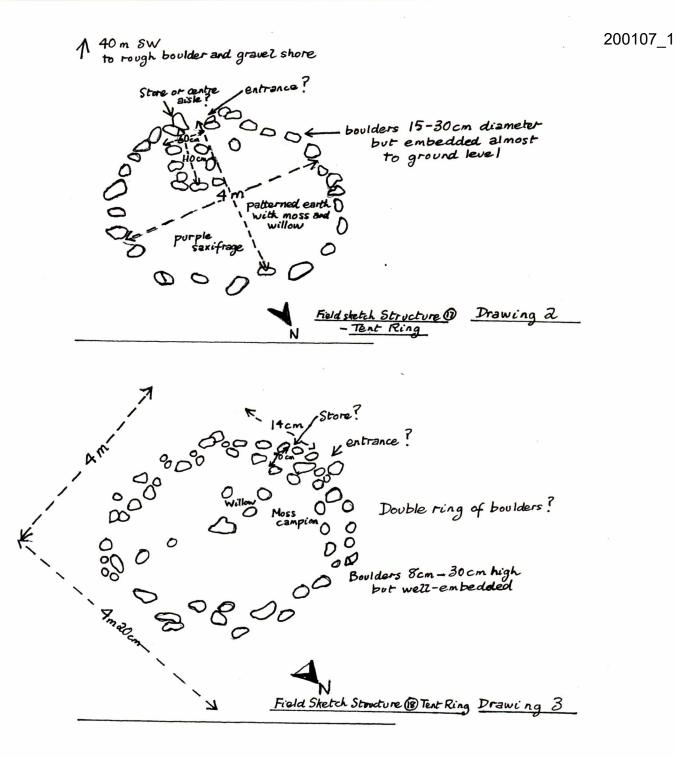


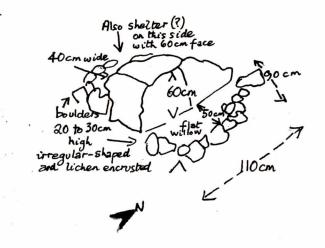






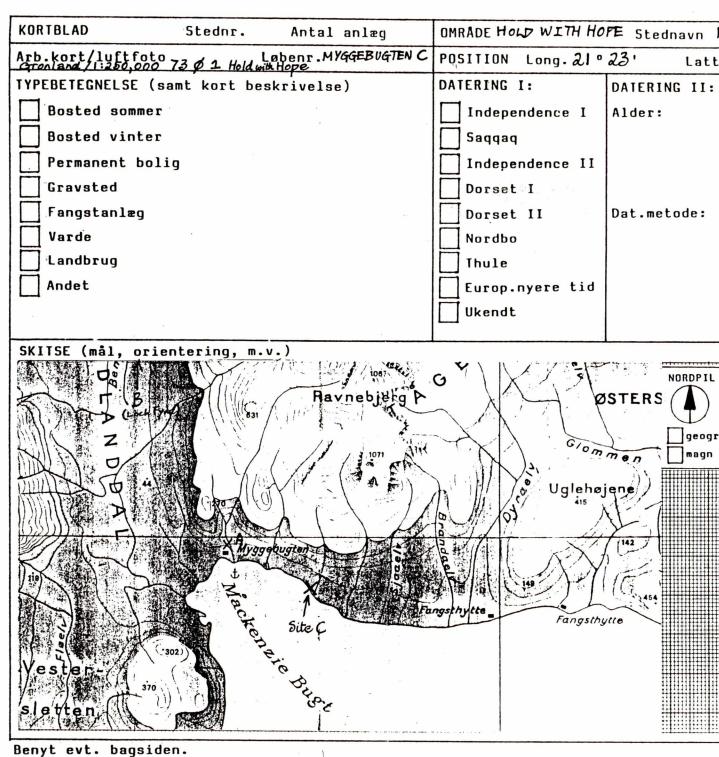




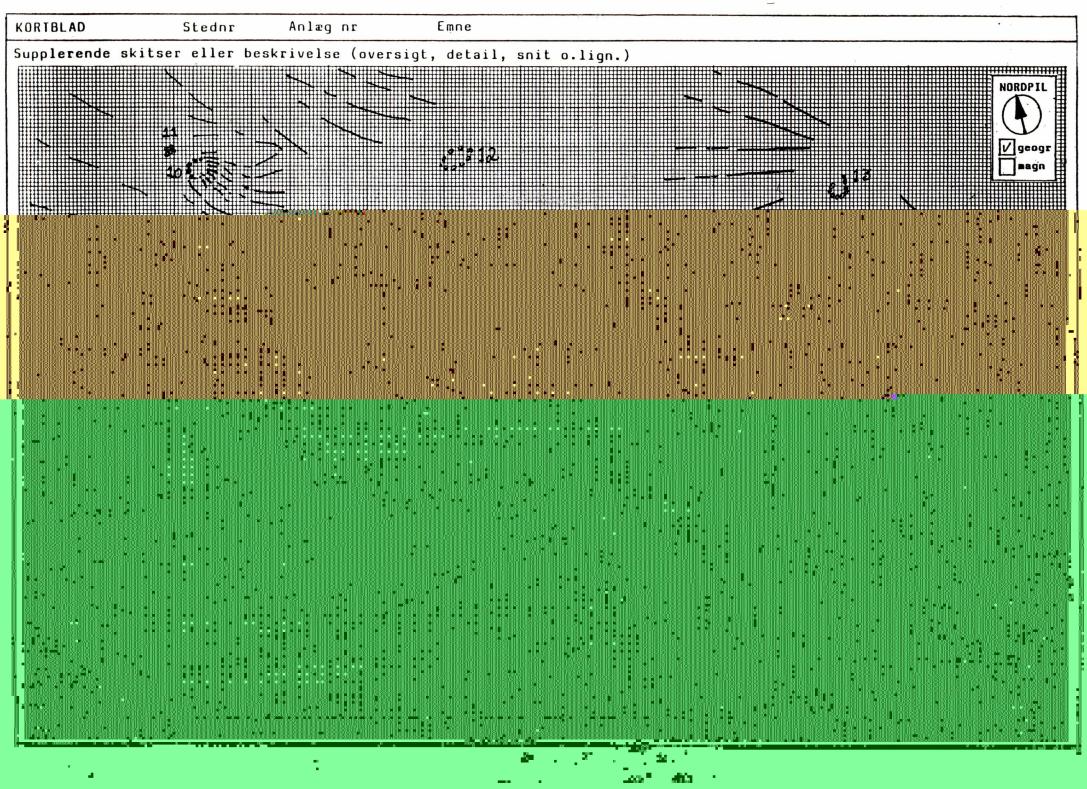


Field Shetch Structure @-Double Shellor Drawing 4

ANNEX B1 1989 Report on Myggbukta C Site including letter from Claus Andreasen



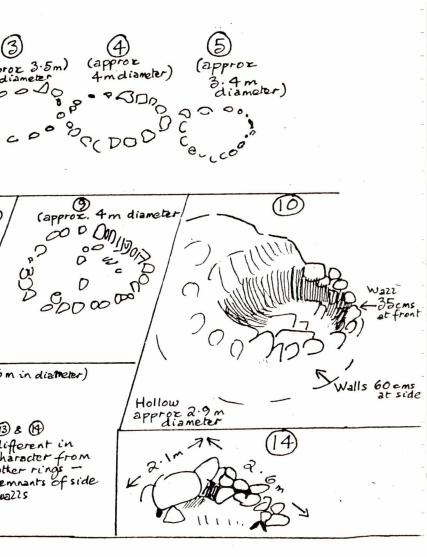
-				
MYGGEBUGTEN Kommunenr.				
t. 73°28' UTM-koordinat				
	Iilstand: Site well-preserved; not in any short-term danger.			
	Bevoksning: Clearly visible; tentrings or circles with grasses, sedges, dryas, purple sazifrage, moss campion and salix articum; more grasses and sedges around sunken dwelling			
	Fund: No			
	м. С			
	Højde o.havet: approximately 30 metres			
	Beskrivelse: This is site C identified by the 1988 expedition, about 5 to 6 km s east of the Myggebugten hut; the twelve ring-like structures are located on two levels of terrace on a spur of beach deposits at about 30 metres about the sea-level, and overlooking the sea, about 70 metres south-we A river-bank, with cut-off slope, comes close into the north-east of the site. A part sunken dwelling (10) with another indeterminate structure (Uiss just below the lower terrace to the extreme indeterminate structures (15) & (16). The possible hayak landing sites mentioned by the 1988 expedition were described as features FOIDS: S/H [] Dias caused by grounded lice-flo by the geologist on ourexpect in plan overleaf i.e. structures 1 - 16 (including IA)			
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(approx. 4 m diameter) 0 0 00 0 3 0 0 00 0 000 (approx 3.5m) 0 0 00 0 000 3000 00000 0 0 (1)0 в D 0 0 C (approx. 4m diameter) 0 Ó 60° E0 700000 5 (approx, 2.7 m diameter)(approx, 2.7 m diameter)(approx 3·2 m diameter) 0 20 00 (00 (approx - 2 5 m diatmeter) 0 Do Do Bo 2 D 8 803c30000 (approx. 2.6 m in diameter) 12 (13) 7 1.6 0 (3) & (4) different in character from other rings -remnants of side walls Σ 0 0 D 0 2 D Stones and rocks Very sunken Different in character to rings () to () Ь \bigcirc (15) N. F. K Possible shezter? 150 metres to ESE of ring D Gabbro outcrop Gabbro Also B to NE of outcrop (drawn from NE)



20 August 1989 (Exact copies of rough sketches undertake. on 18 July 1983) R.G. Woolmore



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Mr. Robert Burton 80 Caxton End Eltisley, Huntingdon Cambs. PE19 4TJ ENGLAND

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Dear mr. Robert Burton

Thank you very much for your kind letter with slides and fine information about Myggbukta Site C. The site is in the files of The Greenland Museum called: 7301-IV-6. Likewise I am gratefull for the colorphotos of Site B = 7301-IV-7 at Loch Fyne and your information on Site A at the Myggbukta Hut.

Ad. site 730-IV-6 (site C): you are right that your plan differs somewhat from the earlier plans, but nevertheless it tells us that the thule-culture people liked this place. Obviously they settled here both summer and winter.

Structure 10 seems to be a winter house and the rest to be tentrings. Structure 11 might be a cache considering the modest size. Structure 12 is difficult, and I would not dare a guess on present evidence. Structure 15 seems to be a wellknown type of shelter, which I have seen quite a few times further north in the Dove Bay area. Presently shelters have not been definitely dated to any specific culture, but all "evidence" till now indicates that it belongs to the thule-culture. Structure 14 is tricky. I can't tell you what it might be. Remnants of a house, a tentring ??

Shall I return the slides ?

Ad. site 730-IV-7 (site B): the color-photos give a nice impression of the situation at the site. The flint flake looks like the ones dr. Lang send us. It probably is thule-culture. Photo 37 intrigued me somewhat. I cant figure out what it might be. It might be parts of a fireplace-arrengement, but actually I dont know.

As I wrote to dr. Lang it seems as if this site contains paleoeskimo structures as well as neo-eskimo structures (=thule-culture).

I am happy to hear that you are returning to Hold-with-Hope and are willing to continue your work there. I am gratefull for all the information you turn over till us. Considering the size of the country the Greenland Museum is deeply depending on persons like you to help in mapping the country's history. May be we, as professionel archaeologists, would find more than you have found

worthwile sometime to go there personally. I will see to that you get updated maps on the area, and I will give it a thought what kind of suggestions I can give you to improve the sketches.

Yours sincerely

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Claus Andreasen director

Encl.: booklet on the National Park

SECTION C

Myggbukta General Area Two additional sites at Badlanddal roche moutonee and Huselv valley terrace by Ray Woolmore

Myggbukta general area - Badlanddal (roche moutonee) and Huselv Valley

Badlanddal (RM1-3). The maps accompanying Drawings 5-8 show the location of the three identified structures (most probably there are others) on the northernmost low roche moutonee (Photo 33) in the Badlanddal, about 6 km WNW of the Myggbukta Hut. (GPS Lat 73^o 29.791'N, Long 21^o 41.773'W). While RM1 is most probably a meat store or cache, RM2 and 3 are enigmatic structures, possibly hearths or graves.

Structure RM1 - Cache (Photos 30 and 31, Drawing 5). Clearly a cache or meat store, covering an area 3m x 4m, and made of rocks of mixed shape, from 30cm - 45cm in size, with a central "hole", well-vegetated with grasses. The location of this structure on an easily identifiable, low prominence, in the maze of lagoons and sandy ridges and dunes forming Badlanddal, suggests that the Inuit, historically, hunted musk-oxen and reindeer inland. Similar inland caches were found by Woolmore on Ymers Island in 2000 (Unpublished Archaeological Report on Ymers Island sent to the Greenland Museum, Nuuk).

Structure RM2 - hearth/grave? (Photo 32, Drawing 6). A most interesting enigmatic "horseshoe" (1m wide x 1.7m long) of large lichen covered boulders standing up to 60 cm above the surface. It is similar to other possible hearths found on Ymers Island by Woolmore in 2000, but could also be a grave.

Structure RM3 - hearth/grave? (Photo 33, Drawing 7). Again, a most interesting and enigmatic structure, much more of a horseshoe-shaped "ring" of rocks with a side entrance/exit. Its small size (1m wide x 1.5m long) and the upstanding nature of the boulders (15cm to 30cm) above a flat vegetated floor, suggests that like Structure RM2, it could be either a hearth or a grave.

Huselv (V1). Only one structure was found in the location (GPS Lat 73° 31.580'N, Long 21° 31.269'W) shown on the map accompanying Drawing 8, on a terrace (Photo 36) on the eastern side of the river shown as Huselv on the Norwegian Map, about 4km NNE of the Myggbukta Hut.

Structure VI - grave/hearth/cache? (Photo 35, Drawing 8). Another enigmatic structure, with a clear N-S axis (2m x 60cm). It seems more likely to be a hearth or a grave rather than a cache which would need, for practical reasons, to be located on a more easily recognisable site. Like the structures on the roche moutonee in Badlandal it suggests that, historically, the Inuit ranged inland, hunting musk-oxen and reindeer.



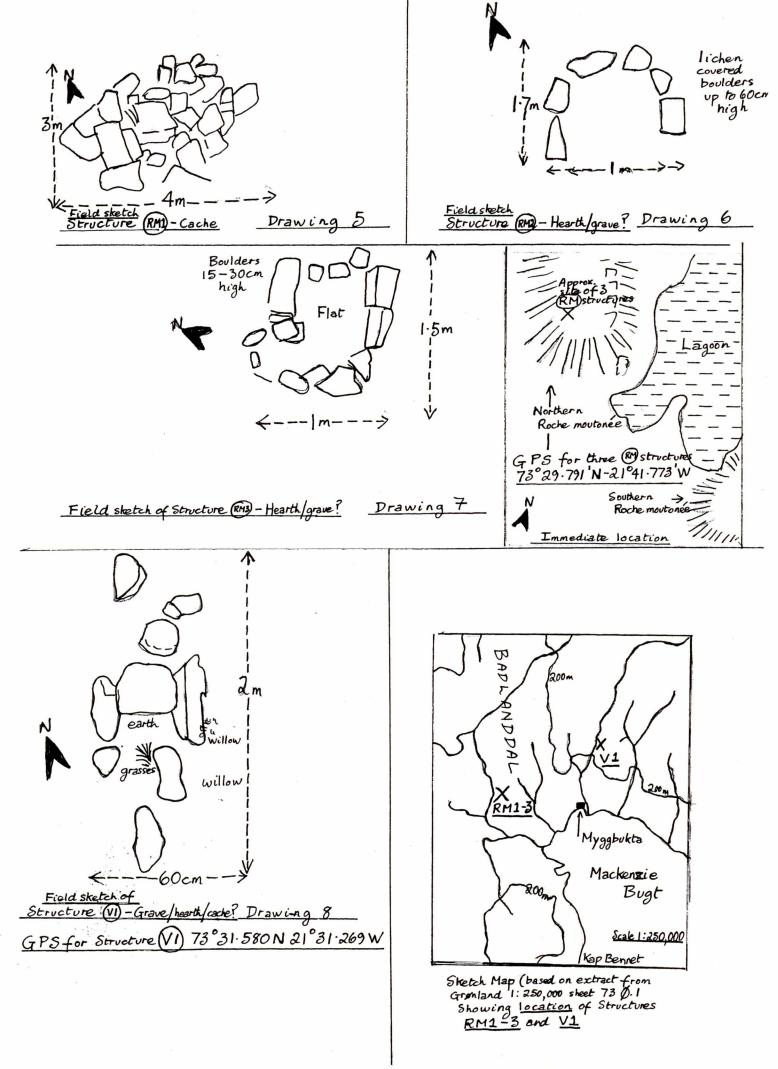














Photo-looking from southern roche-moutonée to northern roche moutonée Photo 34 the summit plateau of which is the location for Structures RM1, 283

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