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**THE ARCTURUS EXPEDITION TO THE SCORESBYSUND –  
ITTOQQRTOORMIIT FJORD SYSTEM NORTH EAST GREENLAND**

**AUGUST 2008**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT**

**BY**

**JEAN STENICO AND RAY WOOLMORE**

**BRUXELLES AND CHELTENHAM 2008**

**THE ARCTURUS EXPEDITION TO THE SCORESBYSUND –  
ITTOQQORTOORMIT FJORD SYSTEM, NORTH-EAST GREENLAND**

**AUGUST 2008**

**LEADER : KATHLEEN CARTWRIGHT  
GUIDE AND ASSISTANT LEADER : INUTA HAMMEKEN  
SKIPPER : JOSEPH BRØNLUND**

**REPORT, PHOTOGRAPHS, SKETCHES, MAPS AND PLANS OF KNOWN  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES ON THE COASTS OF SOME OF THE FJORDS OF  
THE SCORESBYSUND REGION.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This expedition unlike the previous one was undertaken with a smaller party (7) and the help of a 30 foot motorboat and an auxiliary tender, to move from place to place, under the guidance of two local Greenlanders.

The party sailed the 7th August from Scoresbysund for Sydkap and during the next seven days landed and visited some sites : in Jameson Land, in the Sydkap region, on the Bjørne Øer, in the Øfjord, in the Rypefjord, the Hofmann peninsula, the Harefjord, Renodden on the Rødefjordt with a last landing on Danmark Ø before returning the 14th August to Scoresbysund.

In preparation to this expedition, Stenico had received from Claus Andreasen, deputy head of Greenland's National Museum, maps with details of recorded positions of numerous registered archaeological sites, that we could possibly visit during the circumnavigation of Milne Land.

During this all to short cruise we managed to investigate, photograph, sketch, or map only few sites among the many drawn on the Museum's maps. Given the density of location of the sites, in some areas, with their coordinates of identification it was not always easy to distinguish one from the other. However we tried, in this report, to give them the correct references and the local name.

When looking for a known site we generally landed directly near the site from the motorboat, but walked, along the coast, as well, and always recorded the GPS data.

## **MAPS & PLACENAMES**

During our cruise and for the purpose of this report we used the 1 :250.000 scale plans : 71 Ø.2, 71 Ø.1, 70 Ø.3, 70 Ø.2 and 70 Ø.1, in the Danmark Grønland series produced by the Geodaetisk Institute, København and for the presentation with satellite images from Google Earth « Terrametrics 2008 » for a higher and variable scale definition of details.

For the identification of placenames the reference maps were inadequate and we had to have recourse to our guides for the Greenlandic placenames and their local spelling, that through the years might have considerably changed.

The safest source of information in recognizing the sites came from the detailed description recorded by Hanne Tuborg and Birger Sandell in their Reports. 1) & 2)



## EQUIPMENT

In this survey work the authors used the following equipment : a Garmin *Etrex* GPS navigator, re-calibrated on our arrival in Ittoqqortoormiit, a 360° goniometer mounted on a walking stick, a military compass with mirror sighting, a 60m measuring cord, and a Nikon Laser 500 rangefinder 6x20 6.3° and a reflecting tablet.

## STRUCTURE OF REPORT

Section A covers the sites of the Sydkap region, with pictures of sites and most features

Section B the site on the Bjørne Øer,

Section C the two sites at the entrance of Rypefjord namely ,the Øfjord vague 70 0 -001 – 003 site and the Hofmann Halvo 70 03-001- 004 site,with GPS data and a map drawn since Stenico previous visit in 2003, with pictures of the features not covered by the notes 3).

Section D Renodden site on the Rødefjord with GPS, some pictures and a map; pictures of a new (?) small site close to our camping and landing site,

Section E relates to our short visit and GPS data of Stenico earlier find (2003) in Hekla Havn on Danmarks Ø 3).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors thank the late Bill Hankinson and Dr.Lorraine Craig of Arcturus Expeditions for having organized this special cruising expedition and encouraged our archaeological investigations, our very experienced leader,Kathleen Cartwright our old friend and guide Inuuta Hammeken and our competent « skipper » Joseph Brønlund, that having been borne in the Sydkap area led us to all the known sites West of the trading Station.

We are specially indebted to Ole Brønlund who gave us the definite spelling for some placenames of the places we visited.

Last ,but not least. Karin and Martin from Nanu Travel in Scoresbysund ,Frank Loesch, Jane Dudley, Robina,Burdett and Berthold Schneider from our expédition's team.

## REFERENCES

1. Hanne Tuborg Sandell and Birger Sandell. *Archaeology and environnement in the Scoresby Sund fjord – Ethno-archaeological investigations of the last Thule culture of Northeast Greenland*. Meddelelser om Grønland,Man & Society 15 . 1991 ISBN 87-17-06237-3.
2. Hanne Tuborg and Birger Sandell. *Paleo-Eskimo Sttlements in Scoresby Sund,Northeast Greenland*. Danish Polar Center Publication no.6 Copenhagen,1999 ISBN 87-90369-35-1.
3. Jean V.Stenico The Arcturus Expedition to the fjords of the Scoresbysund- Ittorqortoormiit Northeast Greenland -August 2003. *A Note on the archaeological finds*, Brussels 2003.
4. Glob P.V.*Eskimo Settlements in Northeast Greenland* Meddeleser om Grønland 1944 No.6,Kobenhaven 1946.
5. Slederman ,Peter, *Voices in Stone- A personal Journey into the Arctic Past*,
6. Komatik Series, Number 5, The Arctic Institute of North America of the University of Calgary,1996.

## SECTION A

### SYDKAP

On August 7th after having visited Lauge Koch old scientific station at Gurreholm (Inddigai) on the coast of Jamenson Land, we sailed, through an increasing number of icebergs in the Sound, to Sydkap the old hunter's trading station built here soon after the Scoresbysund/Ittoqqortoormiit settlement was founded in 1925.

This commercial post was built in the middle of the Scoresbysund Fjord region to help the new population of hunters that had settled along the coasts between the Nordwestfjord/Kangertertivarmit Kangertivat in the West and the Nordostbugt/Kangerterjive on the delta of the Schuchert Flood.

To-day the old station building is being used only as a temporary storage and is in badly in need of maintenance, while a new house was built in 1946, close by, and used by the Scoresbysund population as a place to stay when they return here in Summer during the hunting and fishing season or by Small expeditions outfitted by Nanu.

We camped here for two nights. Joseph our « skipper » was born near here and three generations of his family hunted, fished and lived between Sydkap and Kangerterajiva.

Early next day we visited two sites to the west and very close to the Sydkap station building and house.

Afterwards we sailed east of the station to Kuugai / Nuugai Idukaddagai a place where the people from Scoresbysund have traditionally camped and, in recent years, have built some holiday cabins where in August they fish for arctic char and hunt narwhal.

After landing we walked along the shore toward Flatness/Nuugai Tsaakkaddagai and an important site :Ujaaidugai (Big Stone),. We returned walking along the coast to Sydkap.

### 71 Ø2-OII-021

August 8th *GPS 71°17.864 N, 25°07.381 W*

We landed in this small bay after only ten minutes sail from Sydkap. From the gravelly beach the site develops 100m in depth and has a front of 80m limited on the two sides by rock formations.

This enclosed area is well vegetated and rises not too steeply to the foot of a rockwall and the hill behind. This site, until recently, had a settlement of four houses, one of them belonged to Joseph Brønlund grandfather. To-day, of three of these houses, built close to sea, remain only the stones of the foundations on which they were erected ; the fourth has collapsed, but all the woodwork (planks and beams) as well as a cast iron kitchen range are still there, pictures.

The upper part of the site is overgrown with arctic willows and birch under which we identified five or more winter dwellings all with fairly short access passages, all facing South and downward to the bay.

Some of these houses are well excavated, quite a few stones laid around and in some places the kitchen midden was laid bare, and several cracked bones, mixed with a rich dark soil, were apparent, however we don't think that this Thule dwellings have been recently investigated.



Close to the shore we noticed an other couple of depression without any obvious access passage, but these could have been masked by more récent excavations.

## **71 Ø2-0II-005**

We landed on a very rocky shore *GPS 71° 17.342' N, 25°07.428*.

This site host many fox traps, some recents with wood triggering system, some very old with stone stone locking devices, caches and perhaps shelters or part of very ancient remains, all these features are distributed on a serie of successive steep terraces that are sited at more than 50m above sea level.

Halfway up, on a less steep terrace, there is a small vegetated (salix) depression that could be a dwelling adjacent to this there was a large cache or grave ( ?) *GPS 71° 17.797 N, 25° 07.332 W*.

We belive that this site might contain some Paleo-Eskimo features, in anycase, had been a favored place for fox trapping for a very long time. We counted more than 18 trap features, some of them having been modernized by re-using the original stones. Some of the annexed pictures give an idea of the individual features.

On the way, walking from Kuugai to Ujaaidugai (+/- 3km) we found the following features : *GPS 71° 18.230 N, 24° 55.595 W*

Close to the shore two/three tent rings respectively 10m and 20m from the shore, pictures.

*GPS 71° 18.166 N, 24°55.351 W*

Three large caches and a shelter/screen, the screen could be modern for seal hunting as it is very close to the sea.

## **Ujaaidugai (Big Stone) 71 Ø2-0II- ?**

We were unable to determine the exact identification as there are too many indications of sites for this strech of coast on the Museum's maps. Sandell 1) p.26 also mentioned many sites under Saakattaakajik / Flatness , we believe that this site could be Glob's 4) no. 198 Nordost Bugt our is *GPS 71° 18.113 N, 24° 55.107 W*.

This site is an other favorite place of the Scoresbysund people for the late Summer fishing, here they land and dry the arctic char caught along this coast by netting. There is a large erratic boulder adjacent to the shore (Big Stone ?).

The Thule ( ?) settlement is spread out in a well vegetated area close to a wet patch (marshy) from snow melts, we counted 13 winter dwellings and three other depressions that could be from an older occupation.

Most of the houses are well dug in ,have a recognizable access passages facing South ; some of these passages are quite long and still intact, the roofing consisting of large stones covered with turf, and we noticed that some large whale bones had been used as well.

We belive that some of the houses have been the subject of earlier archaeological excavation as the floor inside seems to be cleared of collapsed side walls or vegetation.

Some pictures

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From this last site we walked back to Sydkap but from KUUGAI instead of following the coast, where in some places we would have difficulty of finding a safe path along the precipitous rocks, we made our way higher up missing perhaps some features at a lower level and closer to the coast.









THE SITE



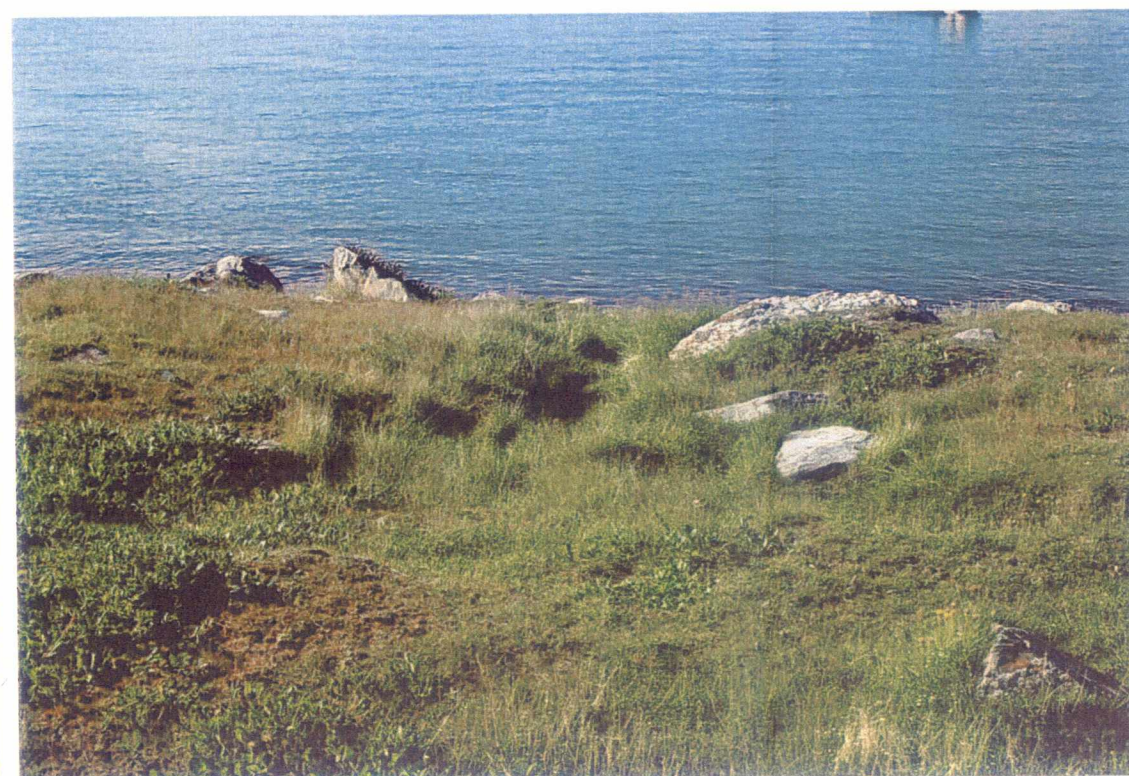
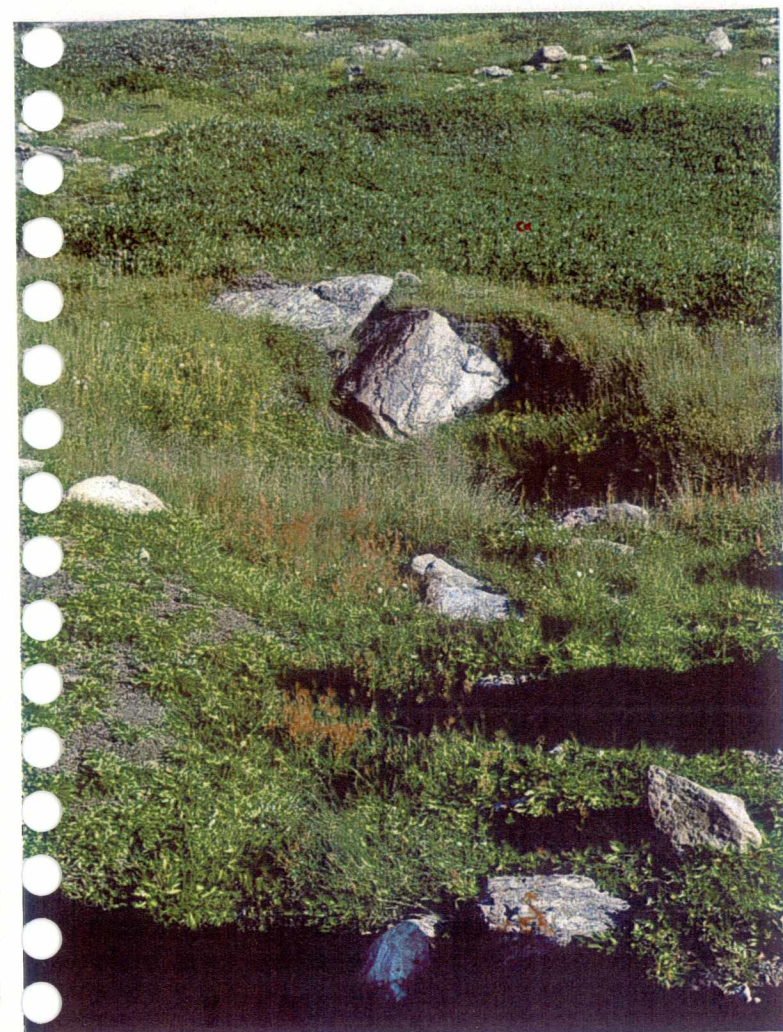




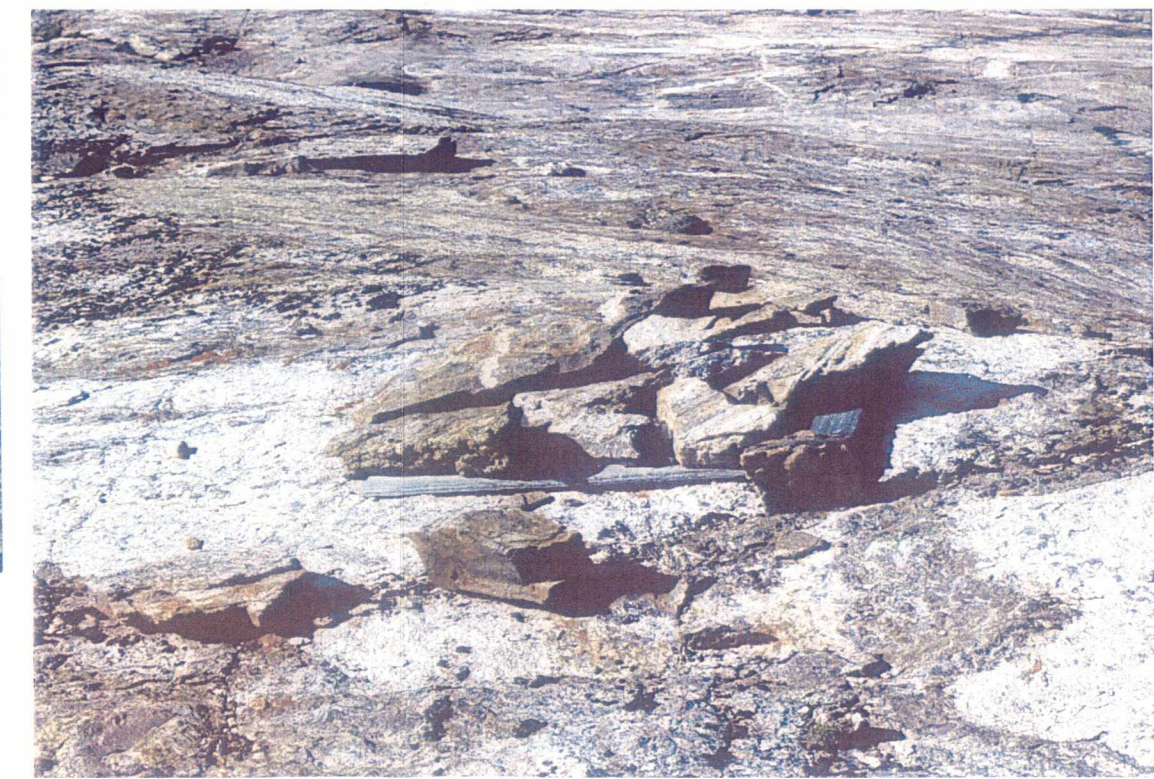
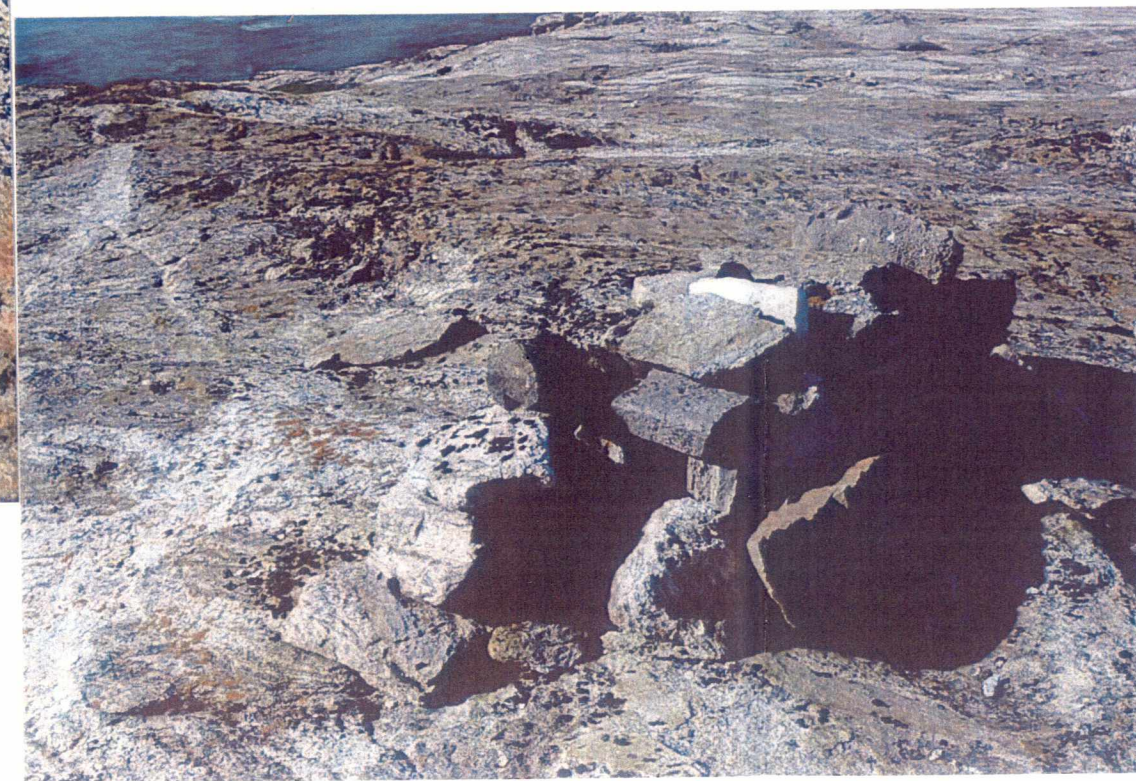
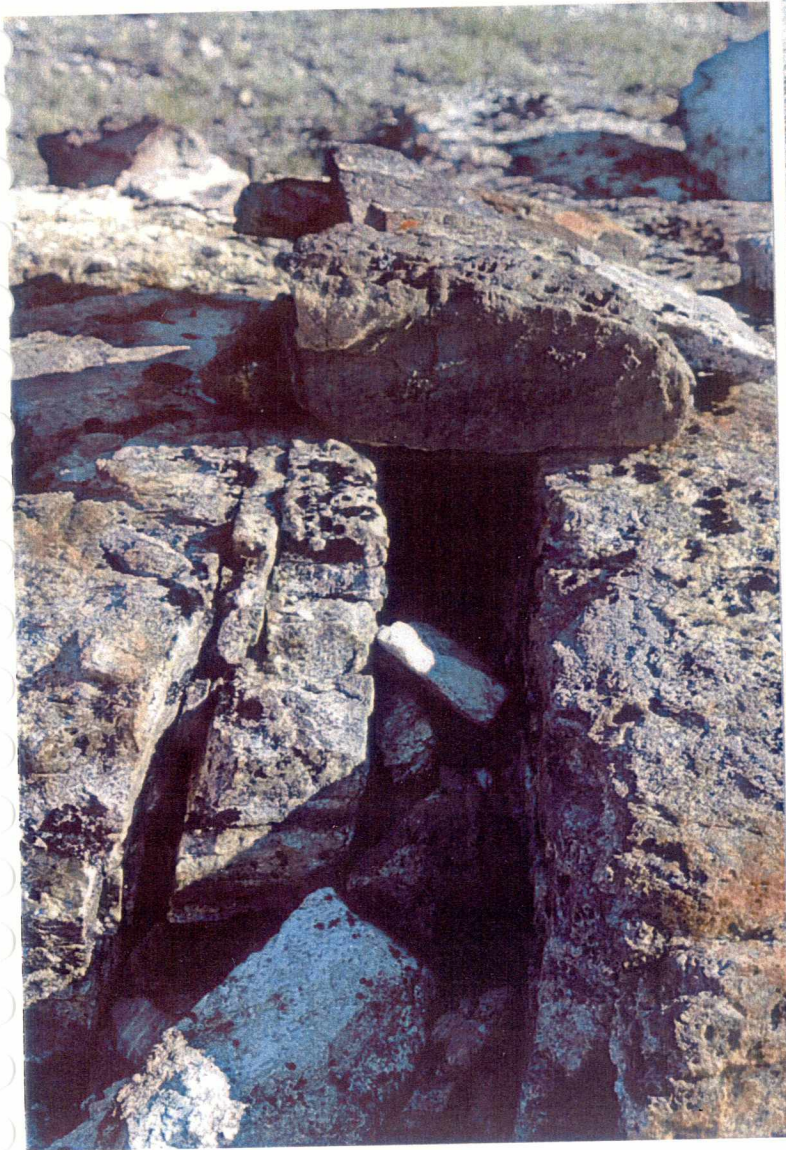














SPRUNG

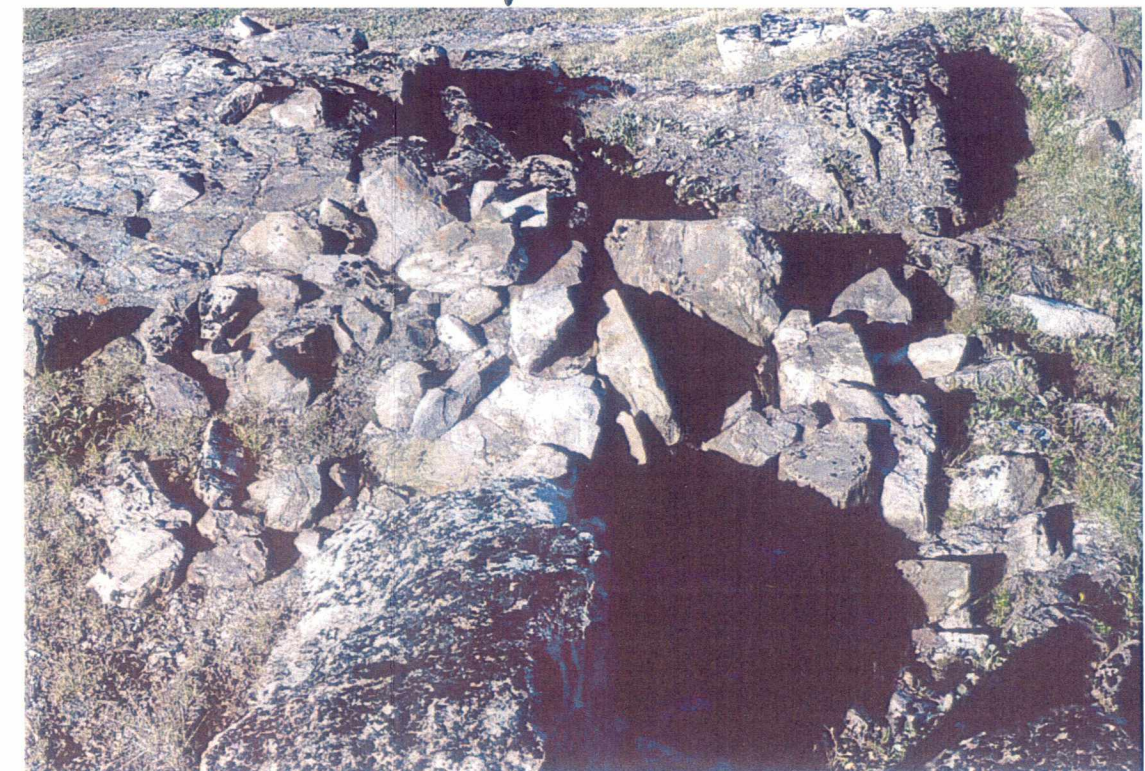


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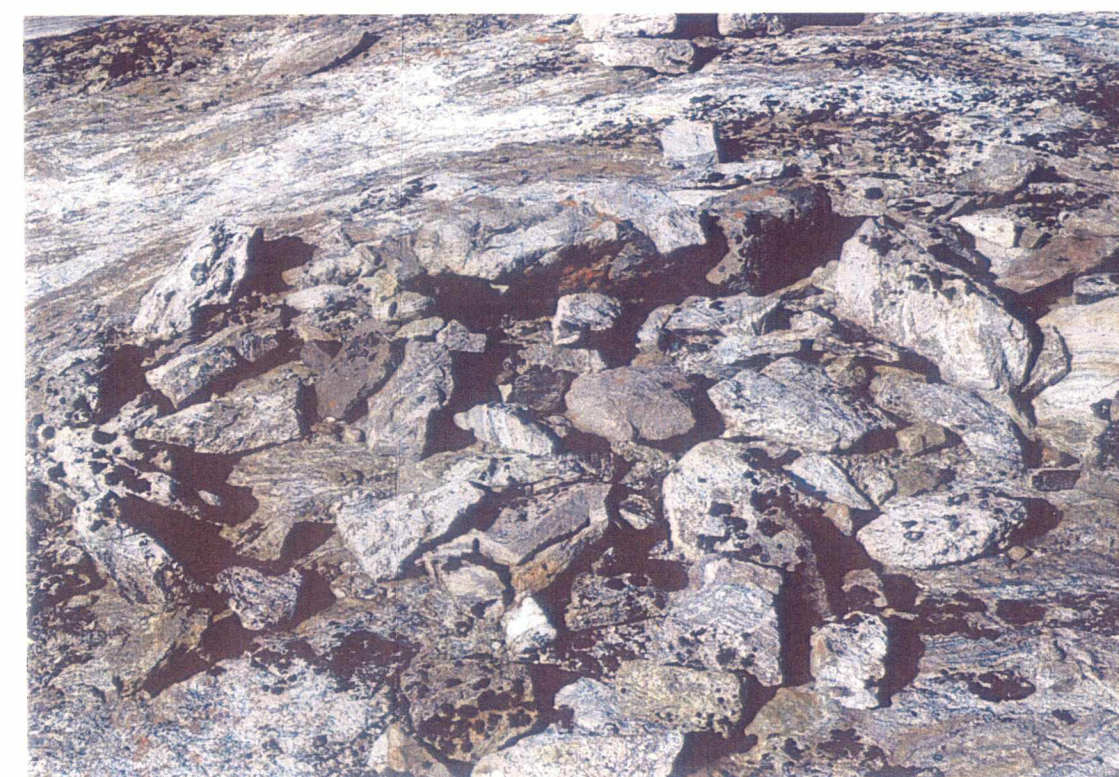
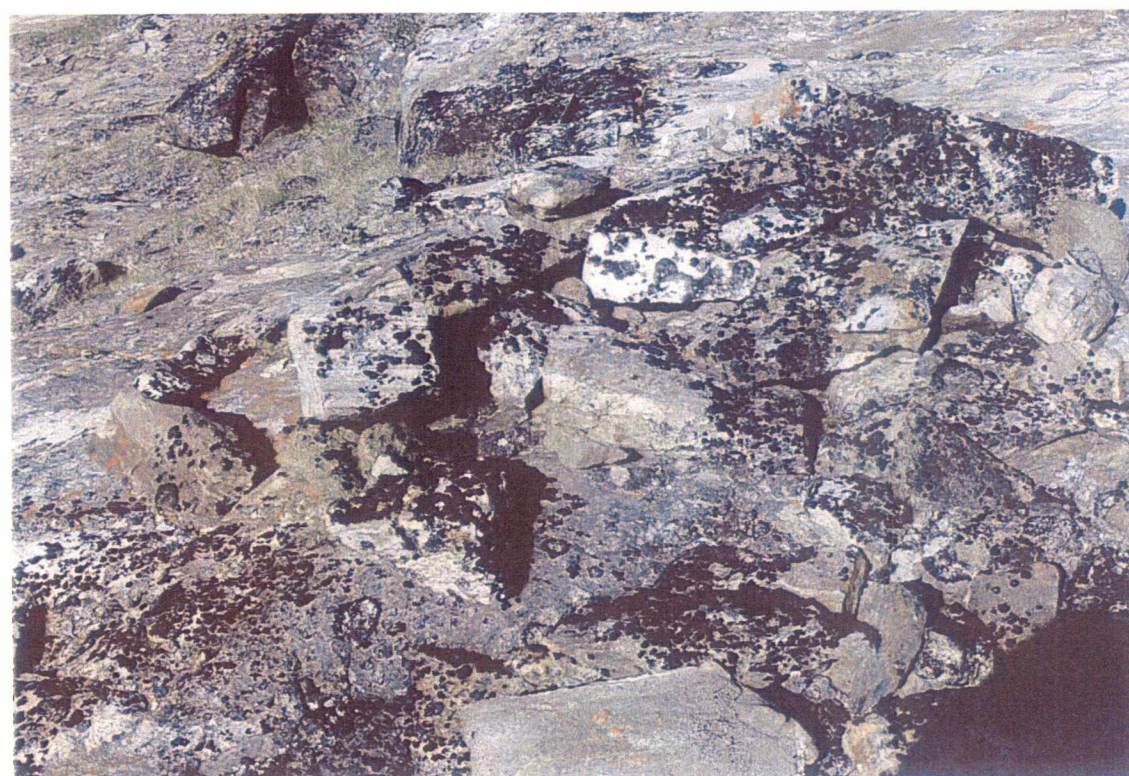
CACHE GRAVE SHELTER ?







DISMANTLED ?











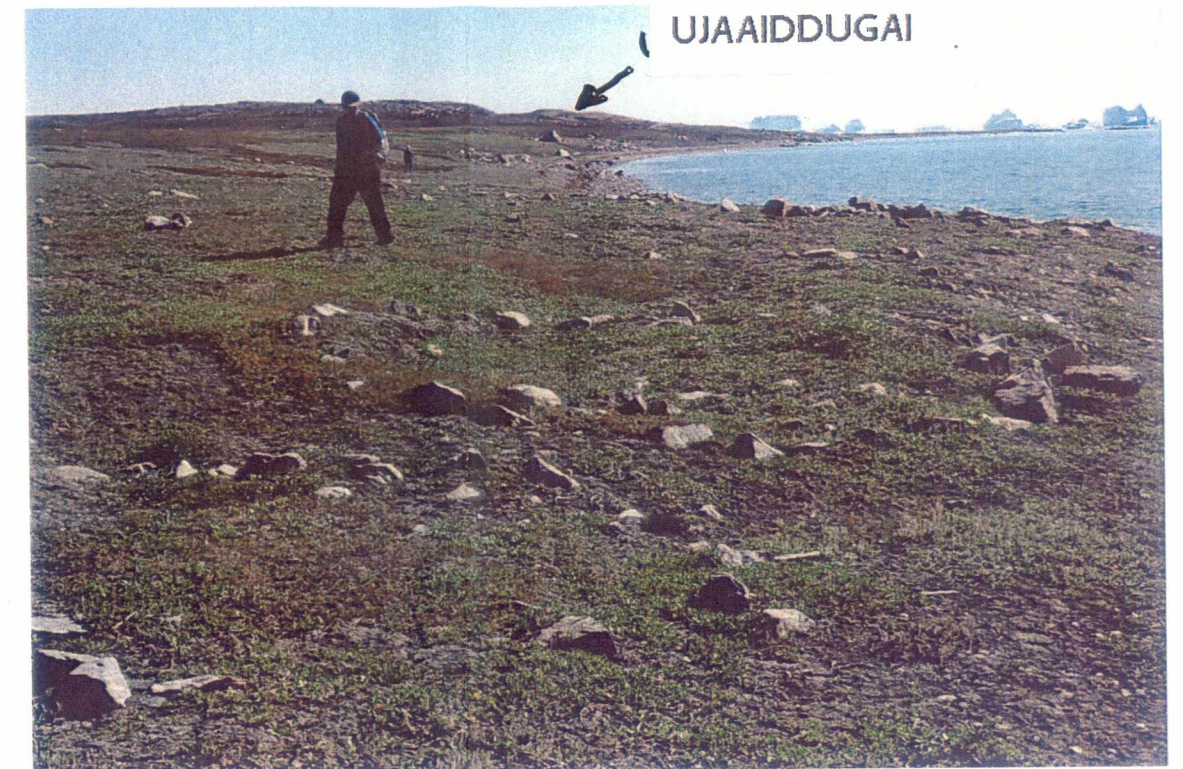
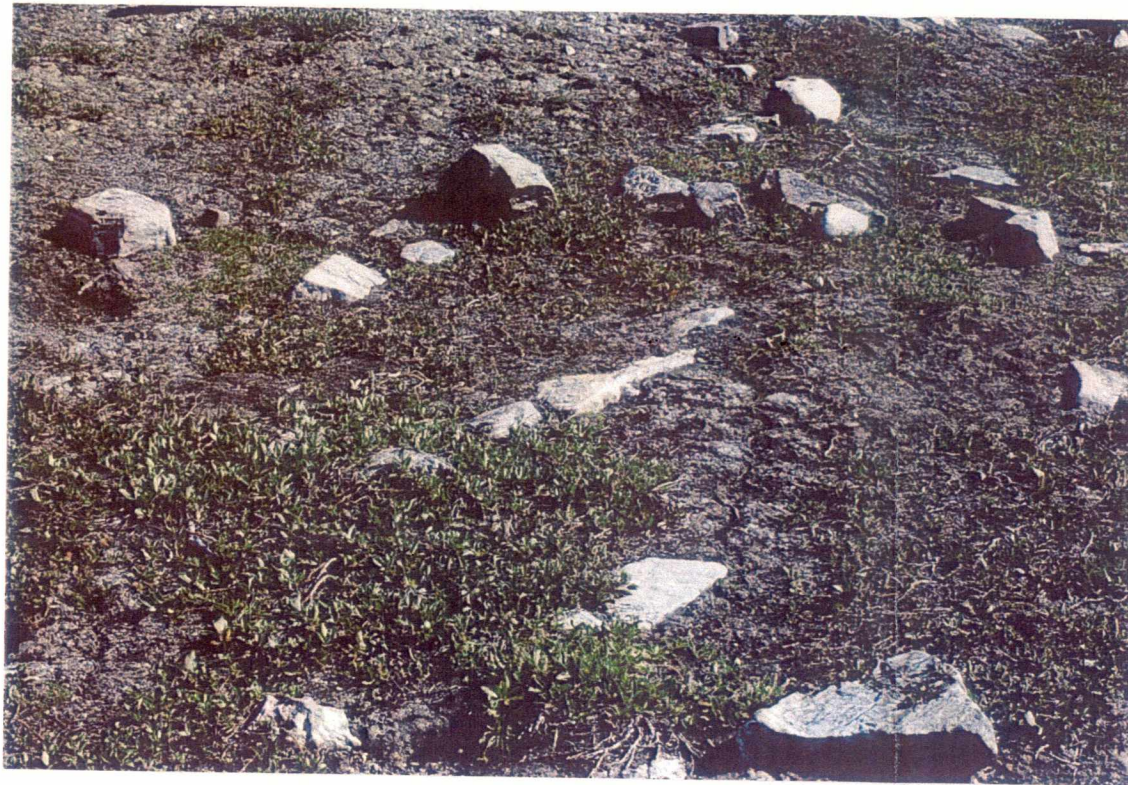
SCREEN?





SYDKAP

GPS 71°18.230N 24°55.107W 200804\_1







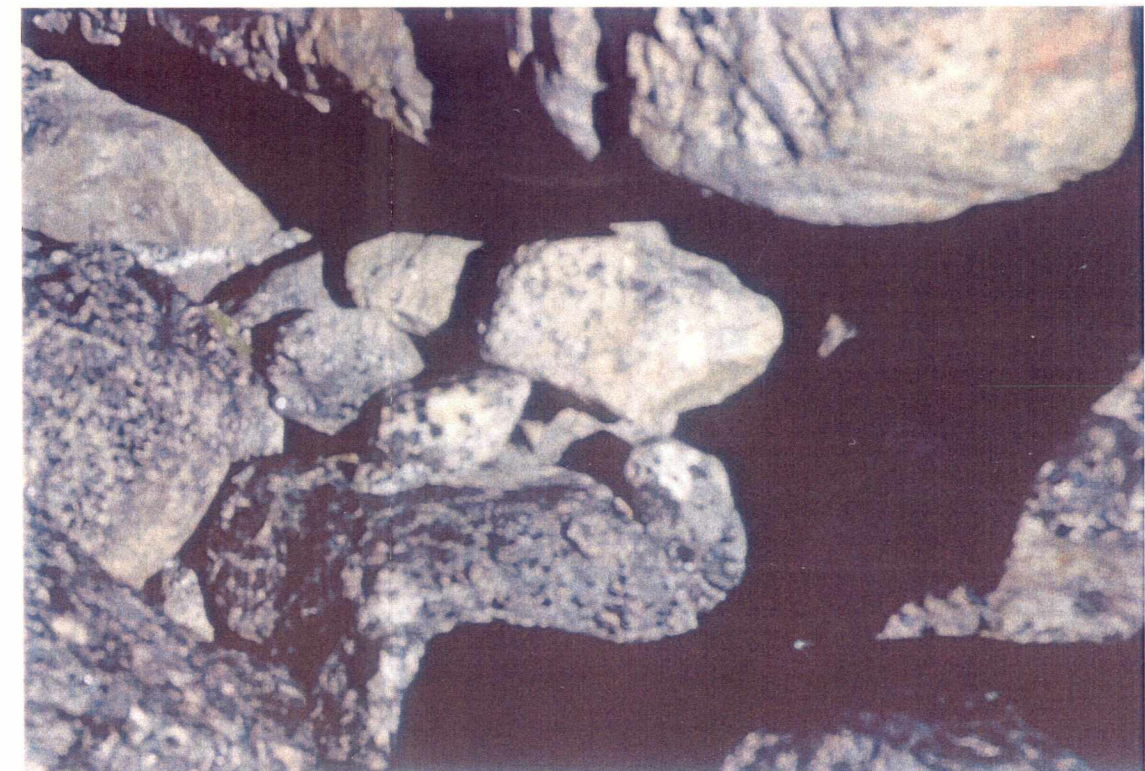
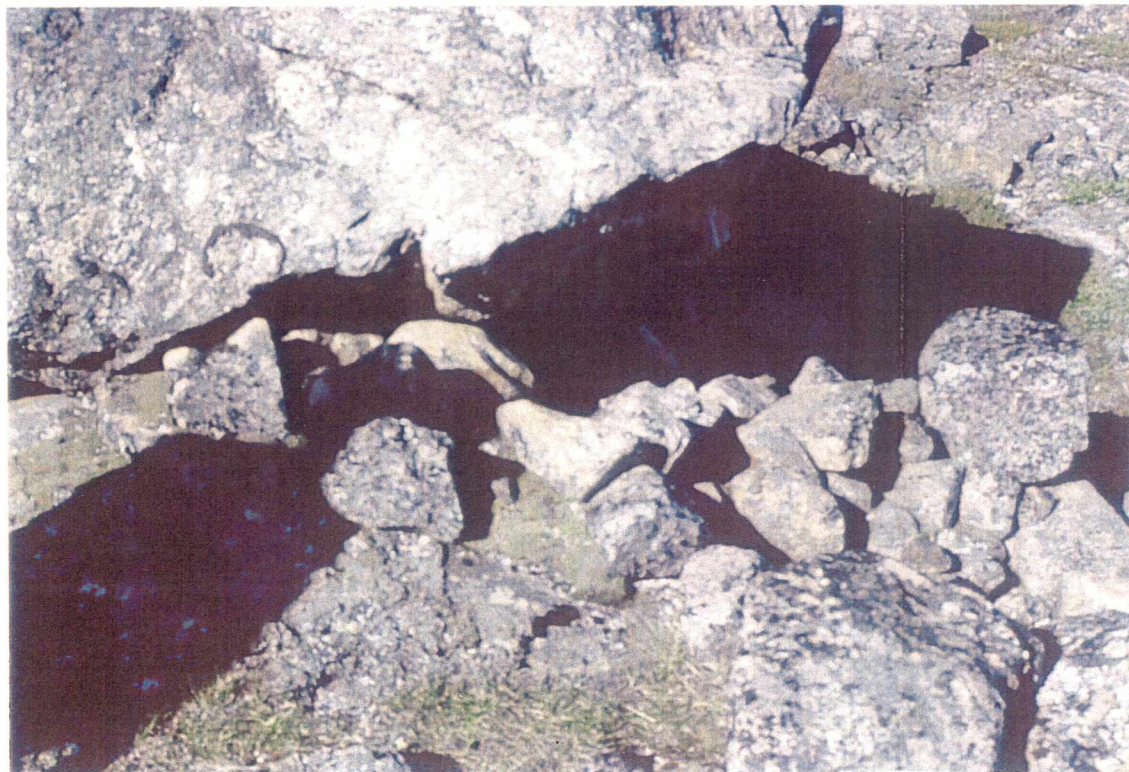
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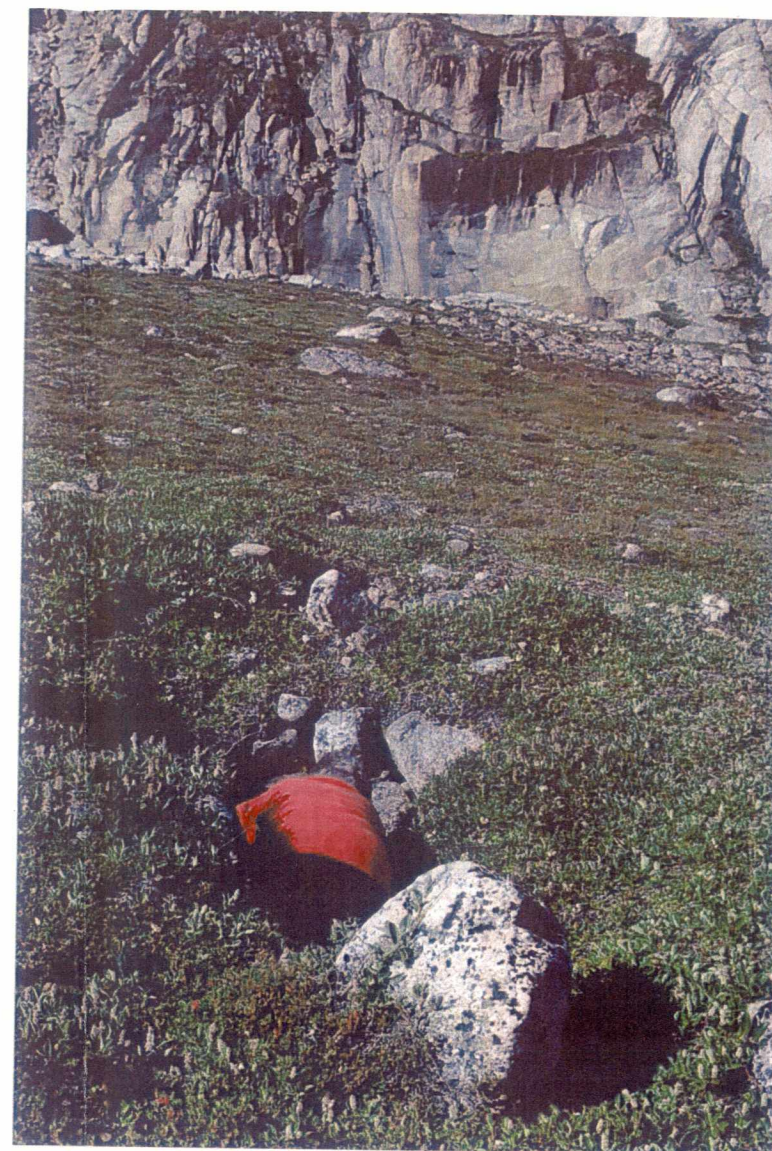












Vertical exit into the passage with locking stone







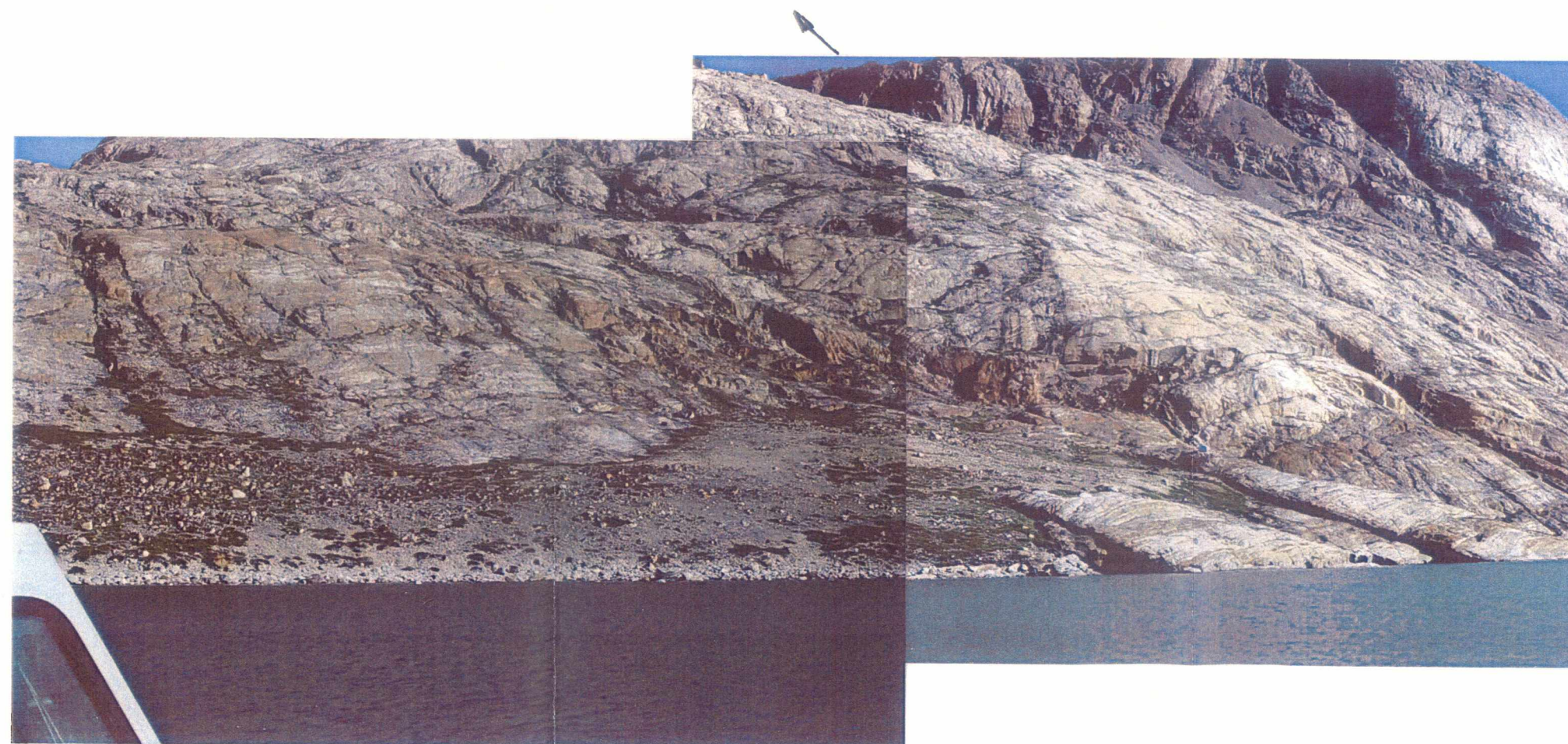








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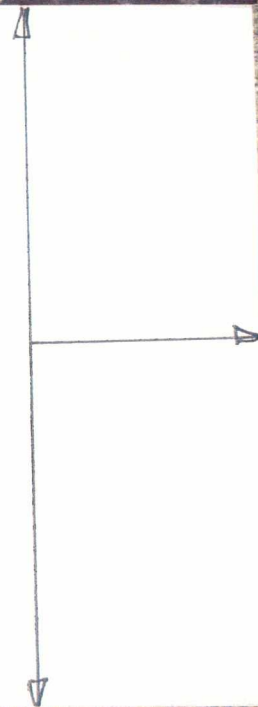










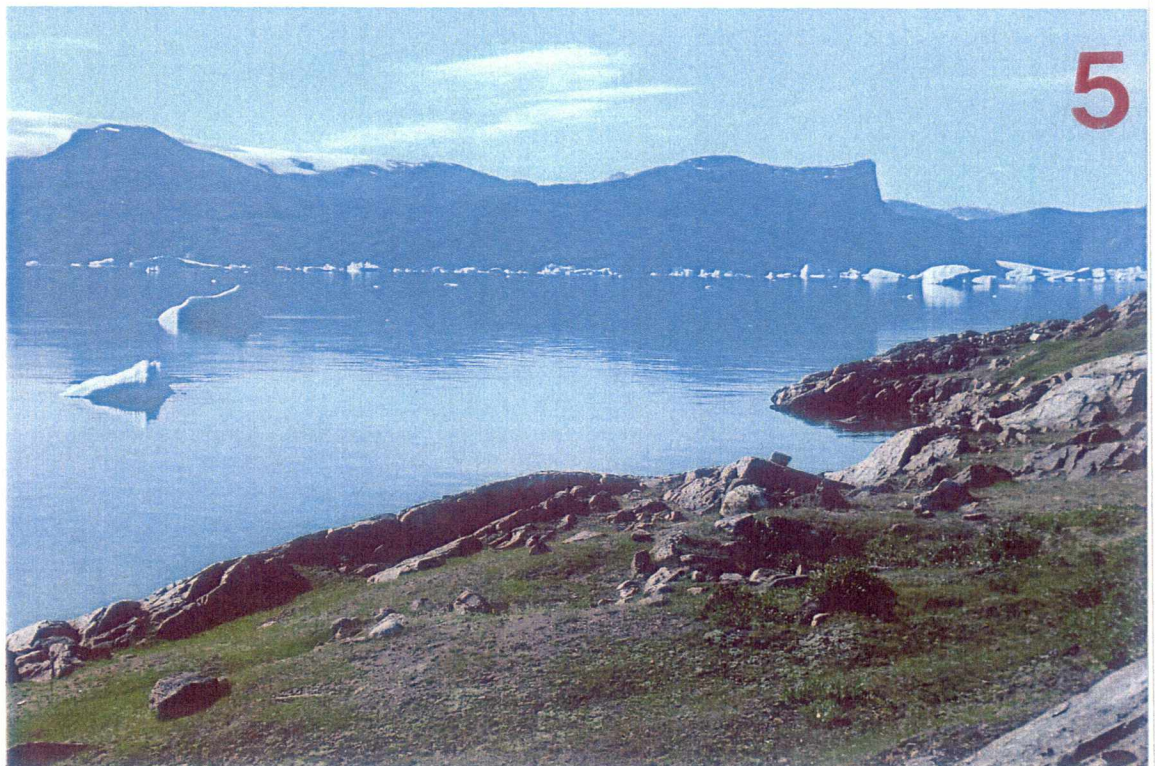




70 Ø3-001-003









# HAREFJORD

C.HOFMANN HALVØ SITE 70 Ø 3 - 001 - 004

SCALE 1 = 10M

MANMADE FEATURE

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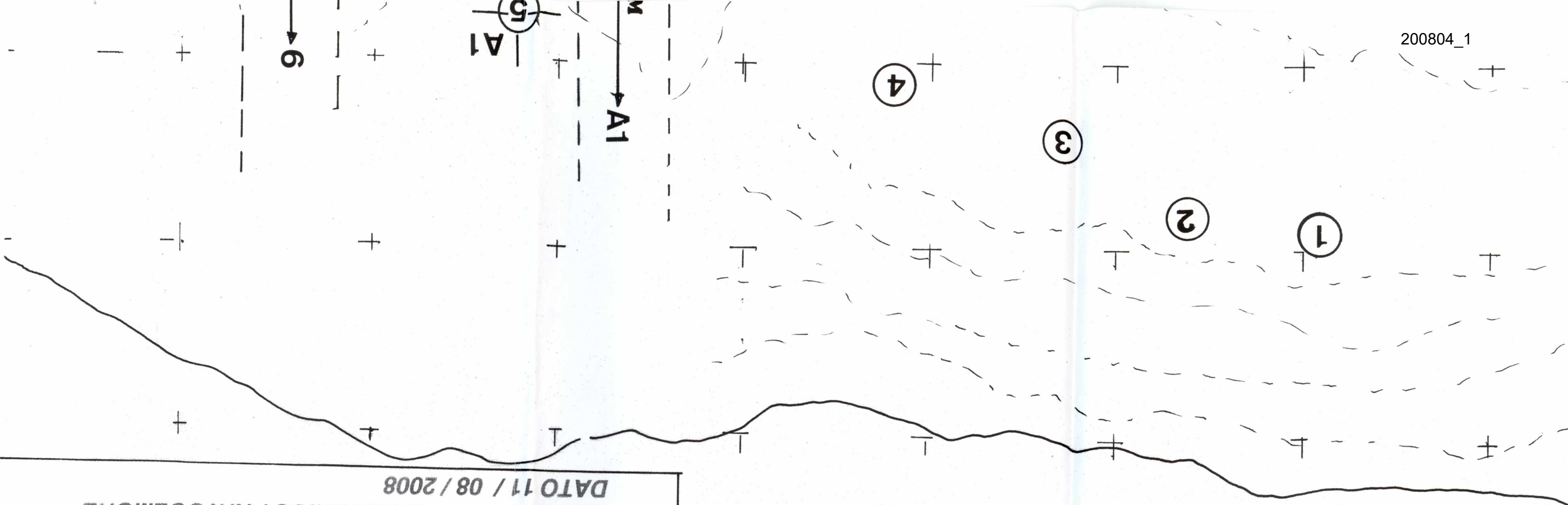
A1 LAT. 70° 55.265' N LON. 27° 41.332W

GRAVE

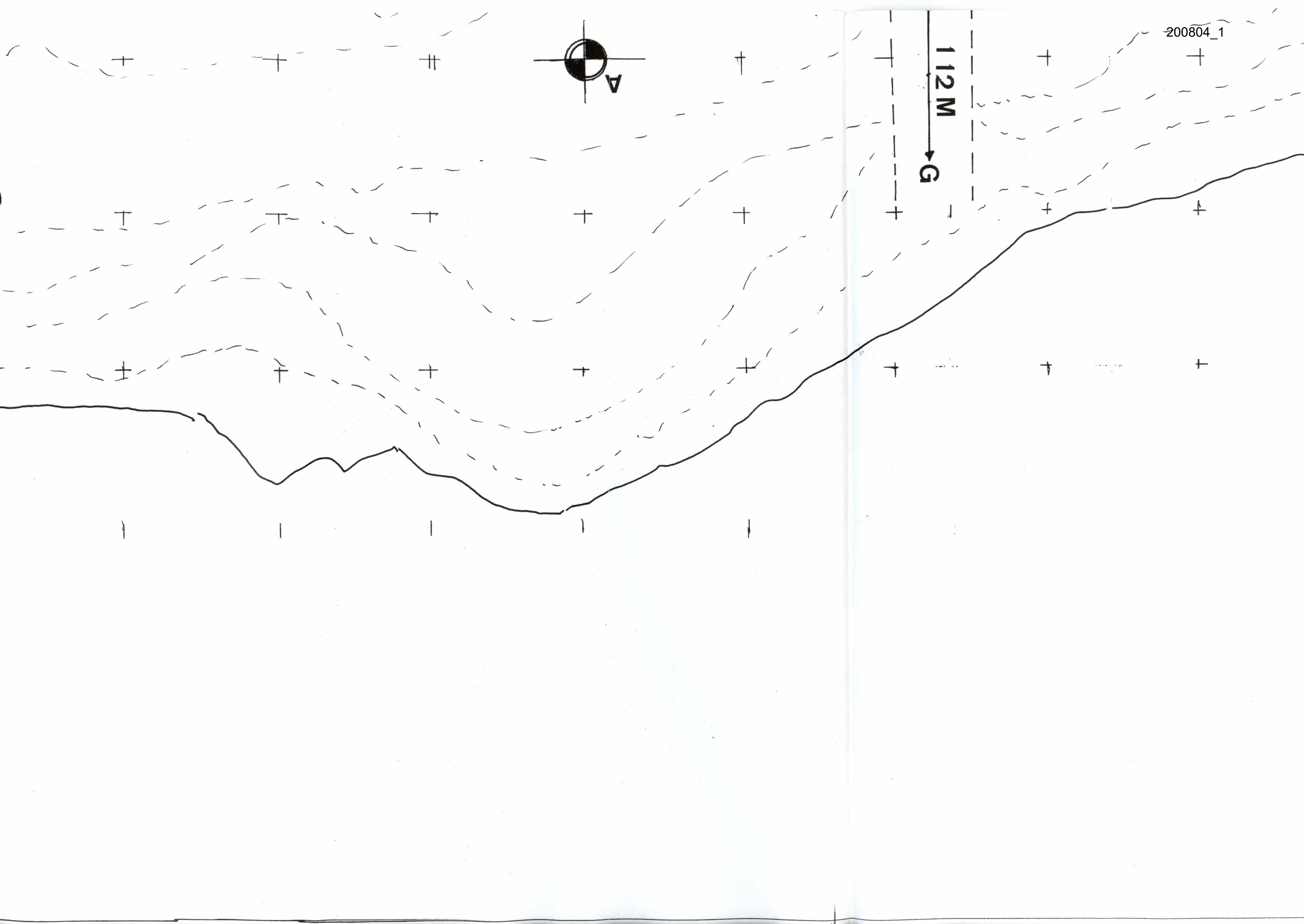
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BESIGTIGET AF J.V.STENICO / R.WOOLMORE  
DATO 11 / 08 / 2008

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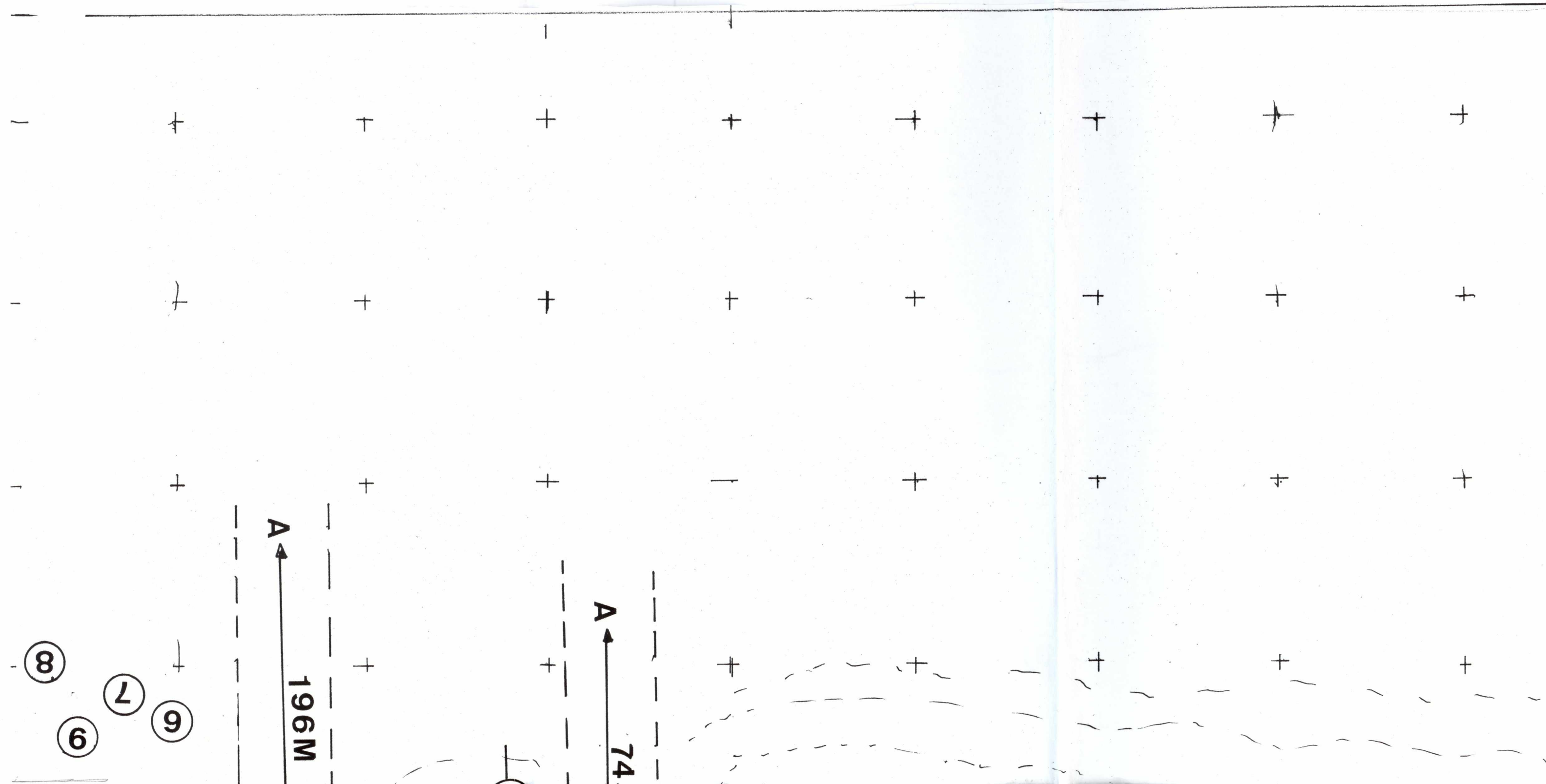




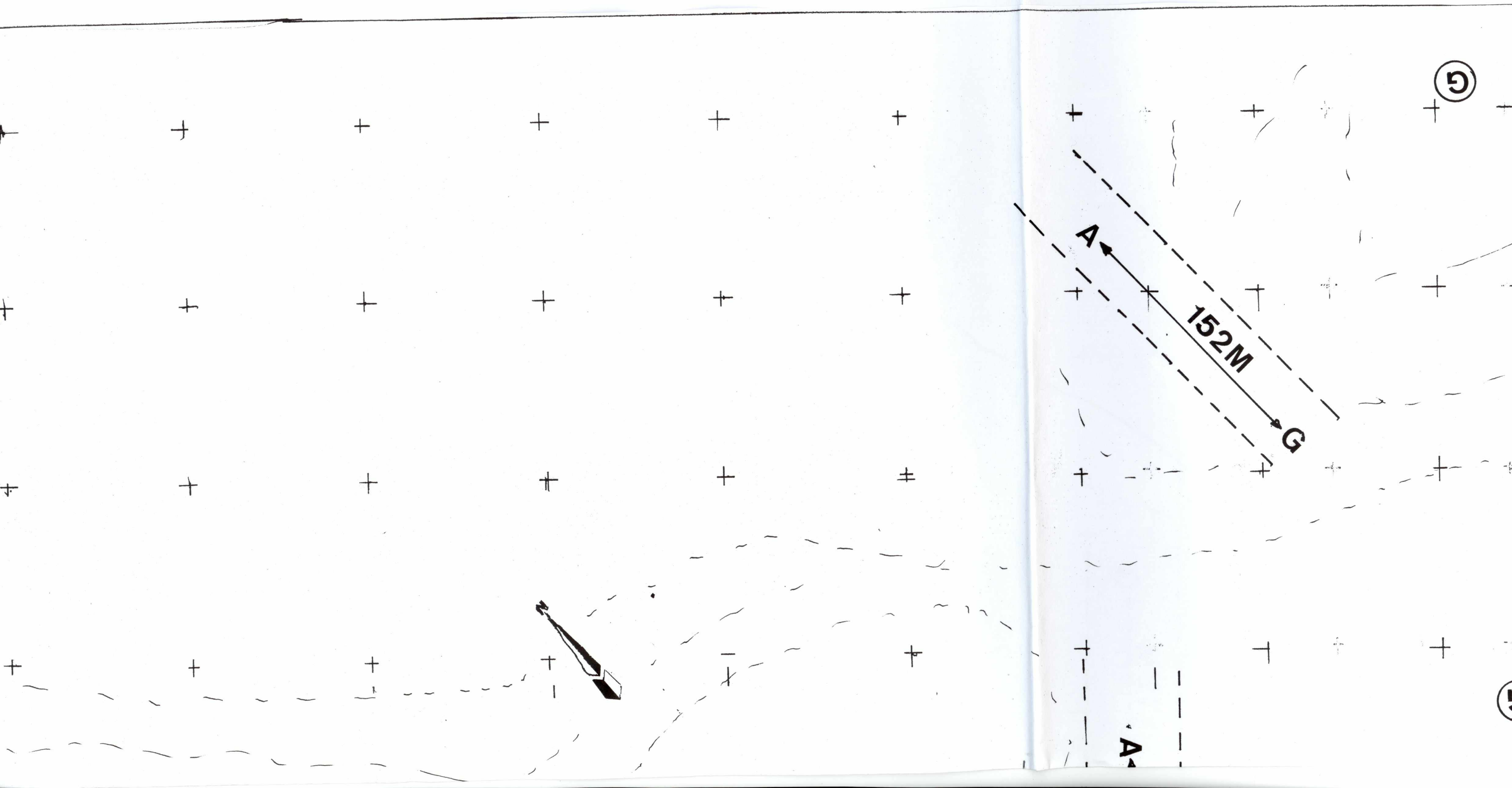
⑧  
⑦  
⑥  
⑨

A  
196M

A  
74













## SECTION D

### RØDEFJORD

We anchored on the South side of the Renodden peninsula, in a small bay where we set up camp for two nights. From here we proceeded to explore the South coast until we found and identified one site near the southern cape.

On the Northern side, having cut across the peninsula instead of following the coast we never rediscovered 70 Ø3-OII-006 nor 70 Ø3-OII-006 .

The last day just before sailing while walking on a little ridge overlooking our camp and very close to shore ( 50m) we came across one or two manmade features well sunk in the vegetation cassiope and ericacae.

#### **RENODDEN 70 Ø3-OII-007**

**GPS 70° 28.594 N , 28° 13.654 W.**

Elevation 22m. The settlement is stretched over 200m of coastal land and was restricted on its Eastern and Northern sides by a rocky outcrop and from these is rapidly sloping into a little bay with a fairly rocky shore. The whole area is rather well vegetated with dwarf willow and arctic birch around the dwellings and tent rings on the upper parts of the settlement.

Lower down the area is more stony or covered with ericacae, sedges and grasses.

On approaching the site from the West we discovered three or more medium size caches/graves (not covered by the map). On the site we counted 15 possible features :

1. Large tent ring (also the GPS reference point)
2. Tent ring with earth
3. Shelter
4. Square tent ring
5. Square tent ring with earth
6. Cache
7. Square tent ring
8. Square tent ring
9. Winter dwelling with earth
10. Winter dwelling
11. Winter dwelling
12. Winter dwelling
13. Possible dwelling
14. Small square feature (shelter ?) overgrown with arctic birch built against the Eastern rock outcrop delimitating the settlement and on the verge of a drop to the sea
15. Very close +/- 10m South/East of feature 14.) against a rock dropping in the sea an open cache or more probably a grave partly covered with flat stones. This feature ( pictures) is not drawn in the map as it was discovered on leaving the site and all the measurement had already been taken

#### **NEW FEATURE ( ?)**

**GPS 70° 28.372 N. 28° 15.812 W.**

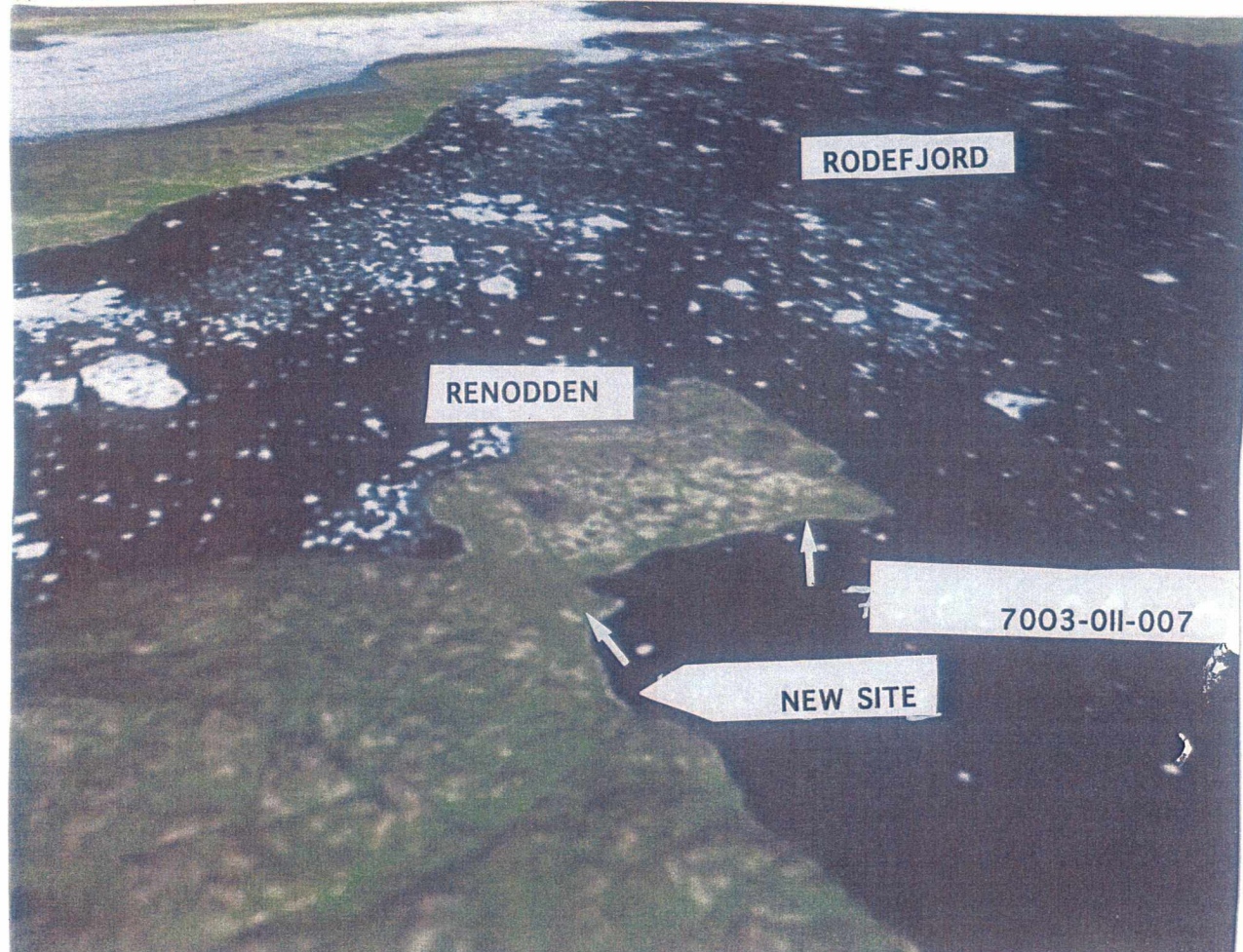
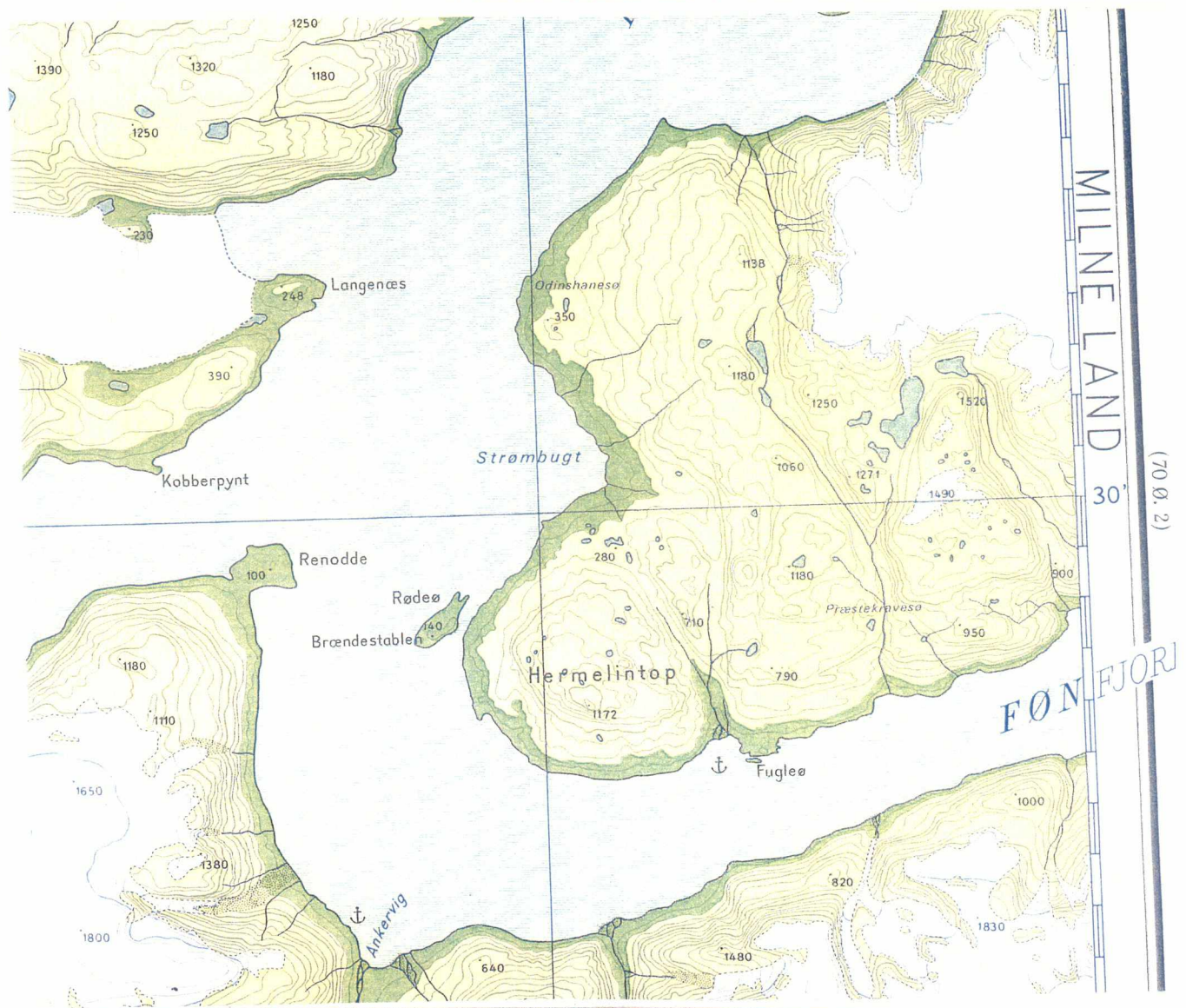
Just few minutes before leaving our camping site ,that is often used by hunters and where a large Summer tent has been erected by the tourist/travel/information firm NANU for visiting tourists there is an outcrop of rocks running North/South.



Here we discovered at +/- 60m from the shore an old square ring of stones that might have been part of a shelter or dwelling partly covered with arctic birch and ericacae.  
The GPS was taken on the shore, on embarcation, from the boat large GPS navigator as all our equipment had been already packed on board.  
Two pictures were taken.

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Features outside of the map and West of the site







THE SITE



# RØDEFJORD

RENODDEN SITE 70 Ø 3 - 011 - 007

SCALE

1 = 1 M



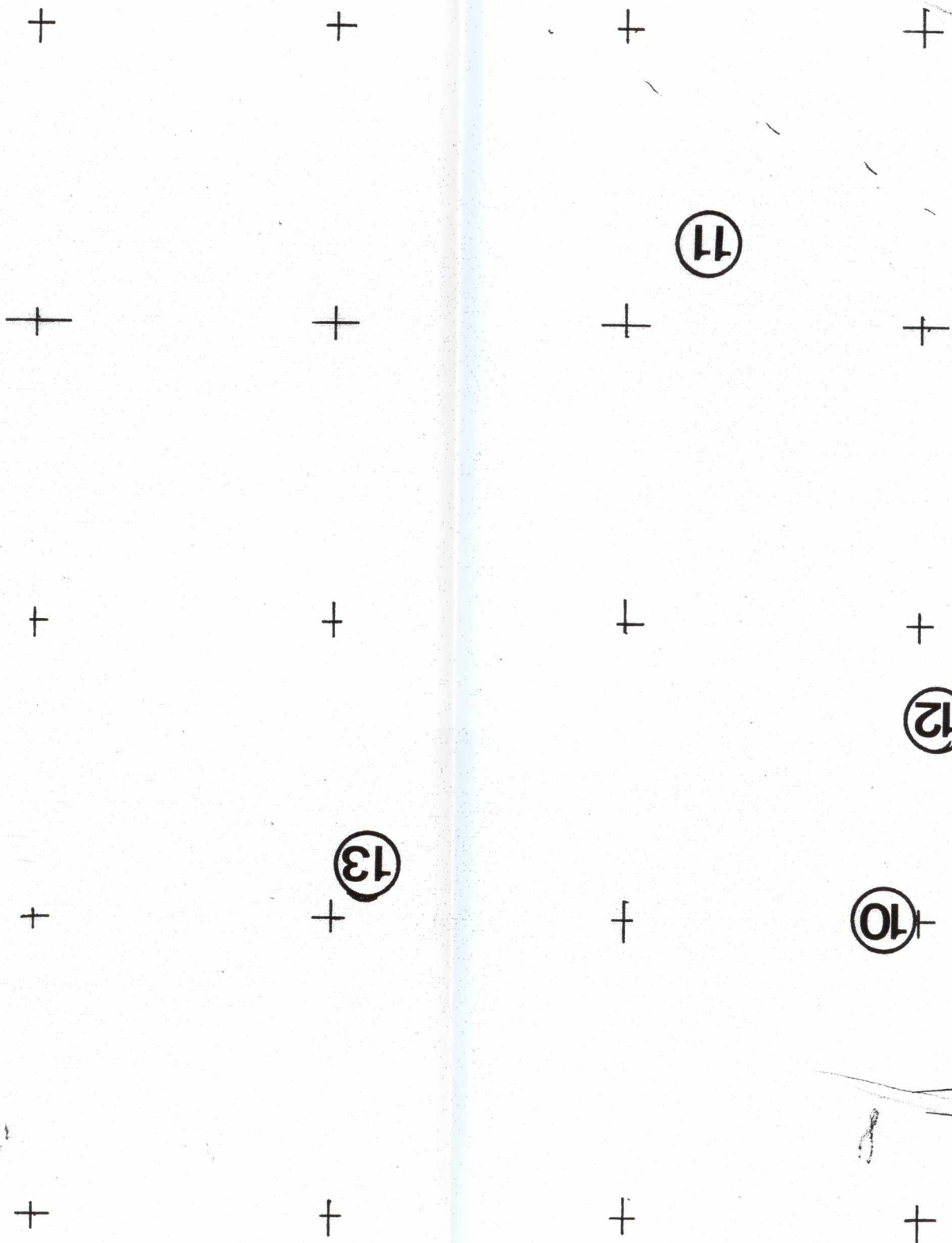
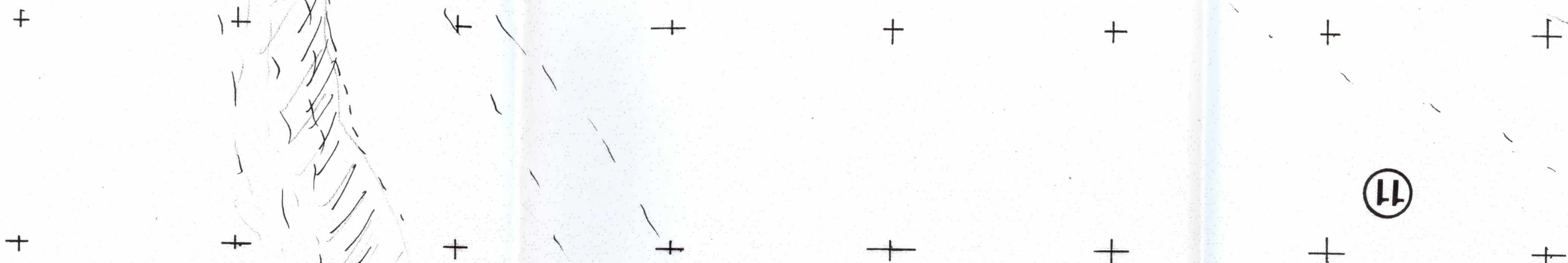
MANMADE FEATURE



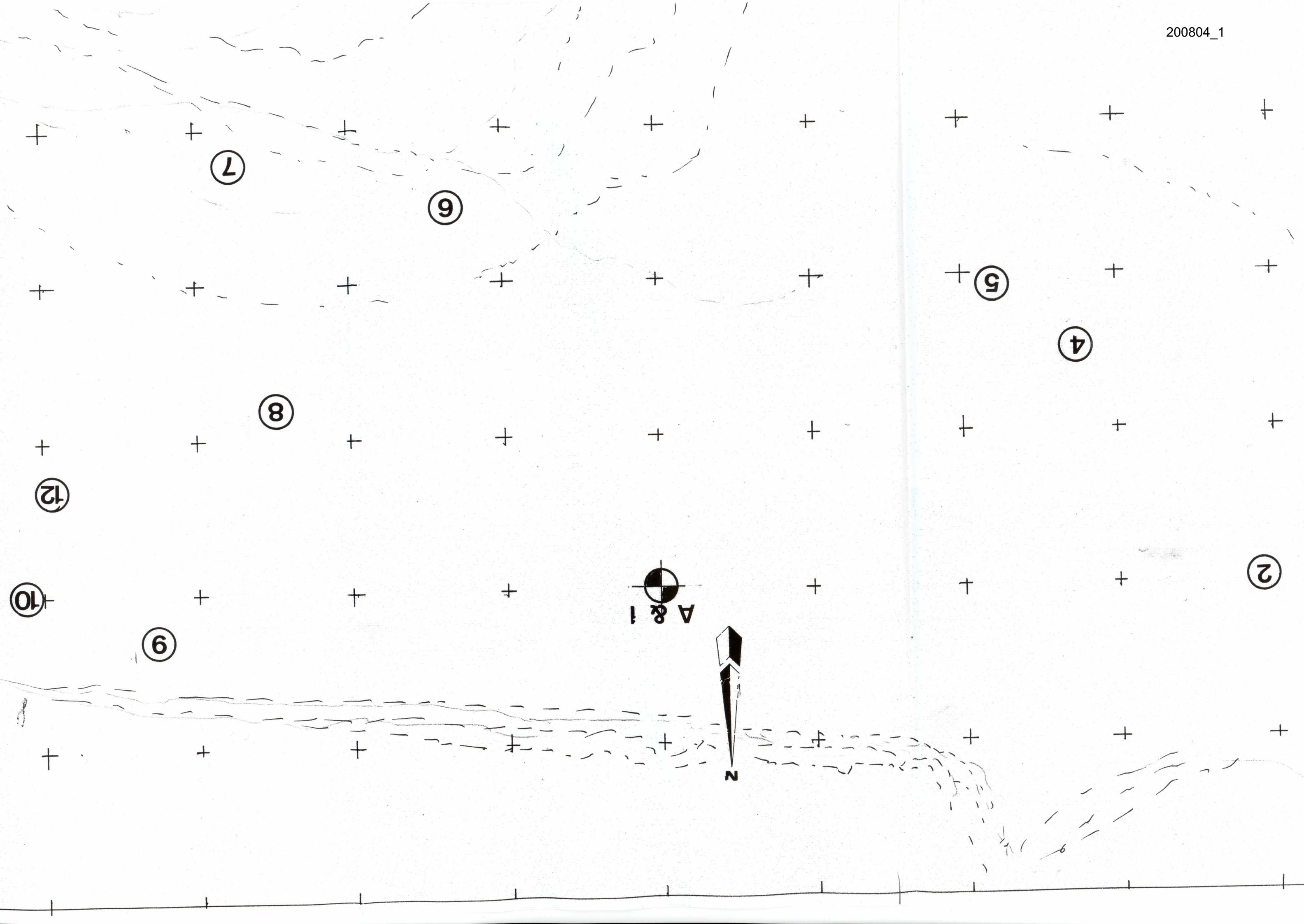
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BLAD 70 Ø.3 RØDEFJORD

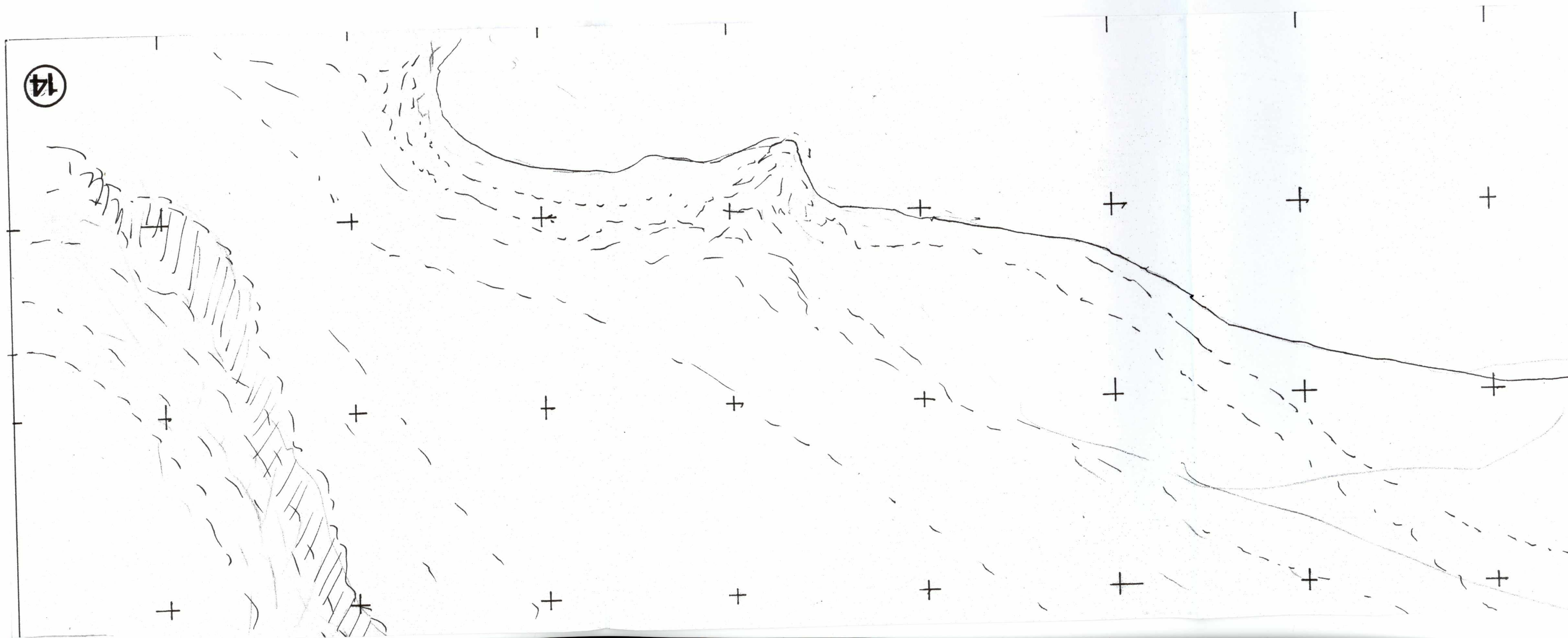
BESIGTIGET AF J.V.STENICO / R.WOOLMORE  
DATO 13 / 08 / 2008



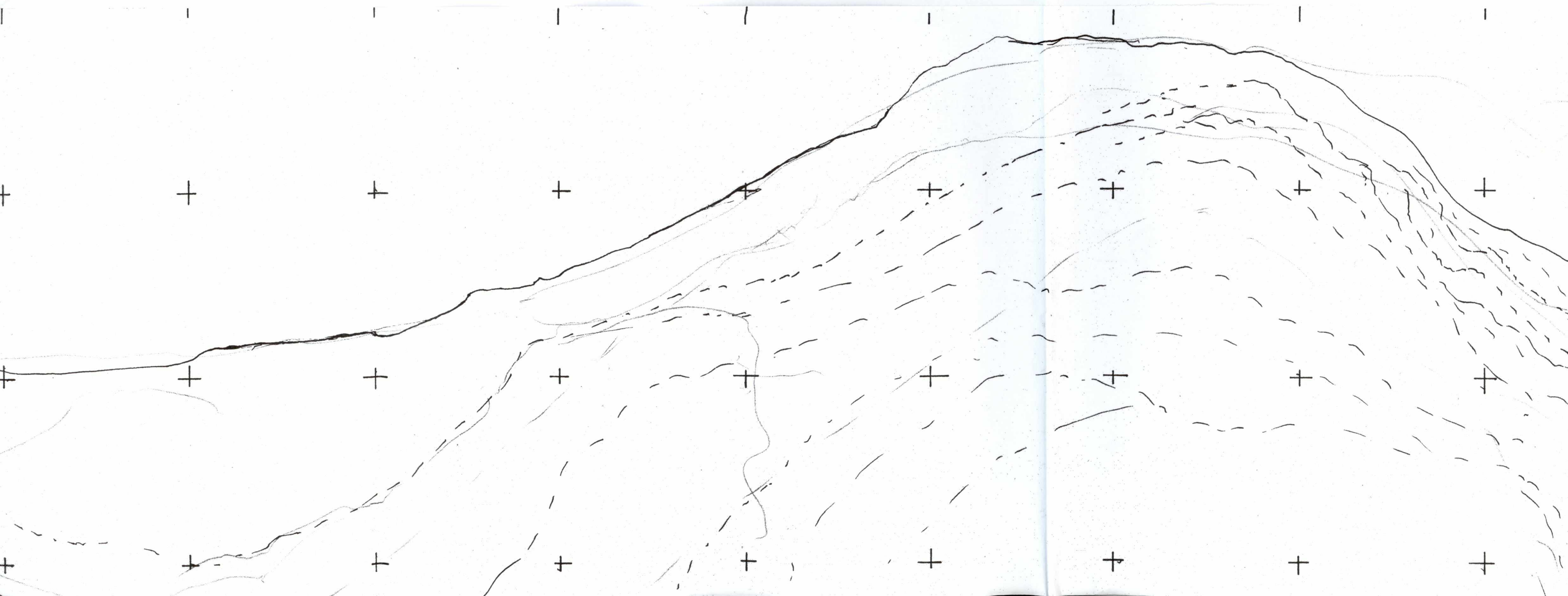




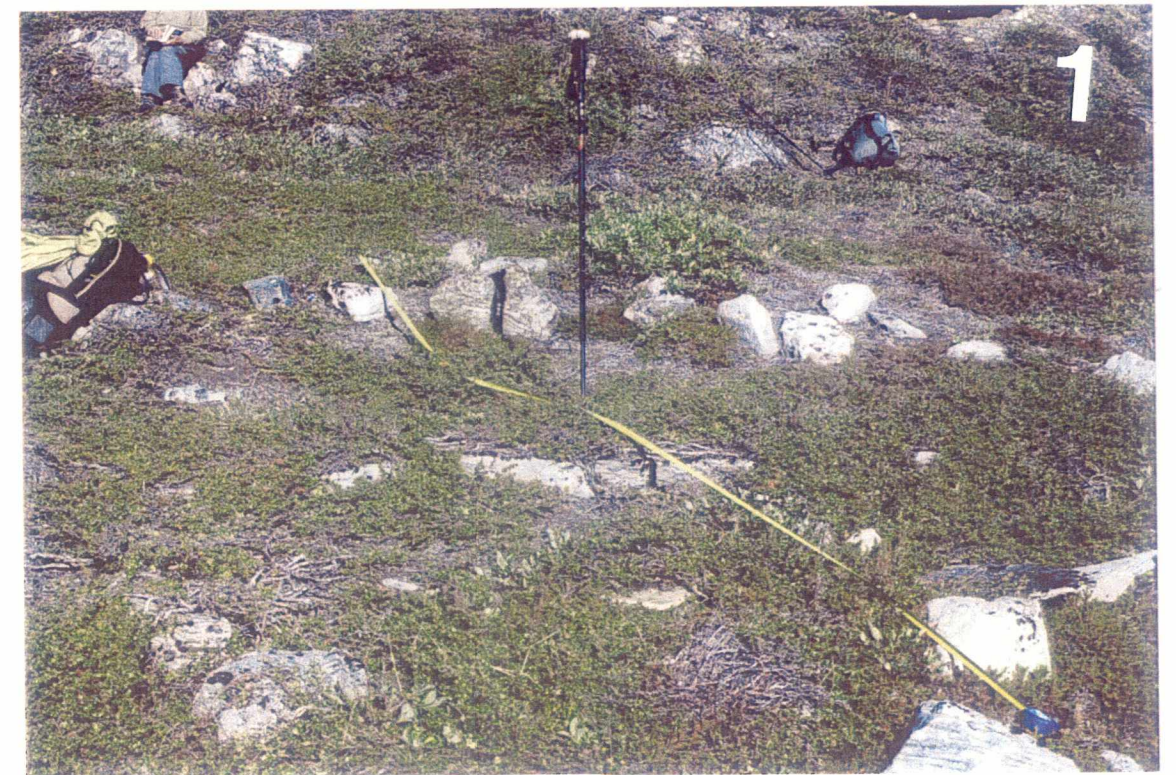
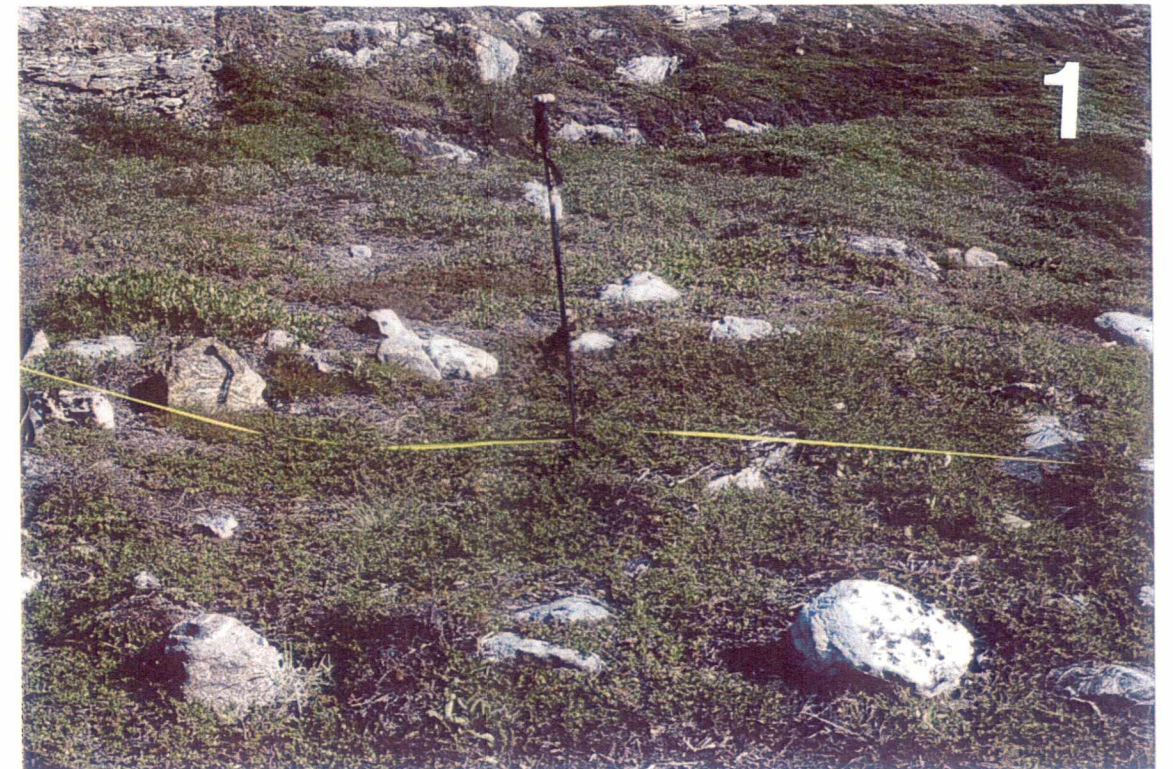








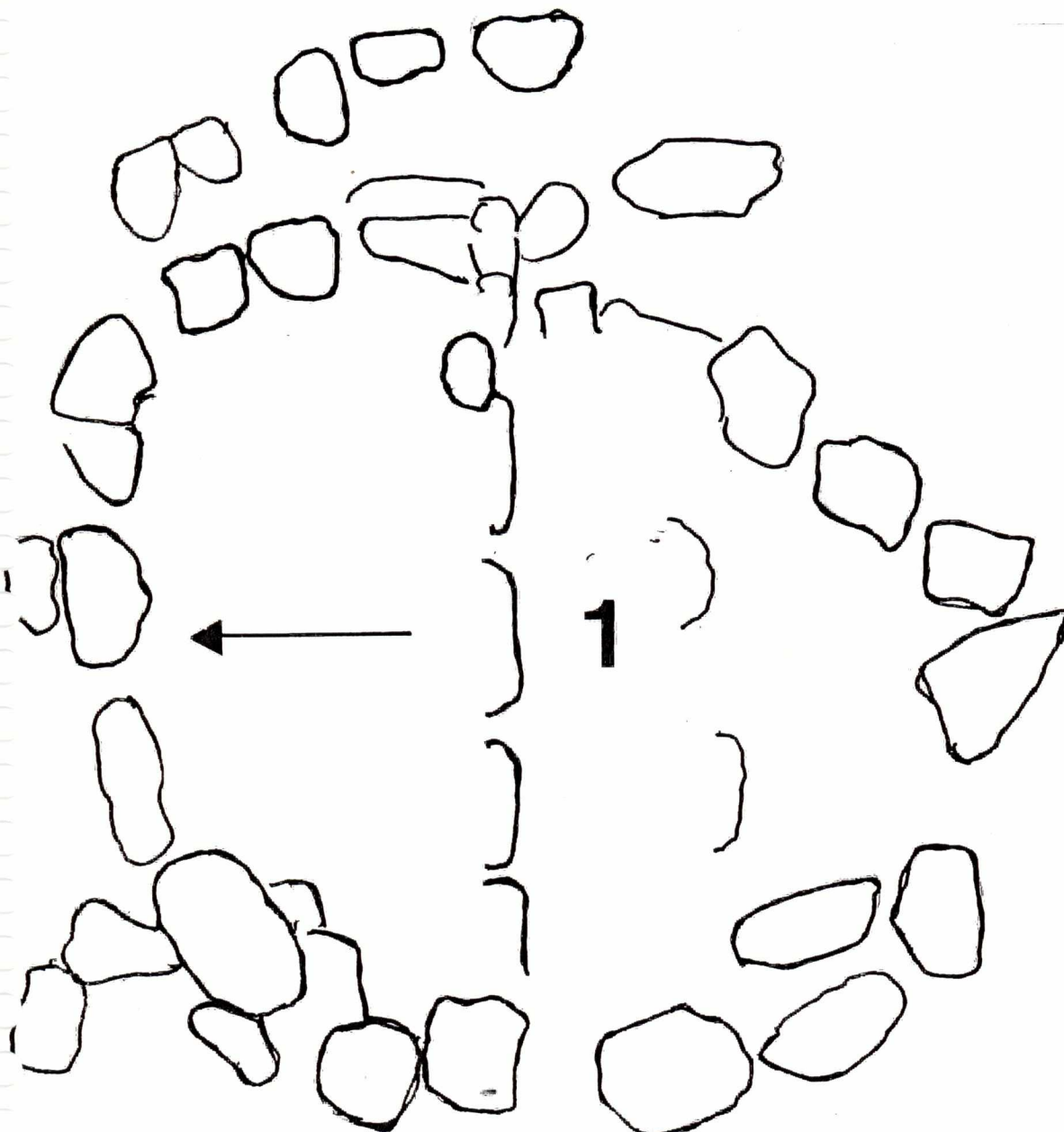




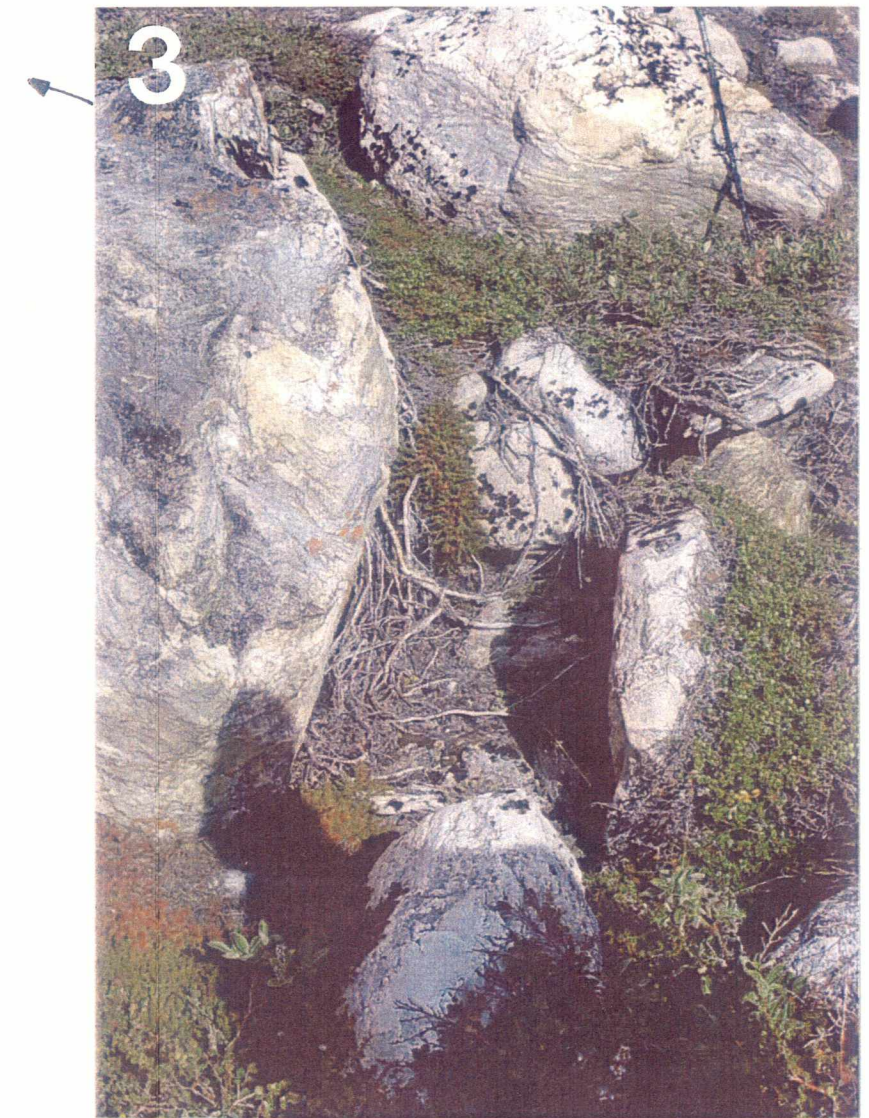


Overgrown with arctic birch, traces of a double ring

1M=3CM







## SHELTER









70 Ø3-001-007 RENODDEN

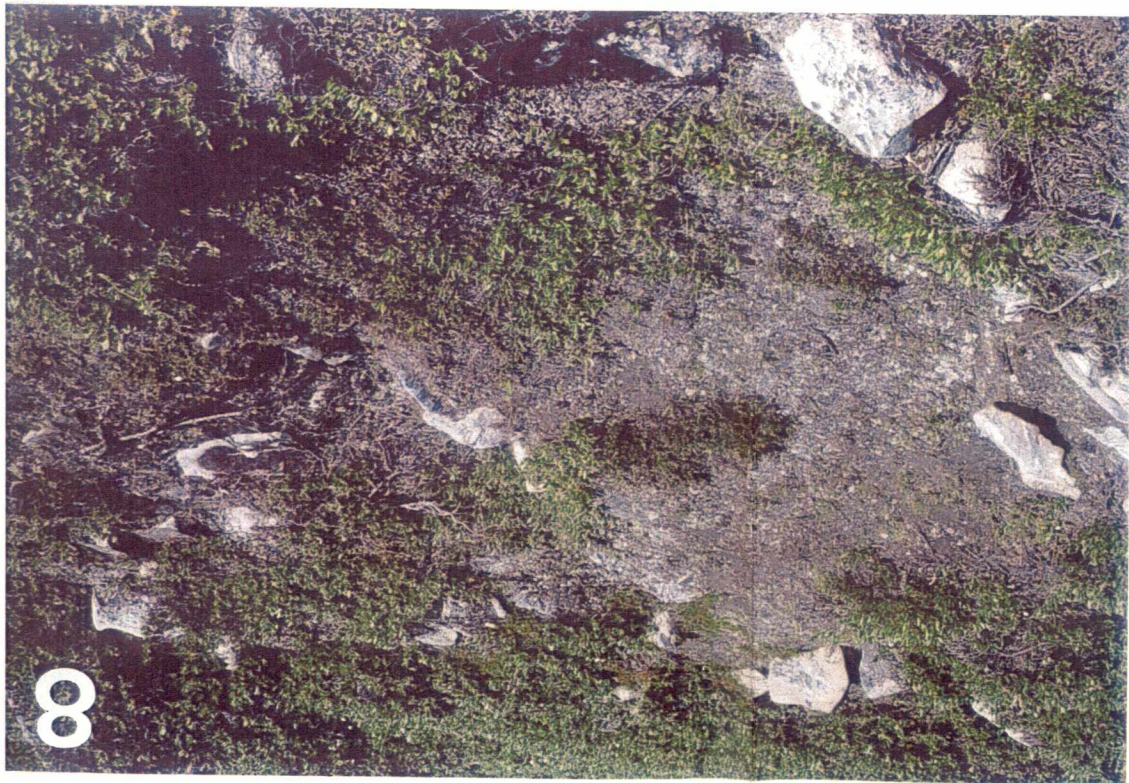












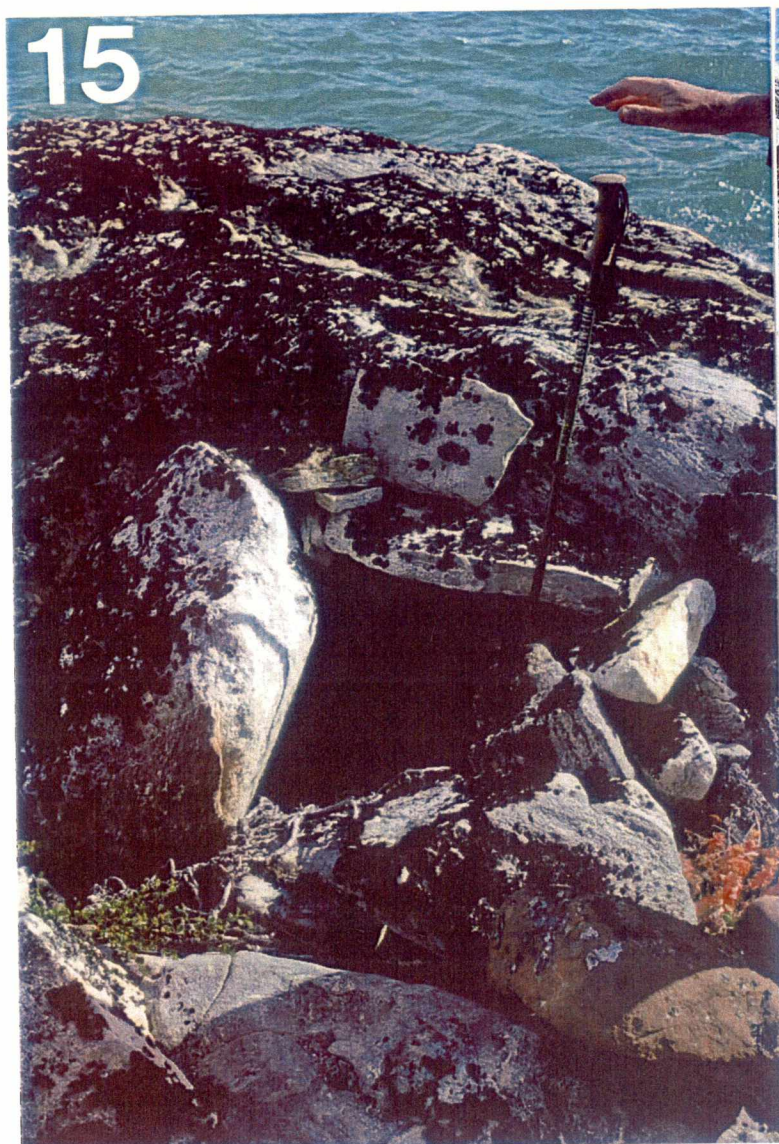




SHELTER ?





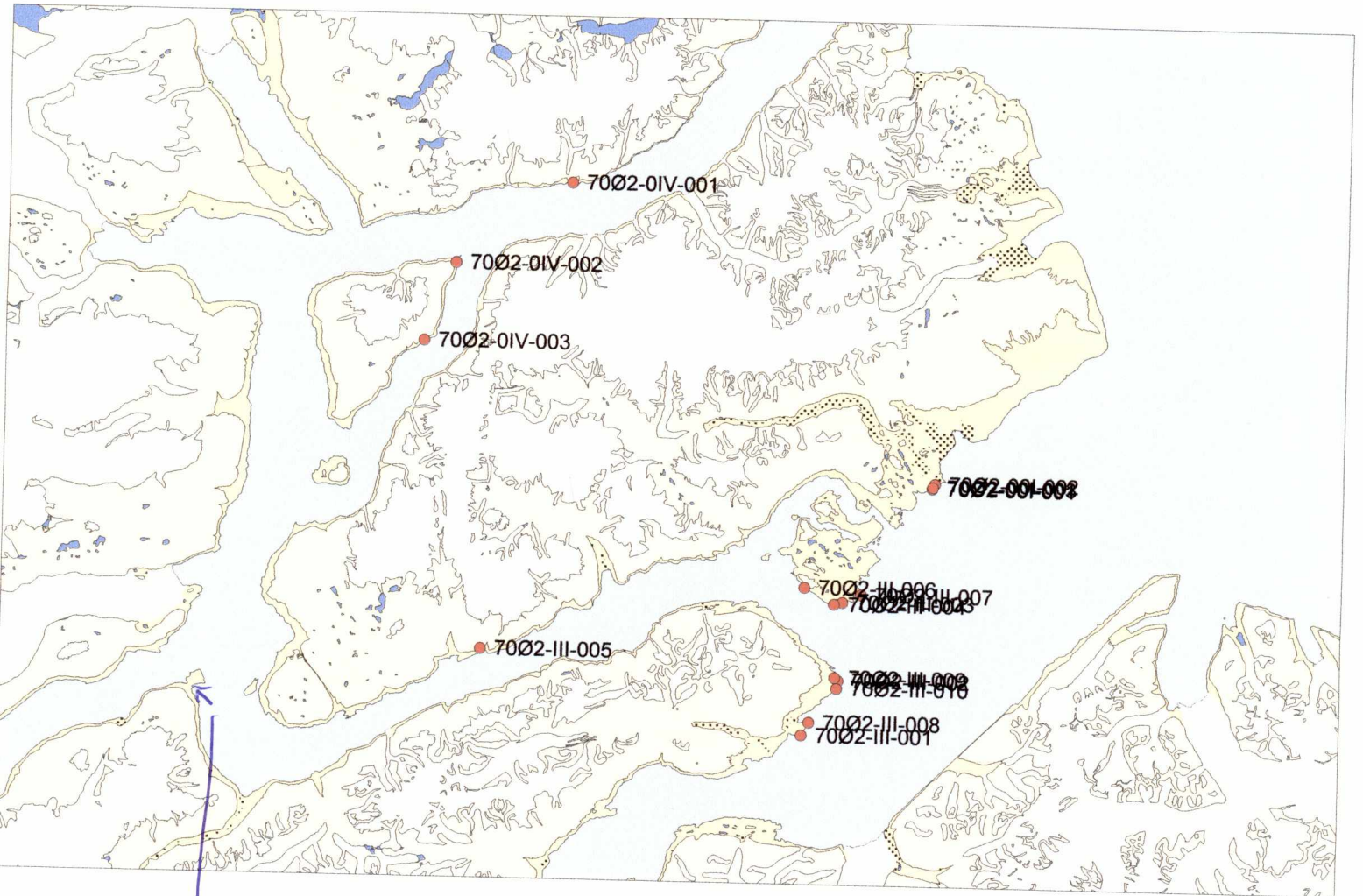


GRAVE ?









GPS hen !



## SECTION E

### DANMARK Ø

#### HEKLA HAVN 70 Ø2 – III – 003

Stenico in his previous visit to the island described his discovery of a « children playhouse » very close to Ryder's winter camp and only a few yards from some Paleo-Eskimo features.

The purpose of this year very short visit was to record the exact location of the feature.

The GPS data was quickly recorded as  $70^{\circ}28.372\text{ N}$ ,  $28^{\circ}15.812\text{ W}$ . / *Forhørl. Del en ved Rensøden*  
*- 70°28' 22,32 N 28°15' 48,72 W*



## SECTION B

### BJØRNE ØER / NANNUT QEQERTAAT

#### **NULIARDIT 71 Ø2-OII-028**

**GPS 71° 12.115 N, 25° 2 1.461 W.**

This site is found on the Northern tip of the last island of the Bear Islands archipelago and at the northern entrance to the Ofjord, placed in a sheltered position on the lee side of a little island.

The shore was very stony with only one rocky platform for dry-shod landings, and the sea here was rather shallow. The bay is surrounded on all side by steep cliffs, the depth of the nearly flat Platform which the settlement is hosted is never more than 70m.

At the foot of the Northwest facing cliff, that runs near parallel to shore, even in August, were extensive snow patches.

The area is partly vegetated near or around the winter dwellings with dwarf willow, arctic birch, cassiope and ericaceae, rocks and stones of all sizes cover most of the rest of this rock circus arena, making it difficult to distinguish what was manmade from the natural deposits. The first feature we find on landing, close to the shore was a large tent ring made with big stones with an imposing platform and next to it a large cache, all around among the stones we found several open stone mounds, of all sizes, that could be caches, graves or even targe traps. We soon realize that this could be a site that might have been inhabited in earlier times : fairly close to the shore we discovered two or more large rings, made with big stones and in the middle of one a platform made with little stones with a large cache close by and, near the shore some shallow depressions overgrown with grass.

Further from the shore among the vegetation we found six or seven, not very large winter-dwelling. All have a deep access passages partly collapsed and facing North and downward to the sea, but still giving clear access to the house.

Inside one of these houses we found the sleeping platform with built-in a small recess.

A special feature of this dwelling is a trap door that could be dropped down vertically over the passage, and thus be closed from Inside. The large flat stone used for this purpose was still *in situ*, pictures.

On the East side of the settlement not far from the rock wall of the cliff there were two large boulders facing each other, and under both of them we found a recess not very high +/- 70cm and of variable depth +/- 150cm that had been closed, on the sides, where necessary, with walls made with small stones.

The front wall (giving access to aforementioned the recess) was partly demolished and in the higher one we could distinguish few pieces of bones that we couldn't reach without damaging the rest of the wall.

This feature was enigmatic ; it could have been - a burial place, a food cache, or a small shelter. The discoverer of the site or other investigators/archaeologists, have probably discussed its likely purpose in their records which will be contained in the original file for **71 Ø-OII-028**.

Our visit was cut short by the freshening wind and a rougher sea causing us to find refuge further South, among the other islands, in deeper and with more shelter. But for this we could have spent time drawing an accurate map of the area showing the position of the features described above, and also detailed plans of some of these features.



THE SITE







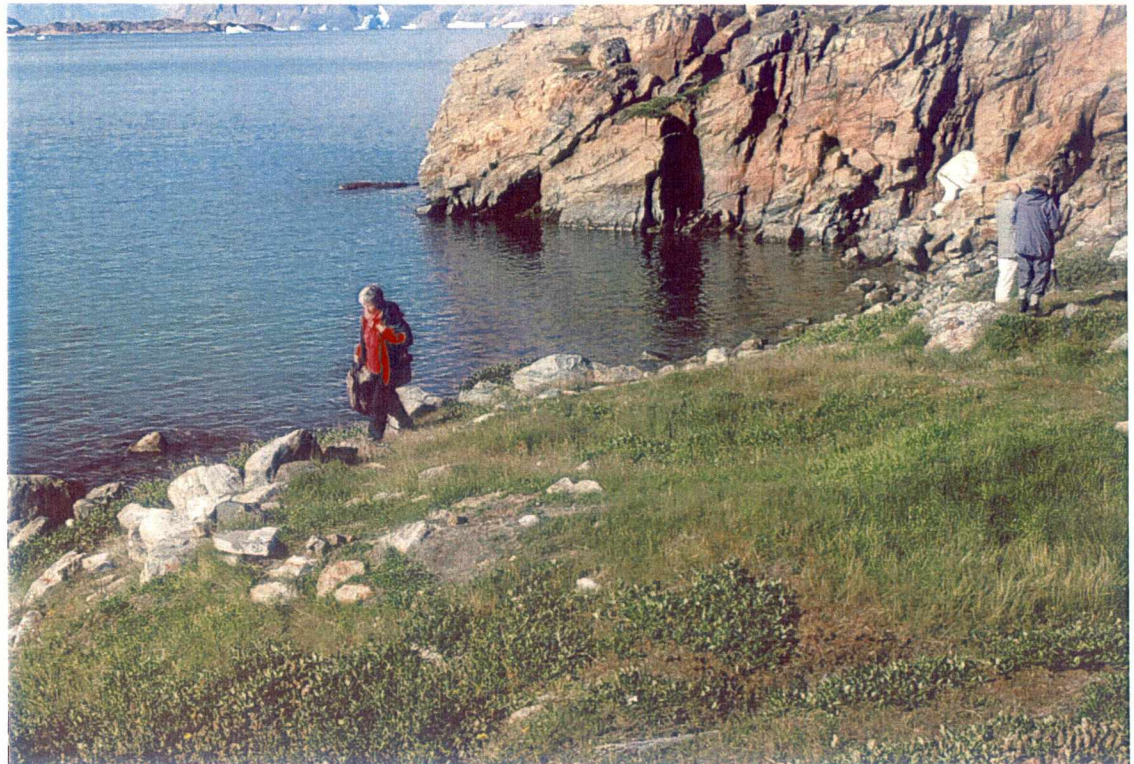
## RECENT PAST



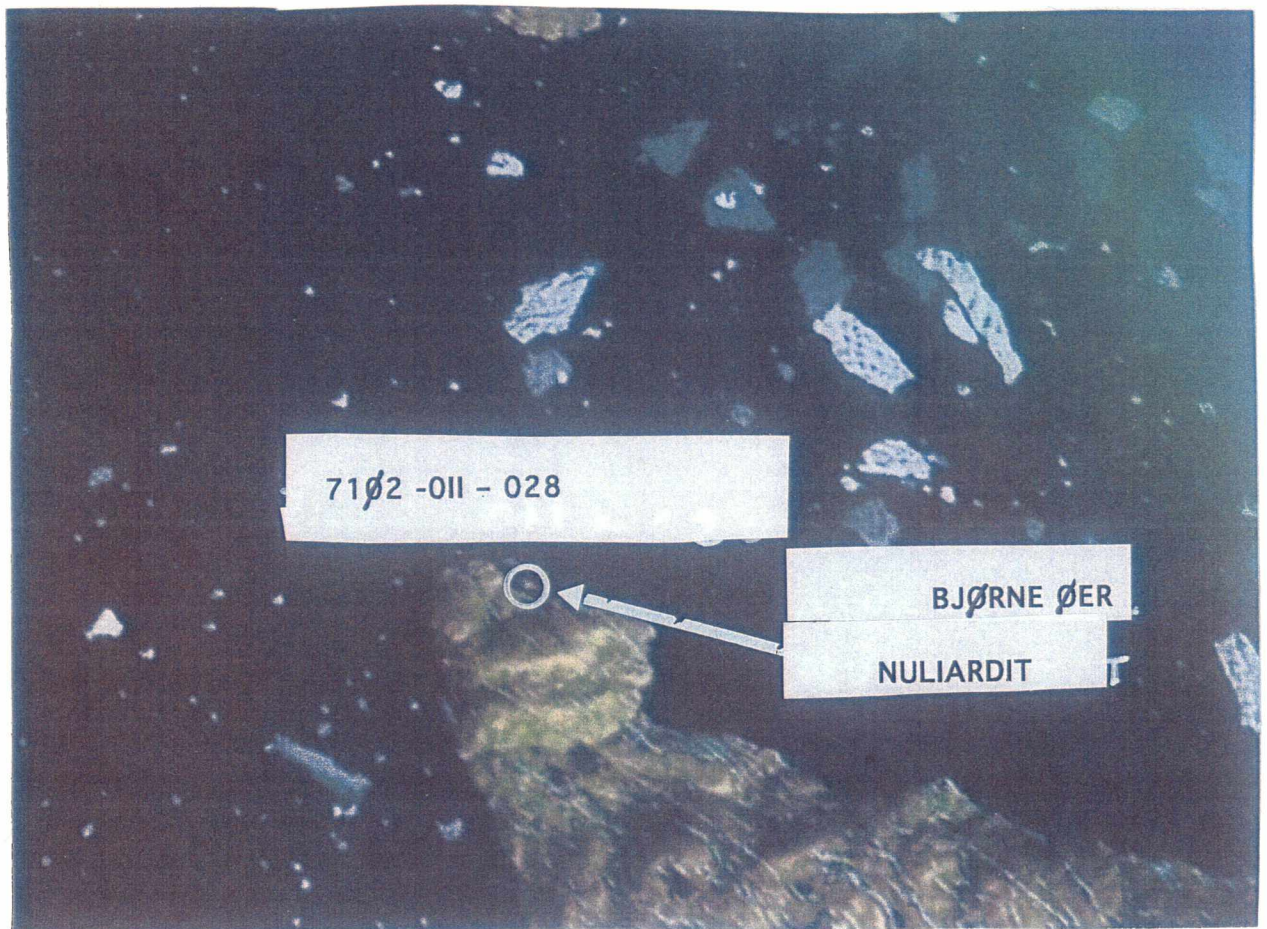
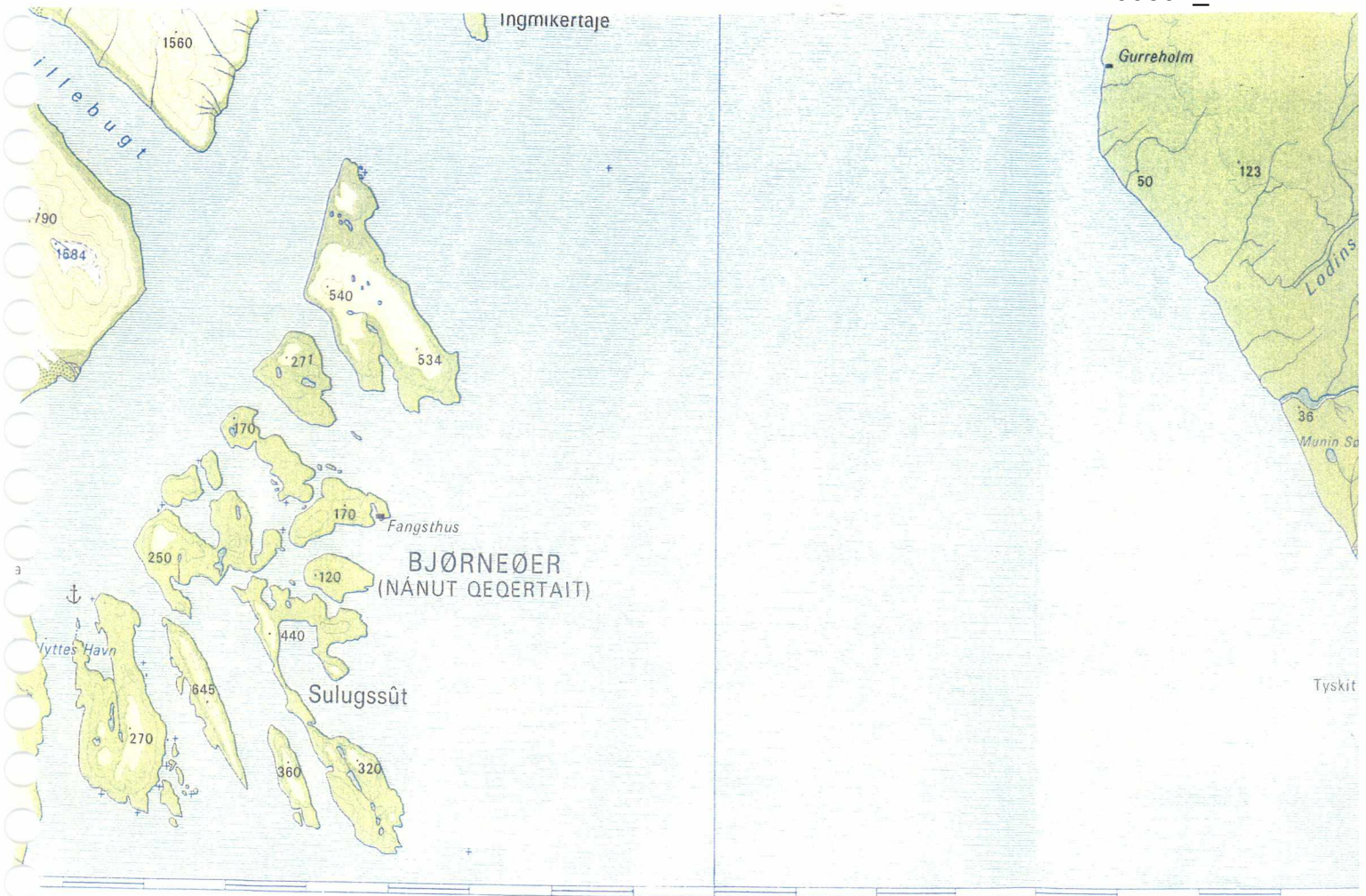




## RECENT PAST









## **SECTION C**

### **RYPEFJORD**

#### **ØFJORD/IKAASAKAJIK 70 Ø3 -00I – 003**

**GPS 70° 55.117 N, 27° 29.957 W.**

We did not know the exact name of the site and for the purpose of this report we have chosen Øfjord.

The site found is the only possible place for a landing on this very steep rocky coast at +/- 500m from the entrance to Rypefjord where we camped the 10th August.

From sea the area of the site didn't look as very promising, there are very few vegetated places and the land rises quickly to the cliffs behind.

On landing we encountered immediately a stony ground, making it very difficult to distinguish the manufactured features from the natural morphology of the site..

After having investigated the Western side of the area and founding only few caches we moved higher up towards the center of the settlement where we found a rectangular structure. Here were no tent rings, but similar rectangular structures on the few small terraces (platforms really), and near them quite a few small caches made up by few stones.

By lifting a stone covering a small cache that looked intact we discovered in its cavity a cranium (small) without jaw bone. The structure of this feature is really very uninteresting only consisting of six or seven stones and it was only curiosity that made us lift the covering stone.

Two other mounds of rocks could be a grave, but we were satisfied that the site presented characteristics of much older occupation, probably Paleo-Eskimo. No Thule type of structure was apparent nor we could recognize kitchen midden type of vegetation.

We have not seen many Paleo-Eskimo settlements so we can only presume that it had not been occupied for a very long time. It would be interesting to be able to see the original records prepared by the archaeologists who first discovered the site.

#### **C.HOFMANN HALVØ 70 Ø3-00I-004**

**GPS 70° 55.246 N, 27° 40.995 W.**

In 2003 Stenico described this settlement in his note 3) as follows :

*This site is situated at the entrance of Rypefjord across from Storø on a long narrow terrace running East-West and dropping sharply (ca. 12m) into the sea. The site is accessible from a small rocky beach or by landing directly on the rocks under the terrace.*

*The site is well known to today's hunters from Scoreby Sund and even the archaeologist are aware of its existence, the only likely references, I found since returning from this expedition are in the Sandell's report at pages 26 and 83.(2) 1)*

*The settlement is spread, on different levels, along 200m of the coast. On the eastern side of the terrace there are two intact graves set quite apart.*

*At the foot of a sharply rising hill and 40m from the sea there is a small bog that originally in its basin received the melted snow waters from the higher grounds. Immediately to the right there are a succession of 4 or 5 winter dwellings deeply set in the bank and fairly overgrown with dwarf willows and grasses.*

*These houses have short half collapsed entrance passages the exit finishing on the dropping bank and all facing SSW.*



*Further west along the terrace there are two more dwellings with longer collapsed passages with the entrance always facing South.*

*On the continuation of the terrace and on higher rising grounds some tent rings can be detected and several structures that could be permanent meat caches.*

*Today the site is used by the hunters as a base when they look for muskoxen, we found bones and craniums of recently shot animals.*

*Judging by the lush growth of vegetation in and around the dwellings we can guess that the kitchen middens have quite a consistency indicating a fairly and/or recent (Thule) occupation.*

*It would be interesting to hear more about this site after a proper investigation. I am sorry that this site could not be the object of a mapping exercise, but this time I didn't have the relevant equipment or the time to do it !*

We landed here to check the GPS data and to draw a map of the settlement, very little can be added to the previous investigation, this is what we found.

GPS reading in **A 70° 55.246N 27° 40.995 W** , 5 winter dwellings + 2 graves and 2 meat caches

GPS reading in **6 70°55.265 N 27° 41.332 W** 4 winter dwellings 3 with short collapsed passages of which two hardly recognizable + 1 meat cache .

We confirm the existence of the two graves on the Eastern side of the settlement.

Some pictures of features (6,7,8,9,)



ØFJORD/IKASAASAKAJIK 70Ø3 OII 003

