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KRUMME LANGSØ EXPEDITION DPC 09 – 113

29TH JUNE – 22ND JULY 2009

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES

BY

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GARTOCHARN - KIRBY STEPHEN - BRUXELLES

2009

KRUMME LANGSØ EXPEDITION DPC 09 – 113**29TH JUNE – 22ND JULY 2009****MEMBERS OF THE EXPEDITION: KATHLEEN CARTWRIGHT, NEVILLE CARTWRIGHT, KATE LEA, MICHAEL LEA, JEAN STENICO.****REPORT, PHOTOGRAPHS, SKETCHES, MAP, AND PLAN OF FINDS OF POSSIBLE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST IN THE KRUMME LANGSØ REGION.****INTRODUCTION**

This expedition was undertaken early in the season to be able to observe flora and fauna at the beginning of the Arctic Summer. Ethno-archaeological investigations were not envisaged as the region had already been visited previously, by an Arcturus Expedition party with both Kathleen Cartwright and Jean Stenico in 2004, without finds of archaeological pertinence. The remoteness of the region from the coast and known Inuit sites and the orographic situation, led us to believe that in the absence of literature or information on human occupation of the region, such an eventuality was not to be taken into consideration.

However Mike Lea and Iain Roy, in 2007 during the expedition DPC 07-009, observed some enigmatic features that he reported, on his return, to Nuuk, and it is mostly these features that, subsequently, we investigated and verified after visiting the upper lake and having found the features described in Section A. Morphology or composition of lateral or terminal moraines and alluvial deposits and traces with “leftover” by previous modern expeditions (geological) have sometimes given us problems of correct identification, but we overcome our eagerness by submitting the presumed finds for common appraisal.

We flew to the well known airstrip of Sødalen on the 29th June and, as the lake was still covered with ice, for the next ten days we visited, observed, and climbed the surrounding valleys and mountain chains where an important musk ox population (+/- 150) has extremely rich grazing options with practically no predators. We sailed to the head of the lake on 12th July. After our first confirmed rediscovery, we investigated both side of the lake and the fertile terraces leading to an altitude of 1239m overlooking the seracs of the Eastern branch of the Walterhausen Gletscher and the irregular course of the glacial melt rivers feeding Krumme Langsø. After five days we sailed South to the other end of the lake and on the way visited, for a short time, the small island on the narrow stretch of the lake opening Eastward onto the Promenadedal. The next two days we investigated both sides of the terminal moraine cut deeply by the river outlet before creating the gorges of the Johan Davidsen Dal. On 22nd July after returning to Sødalen we flew back to Island via Mestersvig and Constable Pynt.

MAPS & PLACENAMES

During our expedition and for the purpose of this report we used the 1:250.000 scale plans:

74. Ø. 3 (Ole Rømmers Land),

74. Ø. 2 (Clavering),

73 . Ø. 2 (Ymers Ø),

73 . Ø. 1 (Hold with Hope),

in the Danmark Grønland series produced by the Geodætisk Institute, Kobenhaven and for the present report satellite images from Google Earth for a higher and variable scale definition of details.

For the identification of placenames the above mentioned reference maps were fairly poor and we have named a few places that recur in our paper: “the narrows” for the two alluvial deposits restricting the Upper Krumme Langsø, the “Sødalen Delta” for the alluvial flood plains at the end of the Sødalen (valley) and the “Hjørnebjørget Island” for the small island/peninsula where the Krumme Langsø lake swings round to the South.

PHOTOGRAPHY

These notes have been complemented with pictures taken in the 2004, 2007 and 2009 expeditions by Kathleen Cartwright, Kate and Michael Lea, David Shaw and Jean Stenico. As some digital records have been misplaced, it is possible that the present notes will receive, at a future date, an addendum for the Hjørnebjørget island and the Lower Krumme Langsø sites.

EQUIPMENT

We had at our disposal a Garmin *Etrex* GPS navigator that had been recalibrated and an improvised measuring cord in sections of 10cm, 50cm and 1m to the length of 10m. For the only tent ring plan in this report, in the absence of mm paper, we improvised a grid.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Section A covers the features discovered in the Upper Krumme Langsø area.

Section B presents some enigmatic features found in the "Sødalen Delta"

Section C presents the features discovered on the "Hjørnebjørget Island"

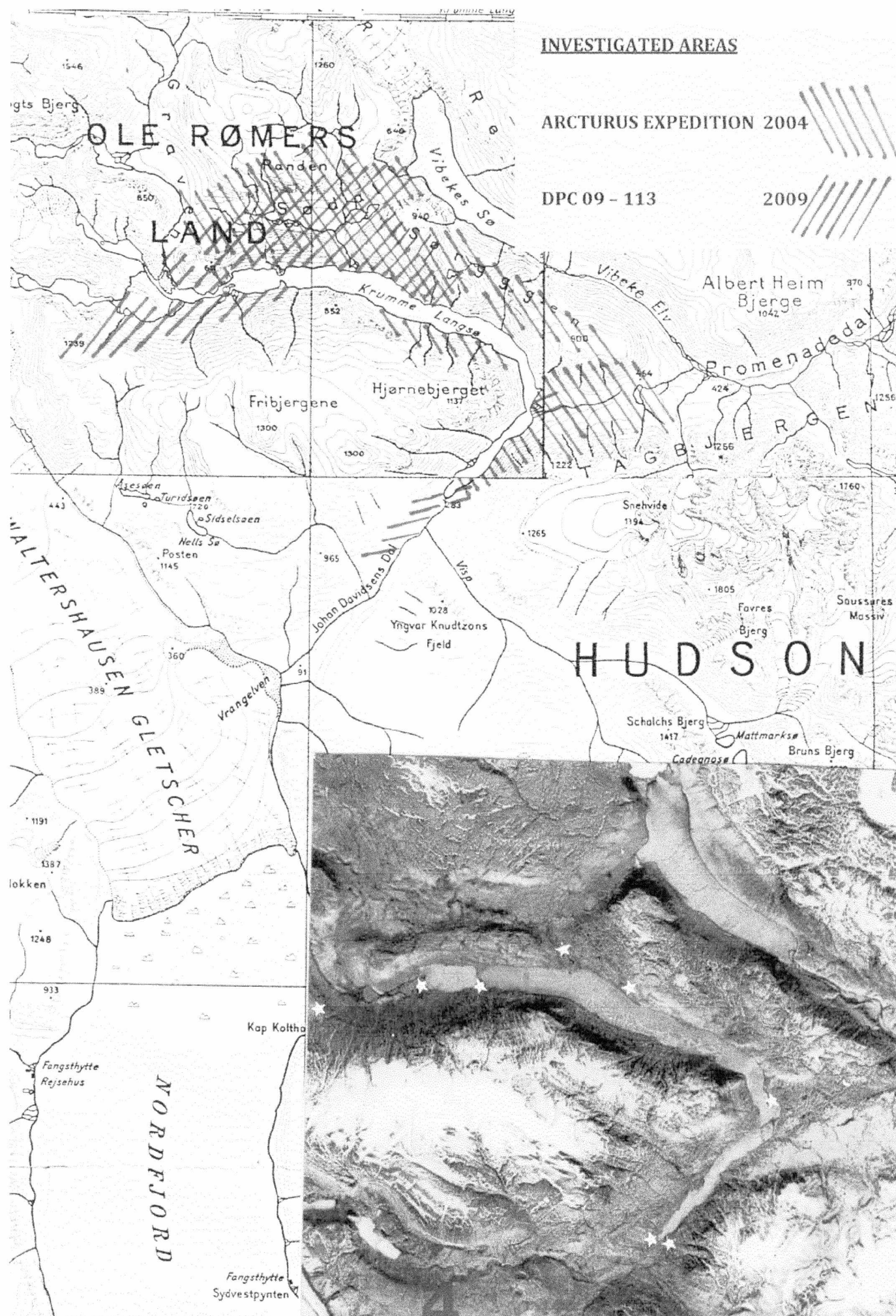
Section D present the features discovered on both side of the lake outlet of the Lower Krumme Langsø

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation ,especially Kirsten Fadnæs Eriksen, formerly of the Danish Polar Center and the Greenland Home Rule Authority, for giving permission to visit the National Park in North-East Greenland; the pilots and staff from Norlandair for air transport; POLOG for arranging flights and logistic in Mestersvig and the members of previous Arcturus expeditions for the detailed information received on some aspects of this report.

REFERENCES

1. Richter, Søren .*A contribution to the Archaeology of North-East Greenland*. Skrifter om Svalbard og Ishavet N.63 - I kommisjon hos Jacob Dybwad, Oslo , 1934
2. Glob P.V. *Eskimo settlements in North-East Greenland*. Meddeleser om Grønland 1944 No.6 Kobenhaven 1946.
3. Corner ,R. W. M. *Botanical Report of the Arcturus Expedition to Krumme Langsø, Ole Rømmers Land, North-East Greenland, 2004*. Unpublished .
4. Shaw, David. *Krumme Langsø North-East Greenland – July 2004*. Unpublished account.
5. Lea , Michael. *Krumme Langsø, North-East Greenland*. Unpublished reports on expeditions: DPC 532-615 (2005); DPC 07-009 (2007) including information on some sites revisited in 2009.



SECTION A

UPPER KRUMME LANGSØ

On arriving from Sødalen and negotiating the shallow waters of the “the narrows” we landed and set up camp near the mouth of the river descending from the Graven watershed and the seracs of the eastern branch of the Walterhausen Gletscher. The meandering river charged with silt and morainic material has created a series of oxbow lakes and in between has deposited gravel that is now covered by vegetation and has become a wet grazing pasture for a sizeable musk ox population.

The successive lateral terraced moraines, on the Fribjergene range, have been cut deeply by seasonal melt waters from the top highlands snow fields, leaving on the plains below long deposits of gravelly materials that emerge, untouched by vegetation, in the surrounding pastures.

It was on one of these deposits just behind our camp and 80m from the lake that we found our first trace of Inuit occupation of the region; this prompted the investigation of all the alluvial and lower lateral terraces around the last lake on both sides of the river and higher up wherever we saw grazing possibilities.

74. Ø. 3 (1) and (2) GPS 74° 05.399' N , 24° 11.695' W Elev. 169 m

Alluvial deposit 54m long NW/SE slightly sloping to its largest width, 6 m high, with a flat and firm top of fine gravel and steep sides covered by rounded stones. At its SE end two features were discovered.

The larger a double tent ring **(1)** with a central passage and possible hearth in the middle, on the other, 6m further down, on the verge of the terrace, an enigmatic regular carpet of medium stones **(2)** (1.40x 2.40 m) covered with orange lichens, of rectangular form with darker soil in between the stones and some vegetation. The two features were measured and a plan of the tent ring was established.

No traces of bones were found on top or on the sides of the site. Pictures and plan

74. Ø. 3 (3) GPS 74° 05.665' N , 24° 06.475' W Elev. 168 m “The narrows”

West side peninsula of “the narrows”, alluvial terrace +/- 7m high reducing the width of the shallow waters of the passage to the last lake. The deposits are a composition of gravel and small to large stones.

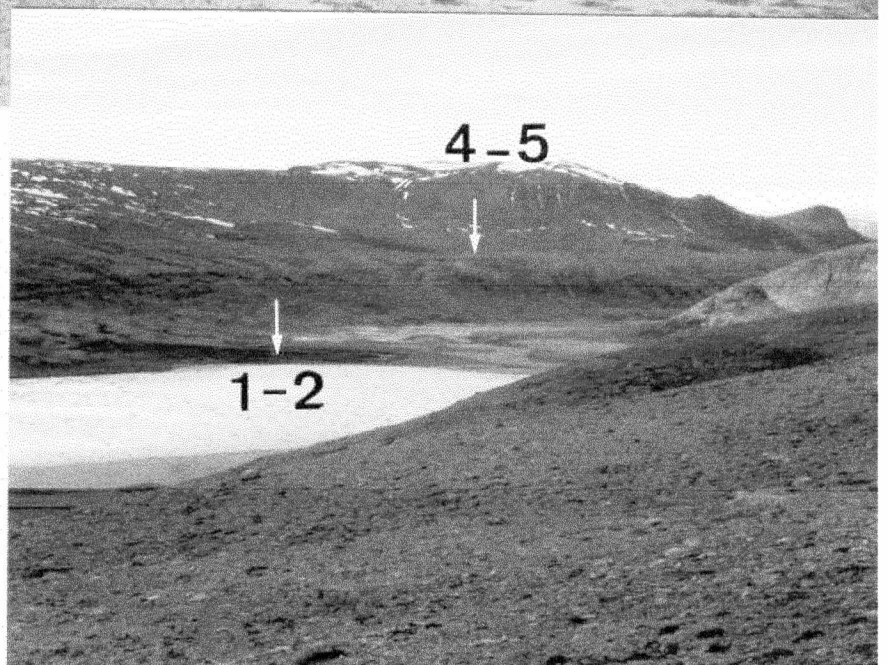
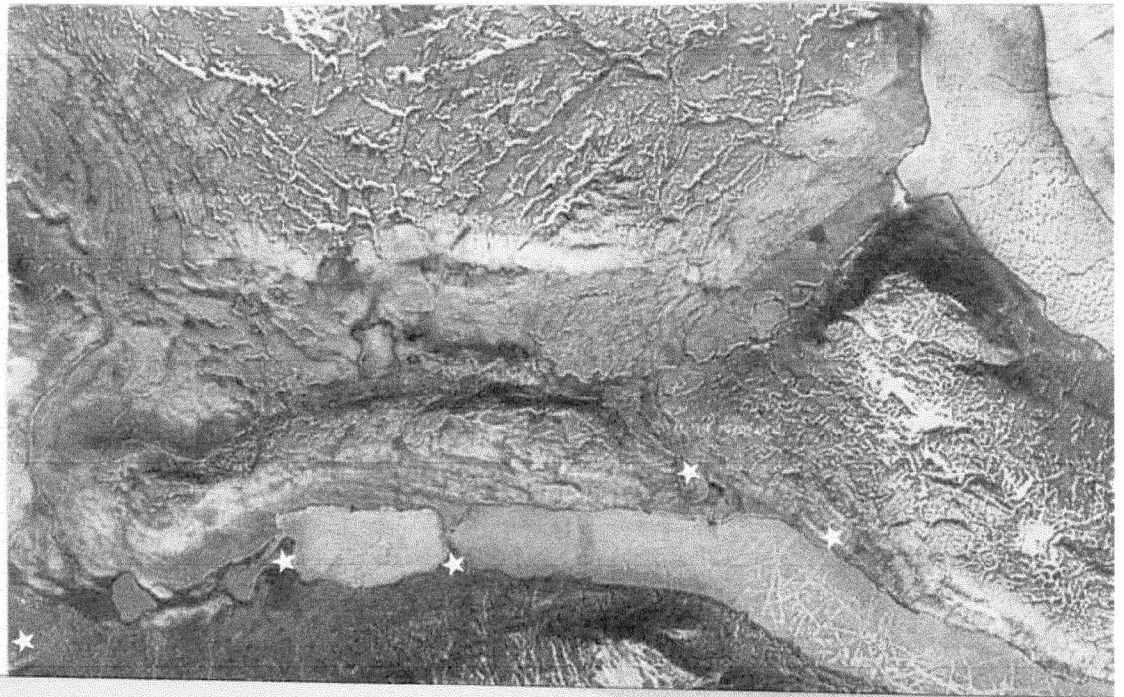
On both sides of the peninsula there are ample flat pastures. Here we looked for possible caches and tent rings, one or two enigmatic features attracted our attention **(3)**, but nature might well have again led us on the wrong path!

74. Ø. 3 (4) and (5) GPS 74° 04.352' N , 24° 20.705' W Elev. 466 m

In examining the lateral morainic terraces, that from top to the bottom of the valley signalled the progressive retreat of the Walterhausen Gletscher in the Fribjergene watershed, we climbed to a ridge leading to a plateau meadow with some shallow melt water lakes just below the summit, altitude 1239m .

Here looking down on the musk ox herds grazing we found two large open caches; the GPS was taken at the first **(4)** the second cache **(5)** being found a few hundred meters further on. Pictures.

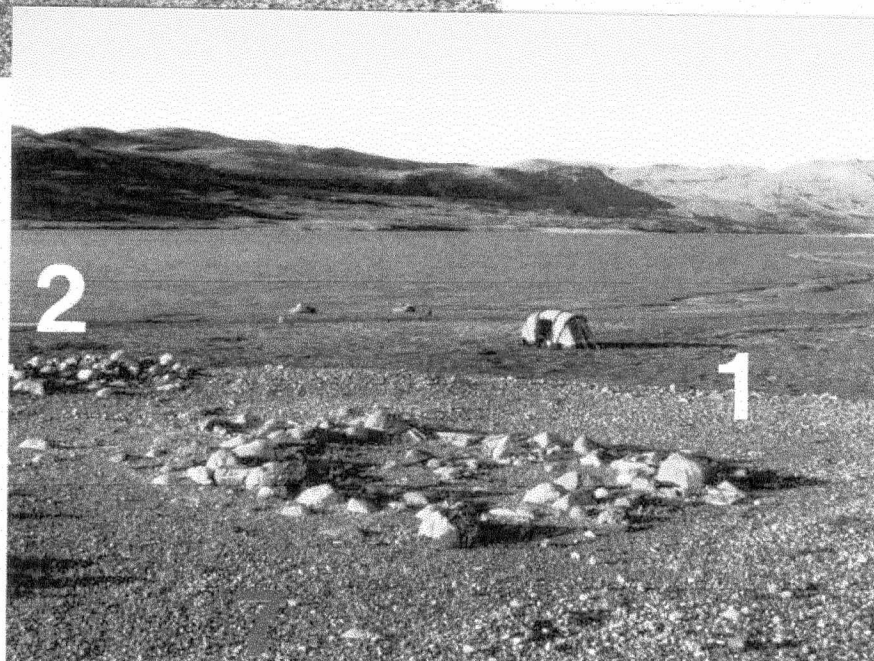
UPPER KRUMME LANGSØ 74 Ø.3



UPPER KUMME LANGSØ 74 Ø.3

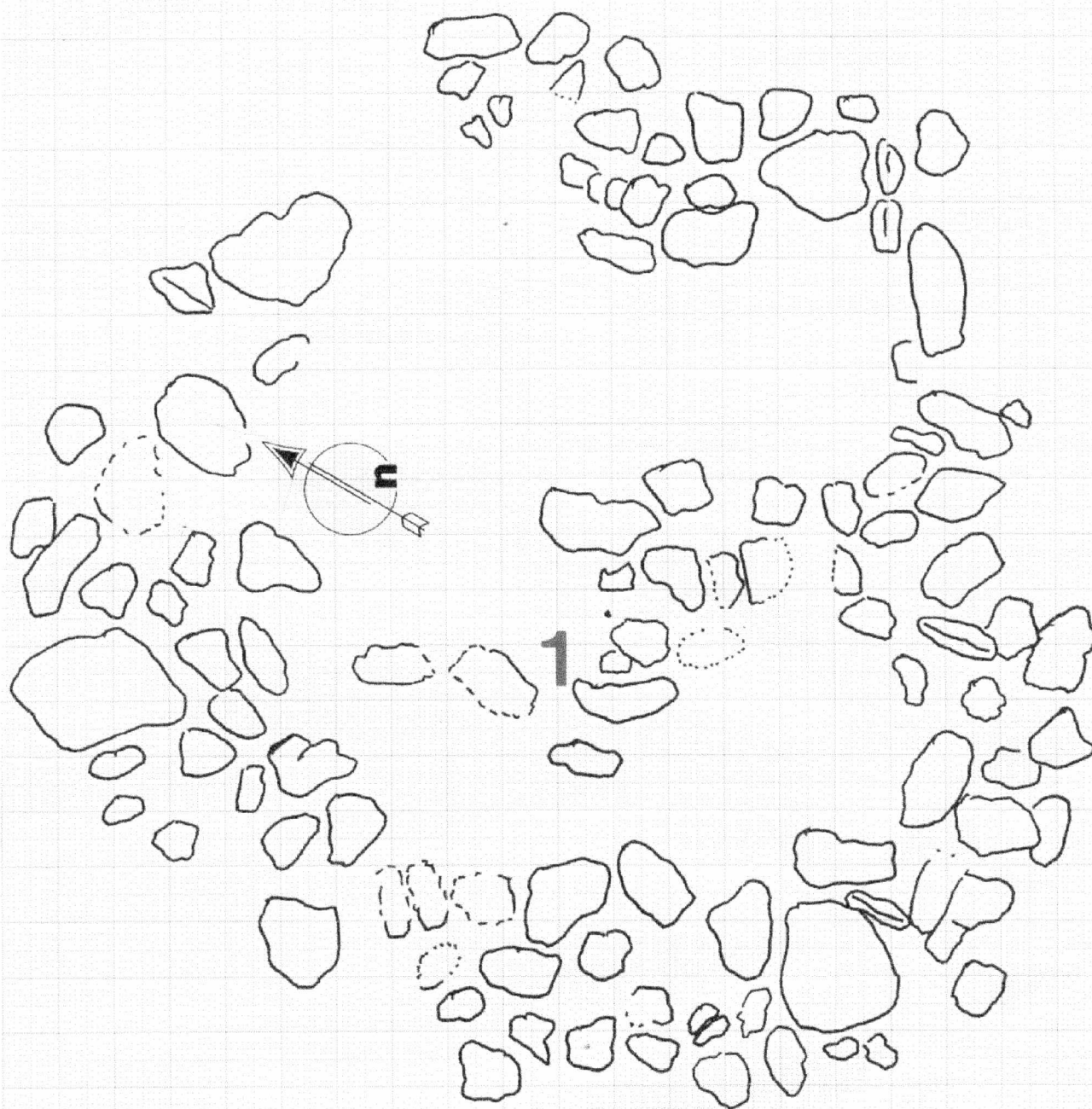


GPS 74° 05.399 N 24° 11.695 W - ELEV. 169M



UPPER KRUMME LANGSØ 74 Ø.3

GPS 74°05.399'N 24°11.695'W



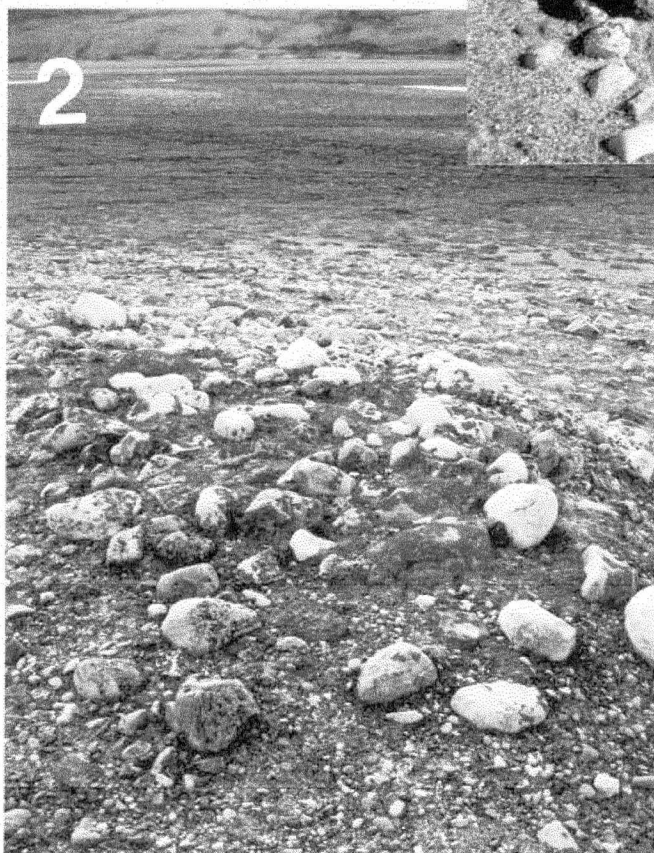
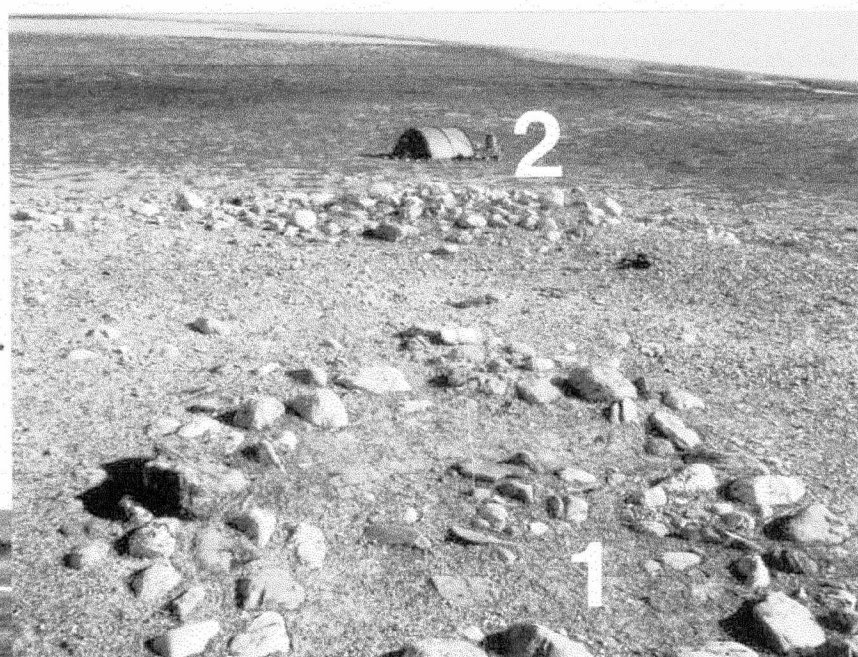
1M=4CM

In the trasfer from the home made grid to mm.paper we discovered a 1° error only.

UPPER KRUMME LANGSØ 74 Ø.3



UPPER KRUMME LANGSØ 74 Ø.3



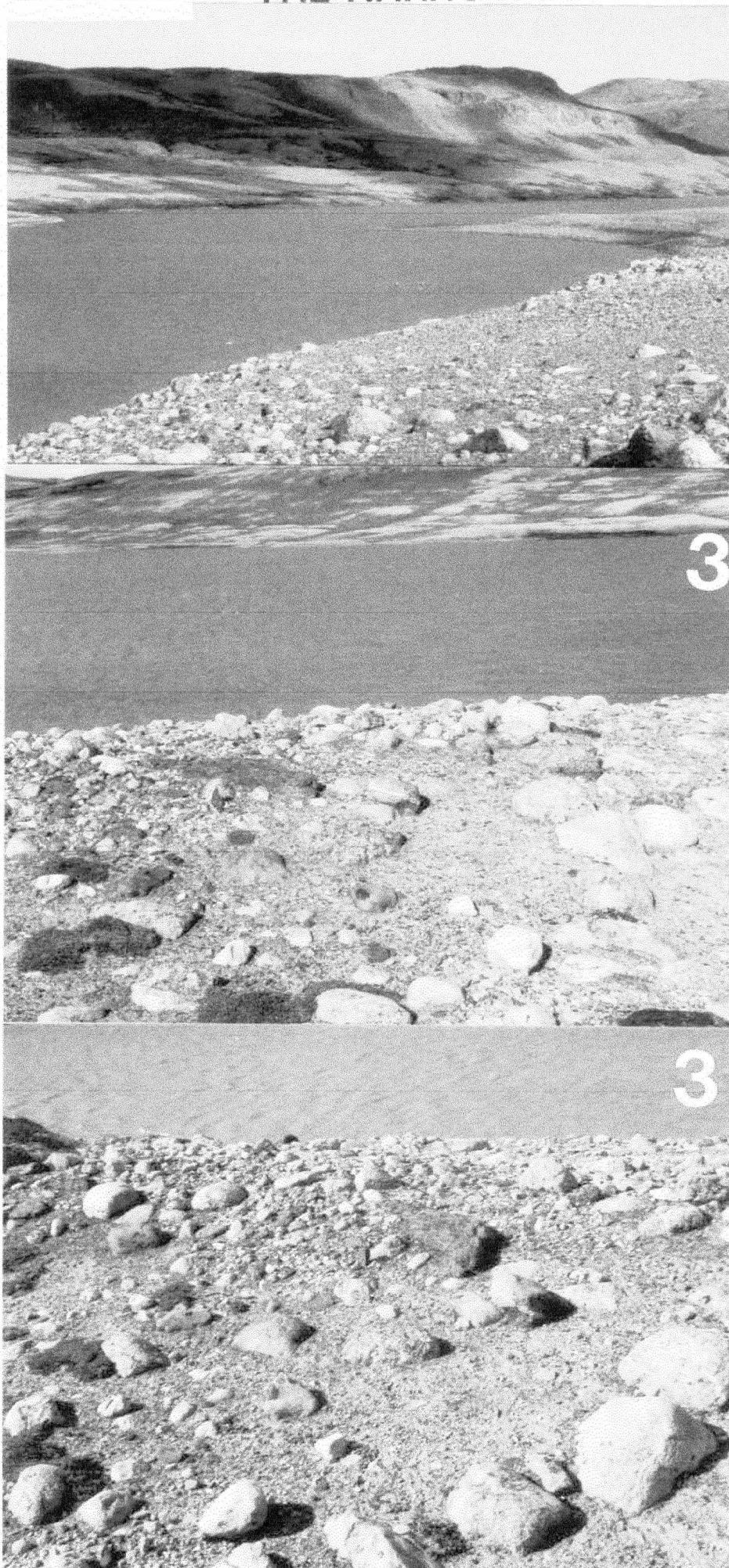
10

UPPER KUMME LANGSØ

THE NARROWS 74 Ø.3

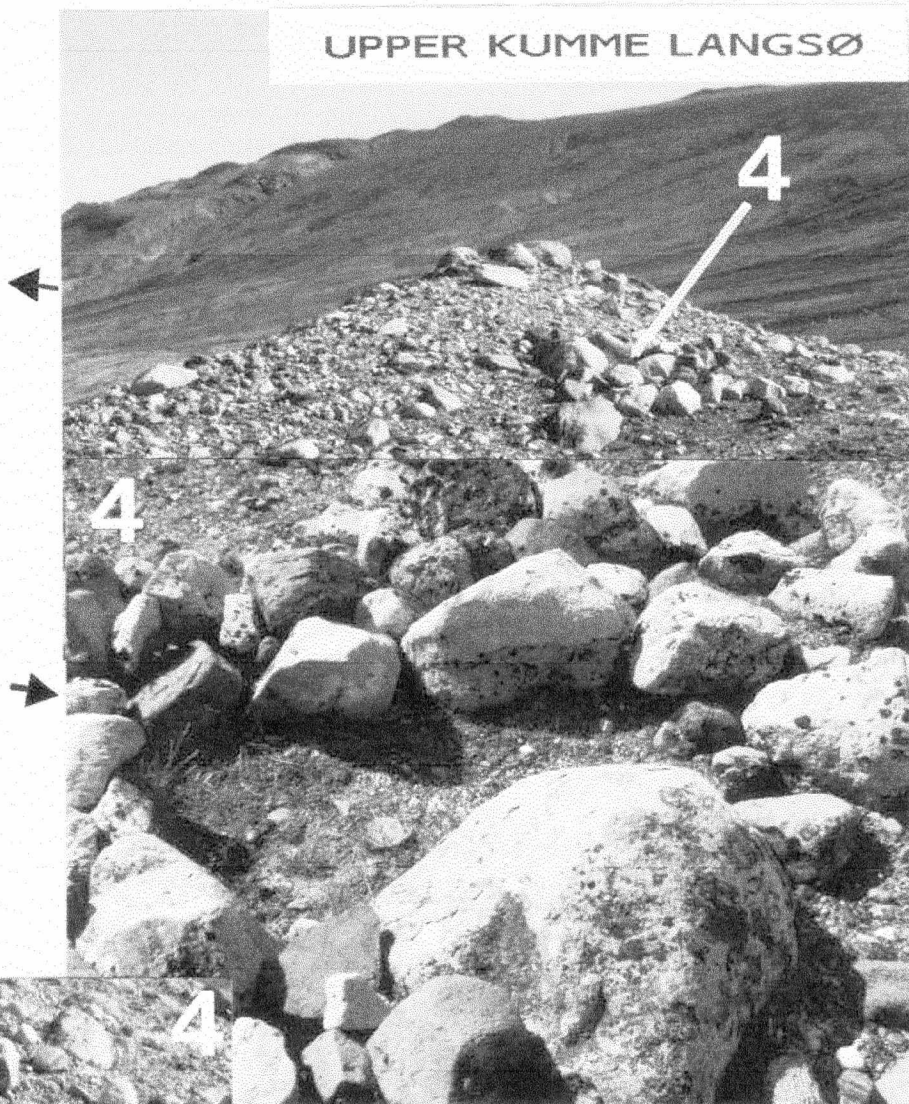
74° 05.665 24° 06.475 W -

168M

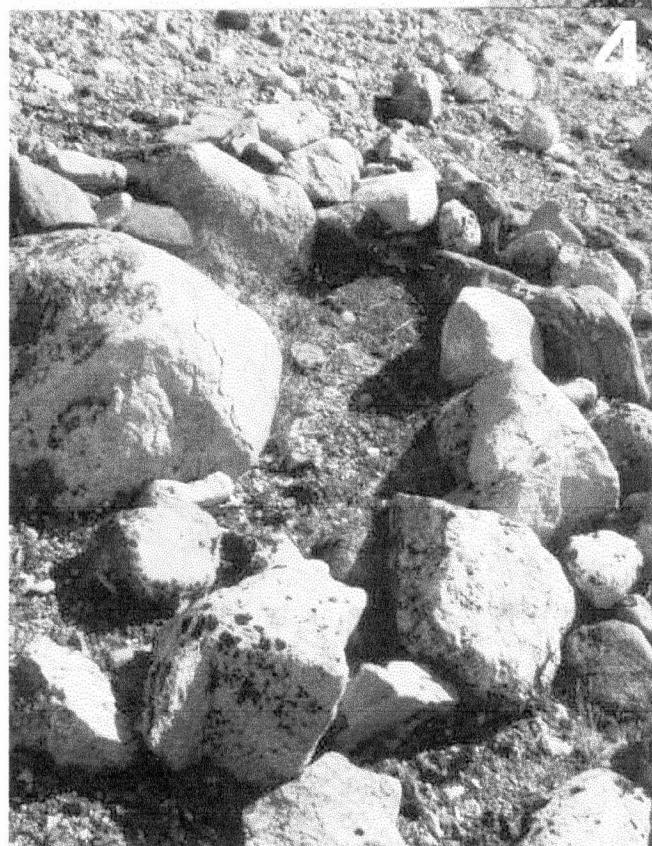


FRIBJERGNE RIDGE 74 Ø.3

UPPER KUMME LANGSØ

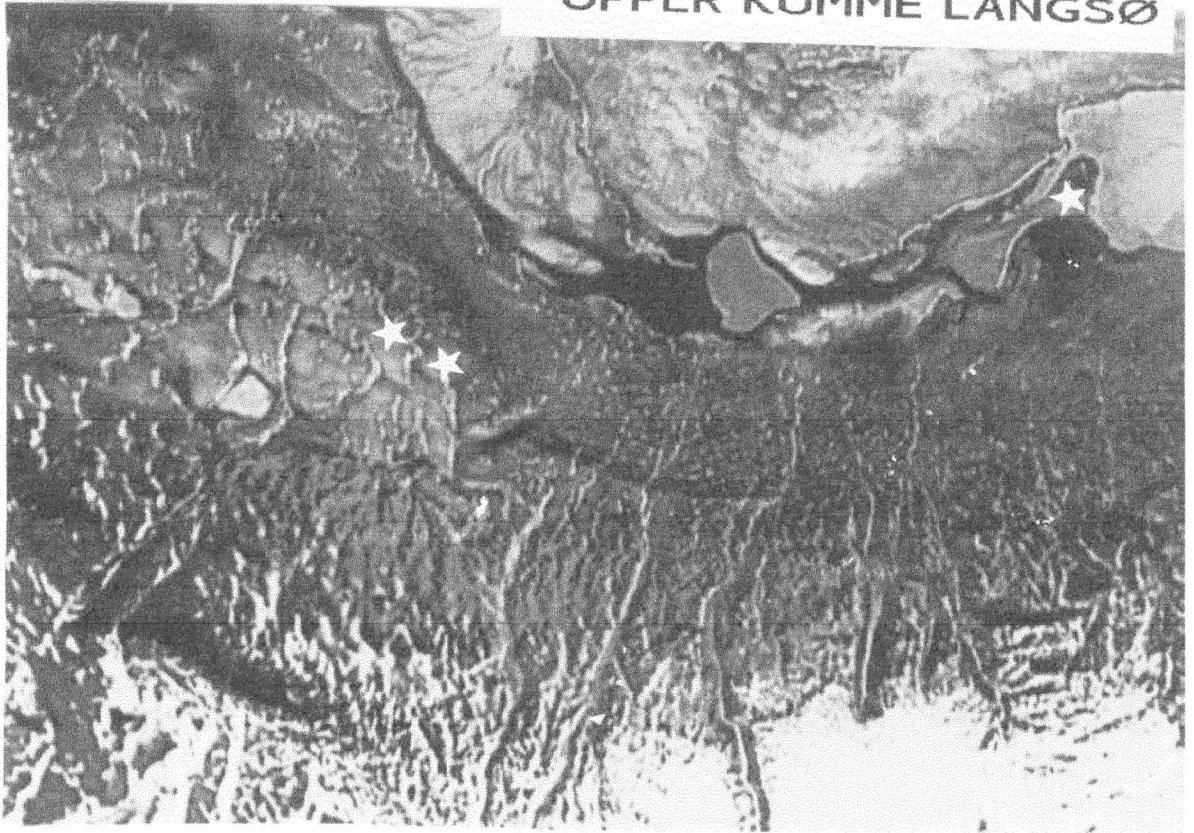


GPS 74° 04.352 N 24° 20.705 W - ELEV. 466M



FRIBJERGEGNE RIDGE 74 Ø.3

UPPER KUMME LANGSØ



SECTION B

SØDALEN DELTA

This area is well known to the members of the expedition as we have visited it previously in 2004, 2005 and 2007. In 2004 we had our base camp by the river. A small permanent river meanders into the lake draining the waters of two large basins bordered on the South by the Sørøyggen chain, on the North/East side by the Randen and on the West by a chain of hills, not very high, that delimit the upper Krumme Langsø.

Both valleys have pastures with a sizeable musk ox population; in the past, there had been caribou herds as we often found decaying fragments of horn. However the only traces of the possible presence of Inuit hunters are enigmatic and we questioned our ability to find tent rings, caches or other signs of the hunters' passage along the lakeside banks or terraces and on such rich grazing pastures.

By going back and forth in the flat plains of the Sødalen Delta we realized that in the spring the little brook collects all the melt waters from the two basins and takes on the character of a flood distributing alluvial deposits of varying depth and consistency along a wide stretch of the coast that have very probably covered up any traces of coastal habitat.

We realized this possibility by looking at the two existing shallow lakes that the meandering river has created; the only protection these lakes have against being filled, is the high terraces of small stones and gravel left there by the seasonal flood.

Around them and lower than the surrounding deposits there has developed, for the time being, a vegetated area host to a colony of water birds (waders and ducks) and a transit pasture for the musk ox. Closer to the lake and on its banks and terraces the surface is flat and covered with fine gravel that the exhausted flood deposited here after having left the heavier deposits higher up at the beginning of the Sødalen Delta

73. Ø.3 (1) GPS 74° 06.010' N, 23° 58.517 W, Elev. 167m "Sødalen Delta".

In a morain deposit, high up in the delta, on the left side of the river we found a feature (70x40 cm), consisting of two, vertically placed, flag stones set at right angles. This receptacle was delimited on the two other sides by rougher and rounder stones, and contained four other smaller stones on a larger semi oval, nearly flat, stone, set on sand.

This feature intrigued us; nature could have disposed the stones in such a fashion that induced us in an easy identification error, on the other hand it could be the remains of a fox trap,... a hearth inside a larger structure by now obliterated, or part of a small grave. We would like the reader's opinion on this enigmatic feature. Pictures.

73. Ø.3 (2) Large Cache no GPS

On the South-Eastern side of the Sødalen Delta a last lateral morainic terrace come to an abrupt end under the precipitous rock faces of the Sørøyggen mountain chain, here we found a large open cache. Pictures



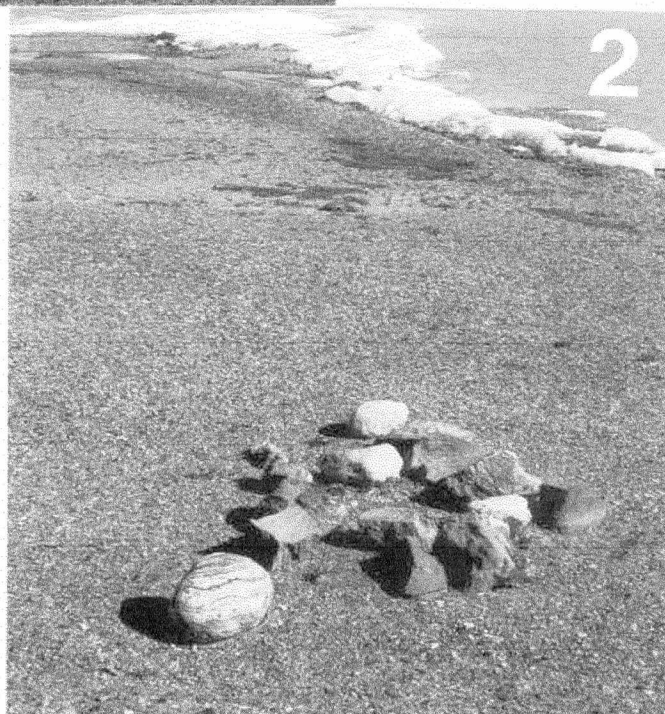
SØDAL DELTA 74.Ø.3



SØDALEN DELTA GPS 74° 06.392 N 23° 58.559 W – ELEV. 169M



SØDAL DELTA 74 Ø.3



SECTION C

HJØRNEBJERGE ISLAND

The discovery of this site was a pleasant surprise and the confirmation of Inuit hunters' penetration in the region. This is the only island on the Krumme Langsø and it lies at the elbow of the lake before it changes direction and just before the shallows where the waters from the watershed of the Sørryggen, on the North, and the Snehvidebjerg and part of the Tagebjergene in the South form a large delta.

Between these two chains of mountains a large glacial passage leads to the pass before descending into the Promenadedal, possible gateway for the Inuit hunters from Jordan Hill, Clavering and Hold with Hope sites. This island is on the direct route for anyone sledging up the lake from Johan Davidsen Dal with an easy access to the terrace from the lake. In 2004, Arcturus visited the island with two botanists to record the local flora, but the bare alluvial terrace that lined the South side held no interest for our two friends.

73.Ø.3 (1),(2),(3),(4), (5),(6) and (7) GPS 74° 02.575' N , 23° 48.460' W , Elev.170 m "Hjørnebjerg Island"

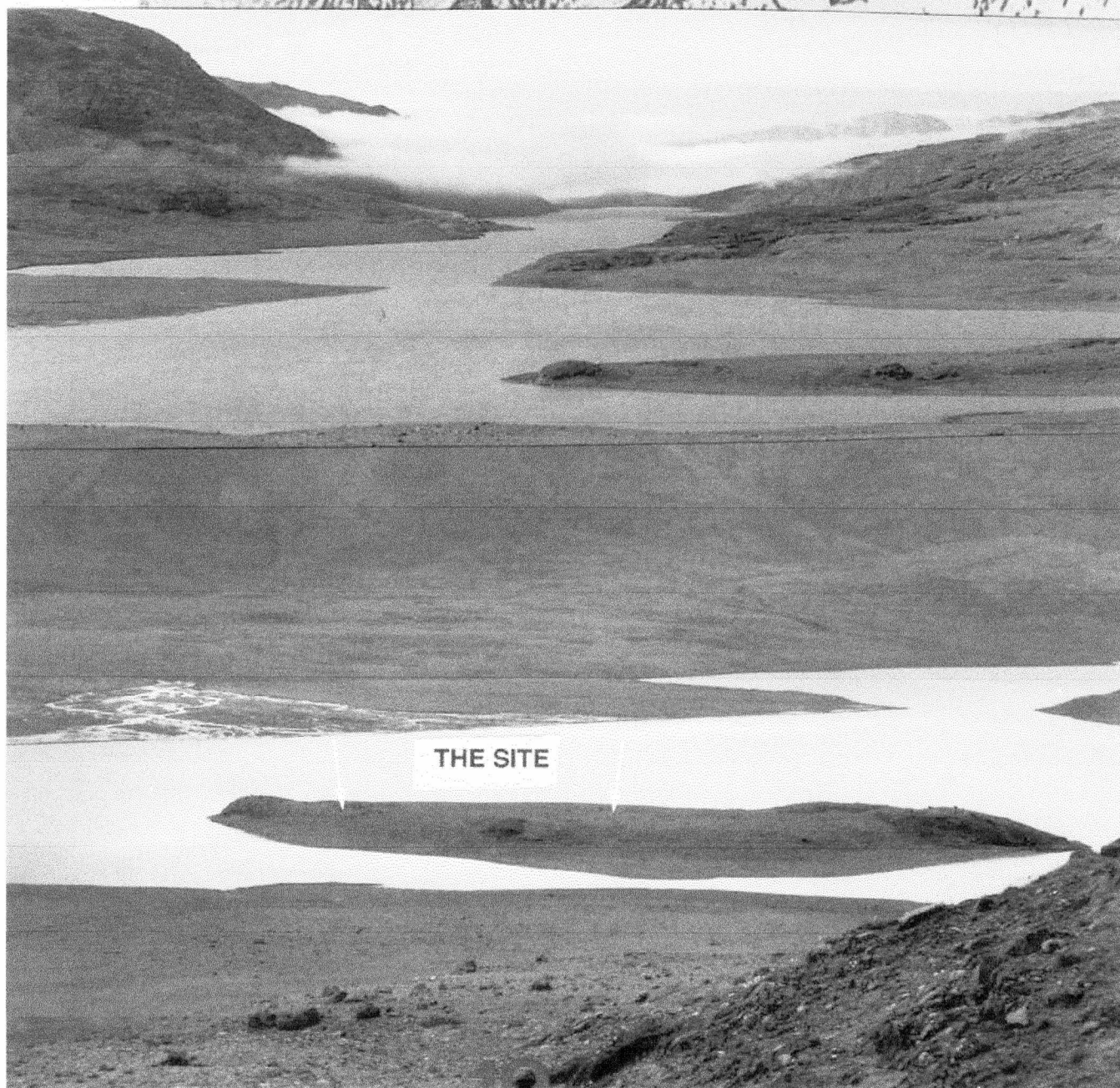
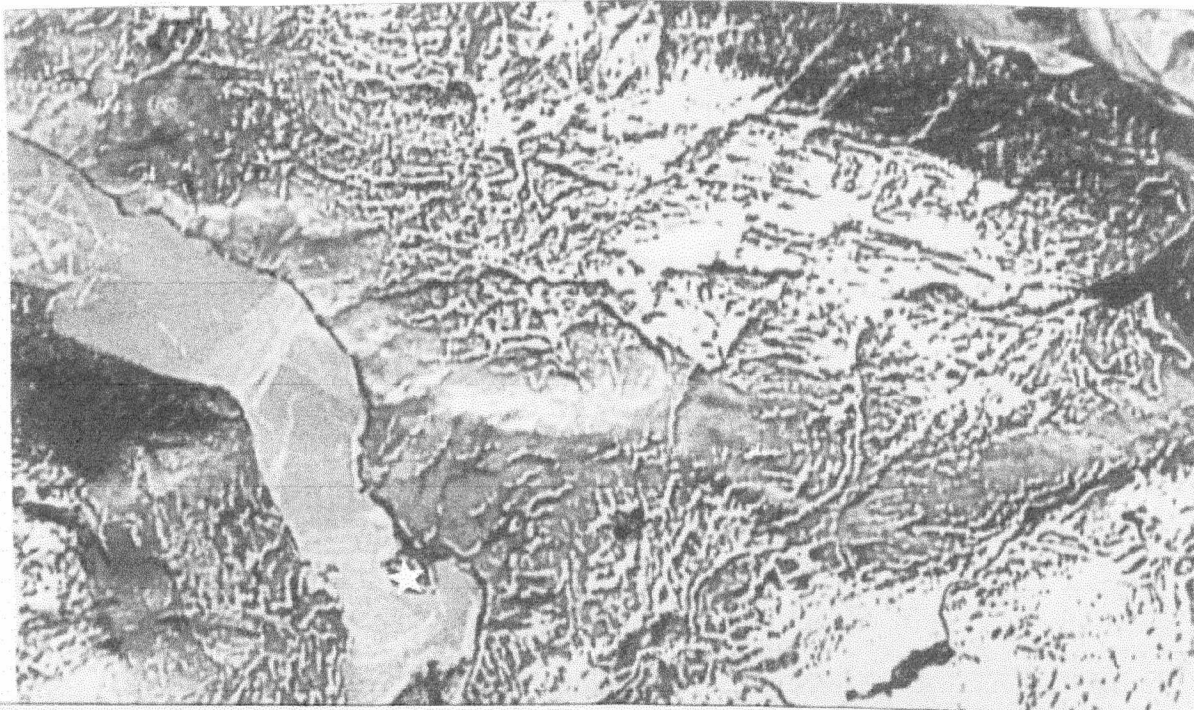
The alluvial terrace is probably very old , +/- 80m long and 10m at its widest point, the wind-swept surface is flat and covered with compact fine gravel, and on both side of this long terrace there are two higher rock outcrops partly covered with vegetation. On the lake side the terrace falls rapidly (+/- 5m) on the bank that is covered with large stones and has some vegetation.

Here we discovered, close to the edge of the terrace and/or in very slight depressions (+/- 15cm) **(1),(3),(4), (6)** six paved surfaces made with small flattish stones like the paving of the inside of a tent. What surprised us was the absence of stone rings except in one or two cases **(4),(5)** where the stones on the South-facing side of the features could have been part of a hearth. Three of them, at least, were definitively manmade **(3),(4),(5)** all of them were close to the edge of the terrace, two had already suffered some damage **(2),(4)**, we think, owing to the fact that since they have been laid down, quite a bit of the terrace has subsided to the bank below.

The paved floors have an average width of +/- 2m, the only stones that could have been used to hold the tents down are found on the northern edge of the terrace or at its South/Eastern end.

We wonder whether packed snow or ice blocks could have been used to anchor the tents, this could justify the absence of large stones as commonly used in such features. A small fragment of bone was found embedded in one of the features **(5)**.

In preparing these notes and examining in detail the many pictures of each individual feature and the more general views of the site, we noticed an enigmatic feature, close to the edge of the terrace, between features **(2)** and **(3)** that was overlooked or didn't impressed us at the time of the survey. We do not have any detailed representation of this feature, in retrospect could well be a seventh feature that we propose as **(7)**.



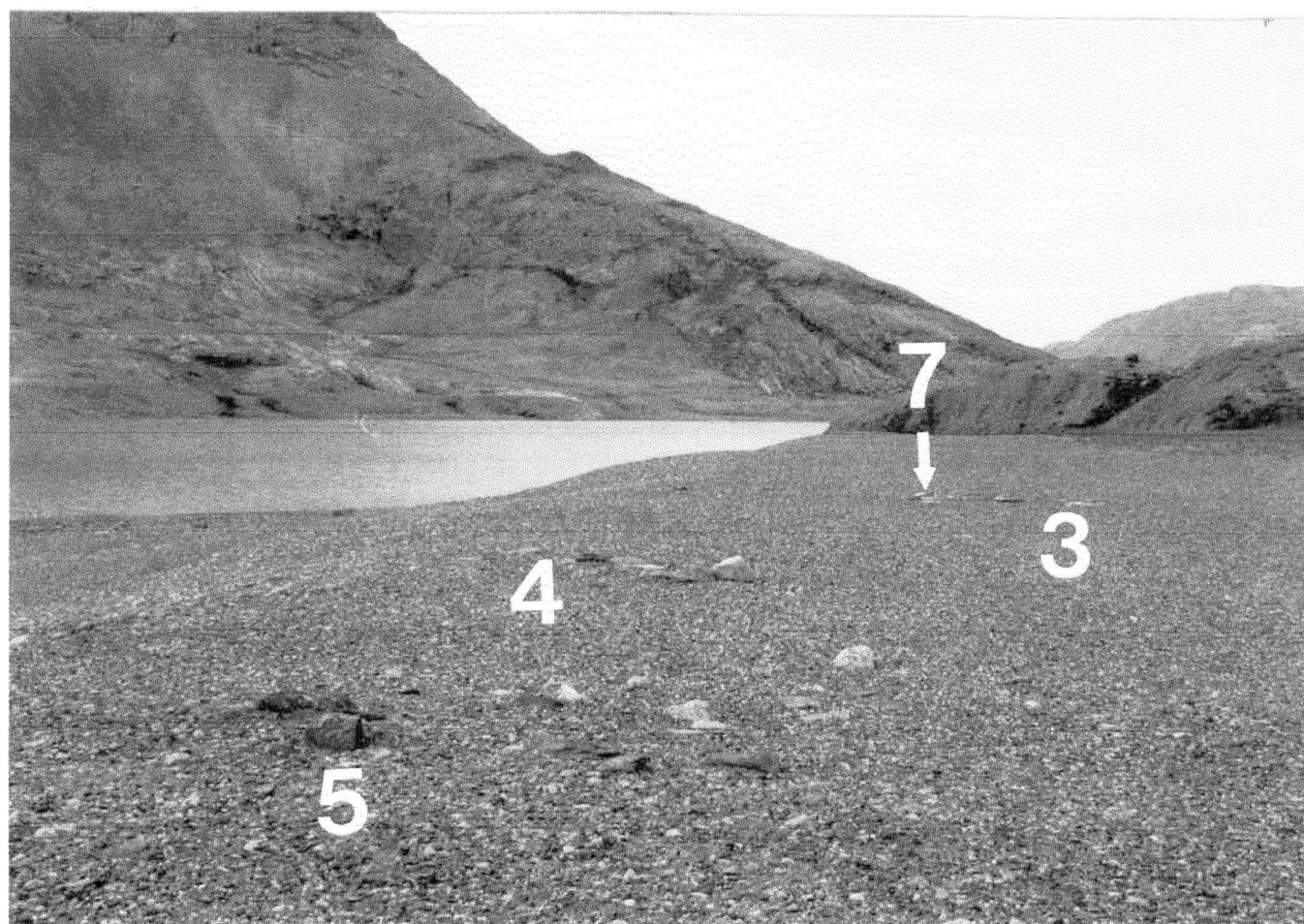
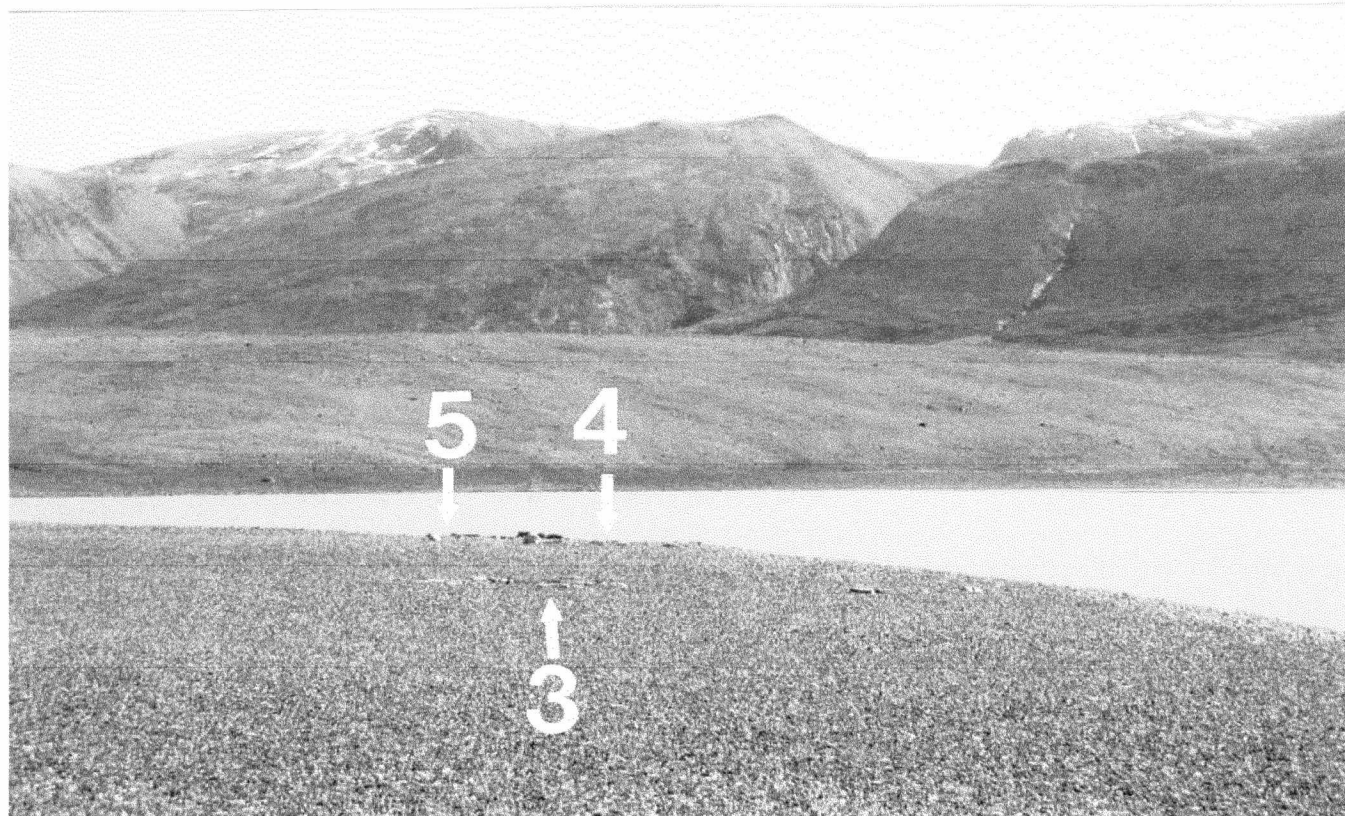


THE SITE

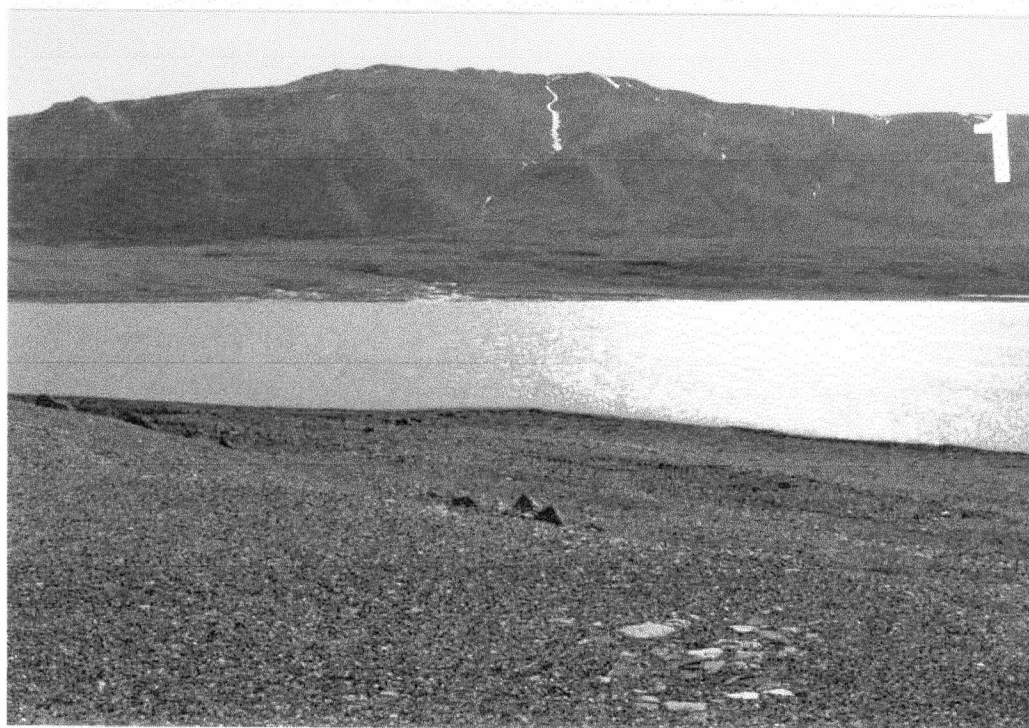
GPS 74° 02.575 N 23° 48.460 W - ELEV. 170M



HJØRNEBJERGET ISLD.74 Ø.3



HJØRNEBJERGET ISLAND 74 Ø.3



HJØRNEBJERGET ISLAND 74 Ø.3



HJØRNEBJERGET ISLAND 74 Ø.3



3

2007

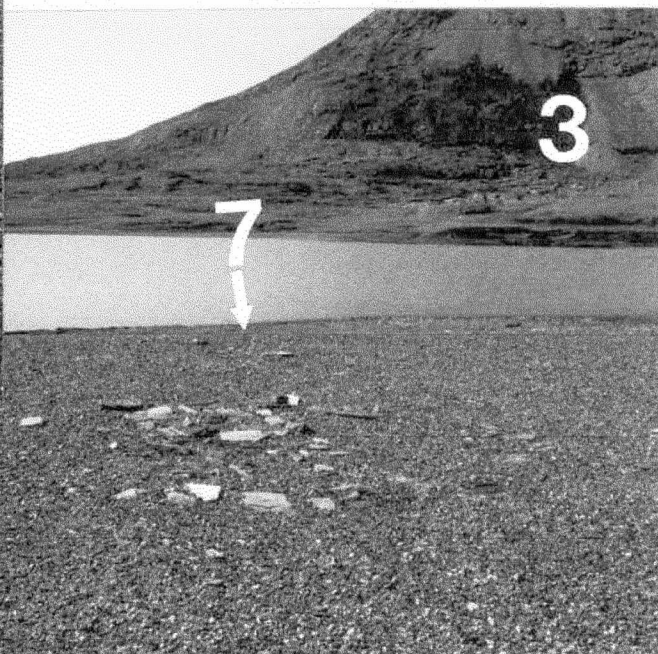
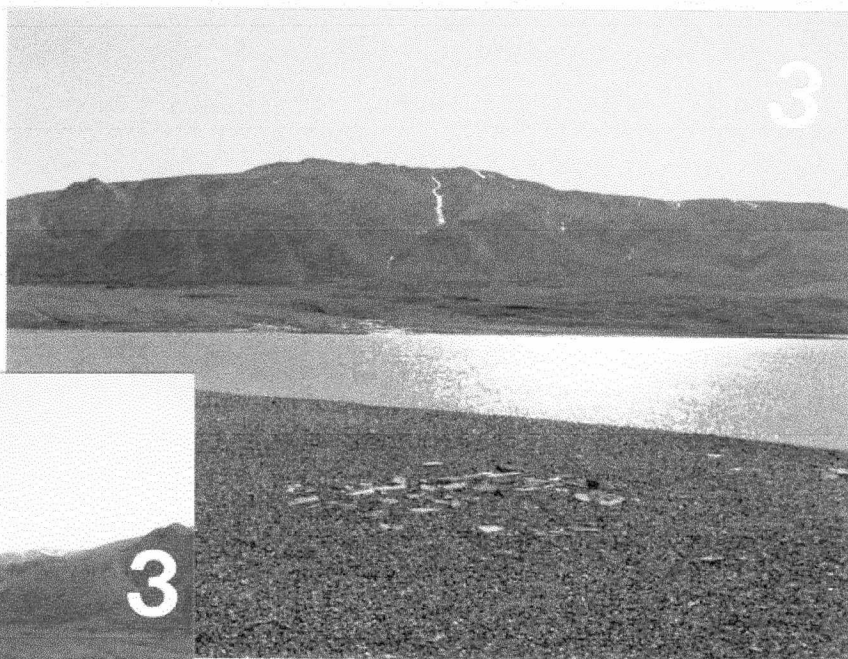


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2007

24

HJØRNEBJERGET ISLD.74 Ø.3



HJØRNEBJERGET ISLD.74 Ø.3

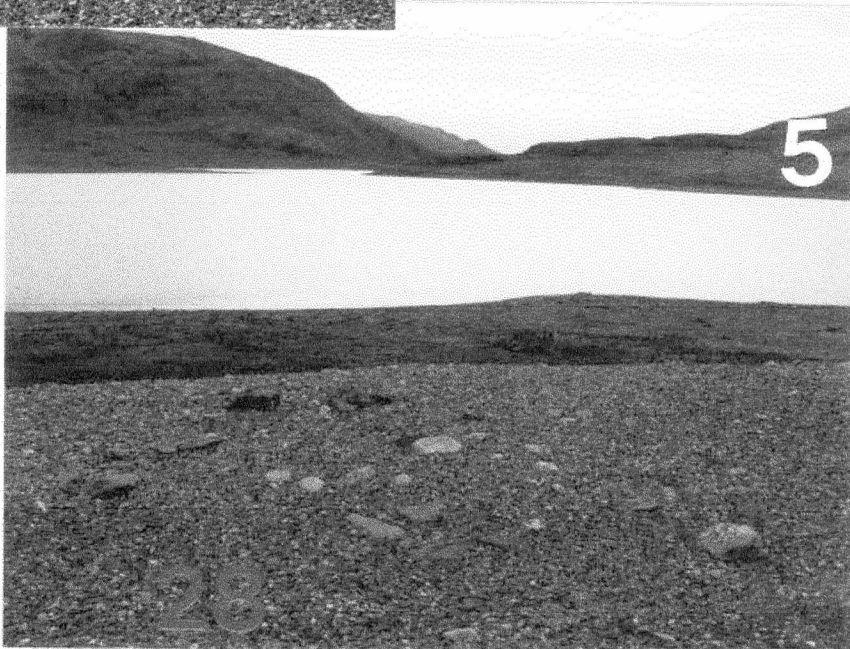
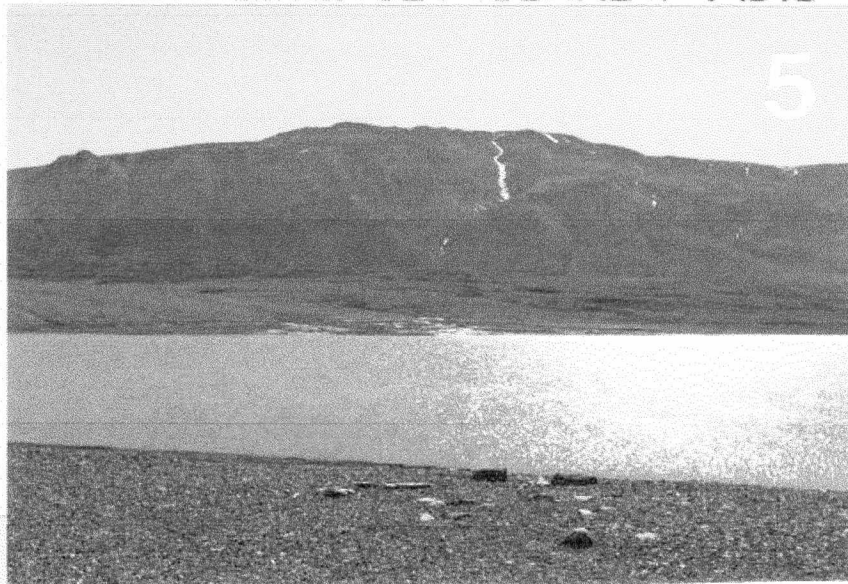


HJØRNEBJERGET ISLAND 74 Ø.3



2007

HJØRNEBJERGET ISLAND 74 Ø.3



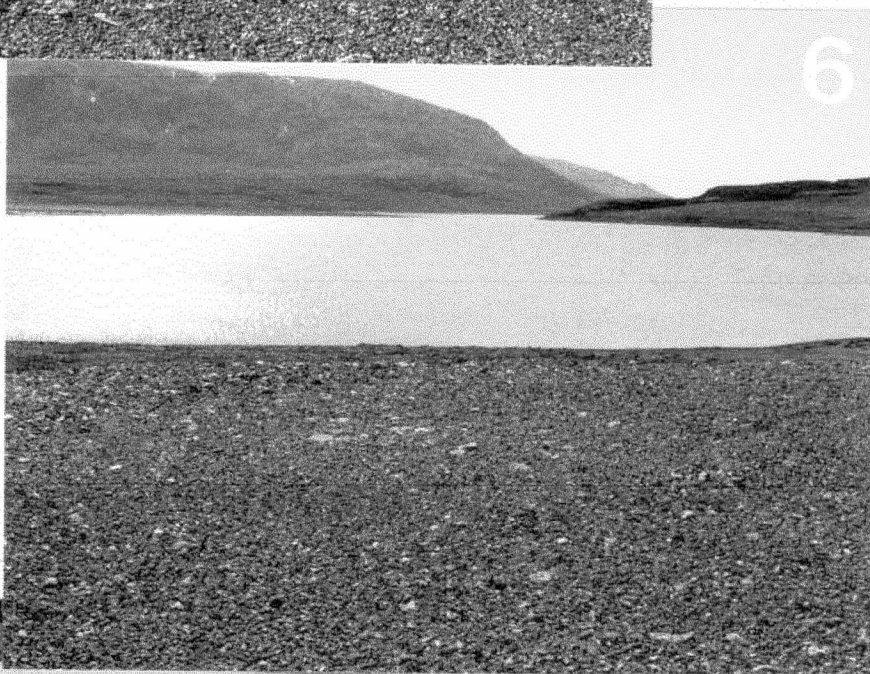
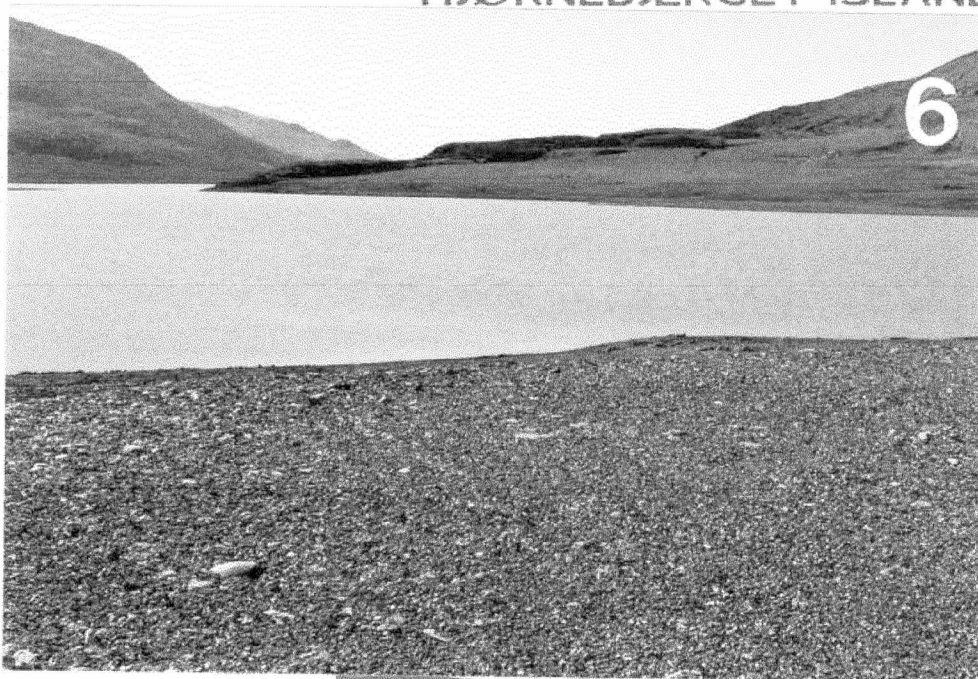
HJØRNEBJERGET ISLD.74 Ø.3



2007



HJØRNEBJERGET ISLAND 74 Ø.3



SECTION D

LOWER KRUMME LANGSØ

We camped on the banks of the lake on the right side of the river flowing out of the lake and remained there three days. The river has cut across several terminal moraines and its rapid flowing waters have created a series of deep gorges in Johan Davidsen Dal before encountering the Walterhausen Gletscher, and flowing into the Nordfjord.

On the terraces directly overlooking the right bank of the river we found traces of modern fox trapping.

On both sides of the river we found even more recent traces of human passage; the geologists had left two very large tent rings on the two sides of the river each with a hearth in the middle, some rusty tins and to add to our puzzlement a “mosaic” of very colourful geological specimens!

On the right side of the river we found only two features, one small tent ring and an undefined feature.

On the left side we found two tent rings, two caches and a winter dwelling as detailed below.

Right bank:

1). 73.Ø.3 (1) GPS 73° 58.856' N, 23° 48.285' W Elev. 160 m tent ring

Small tent ring on the grassy bank of the river, partly subsided in the river by erosion .Pictures

2). 73.Ø.3 (2) GPS 73° 58.856' N, 23° 48.285' W Elev. 160 m man made feature

On the edge of the terrace directly overlooking the river we found an enigmatic feature that, at first sight, we considered to be an open cache, but after having seen pictures from above we believe to be a permanent dwelling or a shelter. Pictures

Left bank:

3). 73.Ø.3 (3) and (3b) GPS 73° 59.794' N, 23° 48.0978' W Elev. 169 m two caches

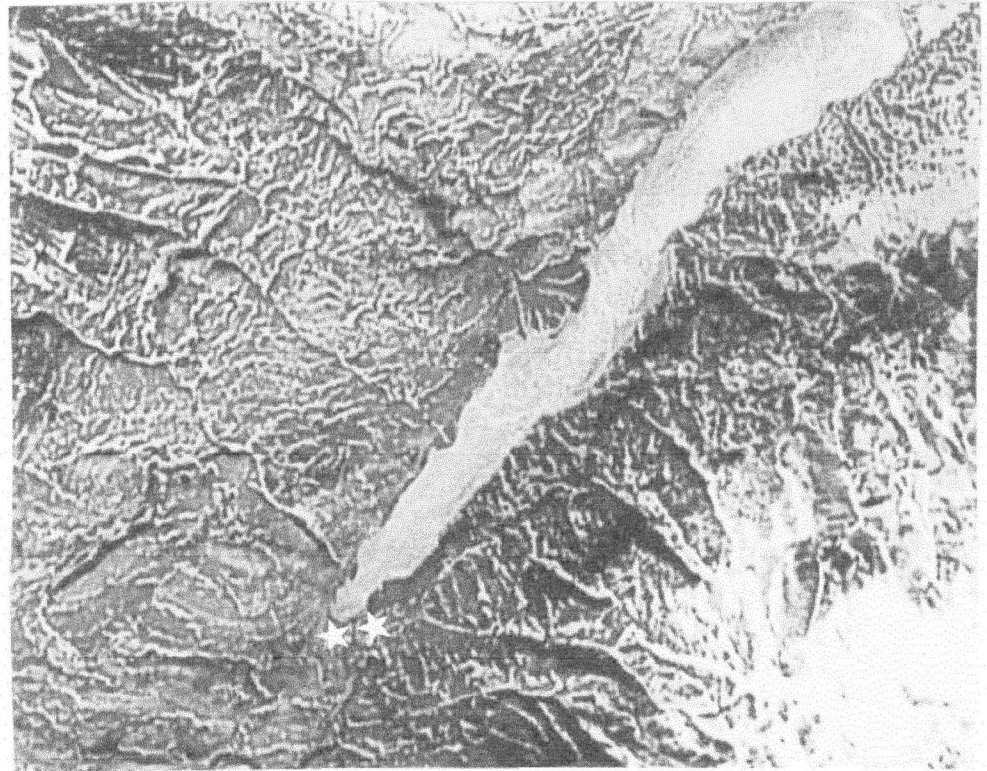
On top and edge of the terrace one large open cache with a second one at 100m. near (4).Pictures

4). 73.Ø.3 (4) GPS 73° 58.654' N, 23°48.043' Elev. 158 m one winter dwelling, one doubtful tent ring

On the river bank, between two terraces one winter house 4 x 4m overgrown with dryas and other vegetation, inward collapsed walls, South /West facing, undefined entrance, probably deep seated, the beginning of a midden with many cracked bones of caribou and other animals, at 25m, near the river, a hearth surrounded by many bone fragments. Pictures

At +/- 30m at the beginning of the slope to the next terrace a 3m tent ring with a hearth in the center, made with few medium sized stones, not set deeply in the surrounding vegetation, a second hearth at 10m near the river with ample evidence of cracked bones. No pictures

LOWER KRUMME LANGSØ 73 Ø.2





GPS 73° 58.856 N 23° 48.285 W - ELEV. 160M



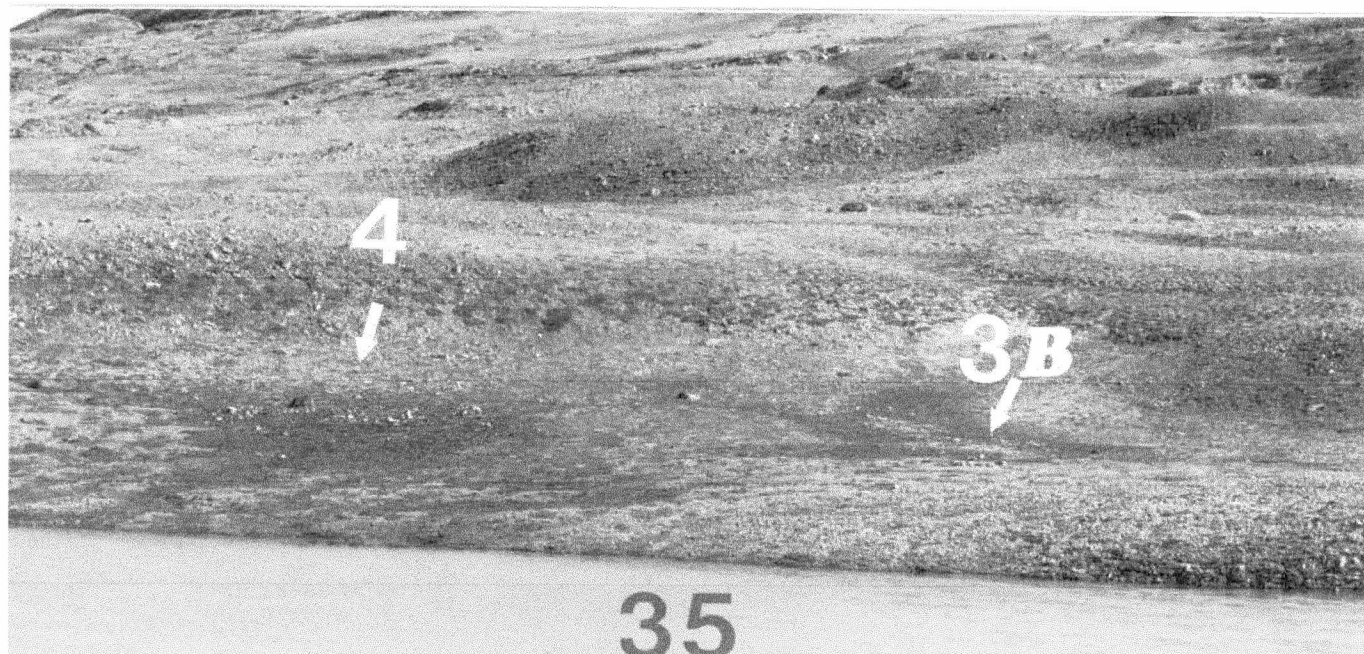
BANK

LOWER KRUMME LANGSØ 73 Ø.2



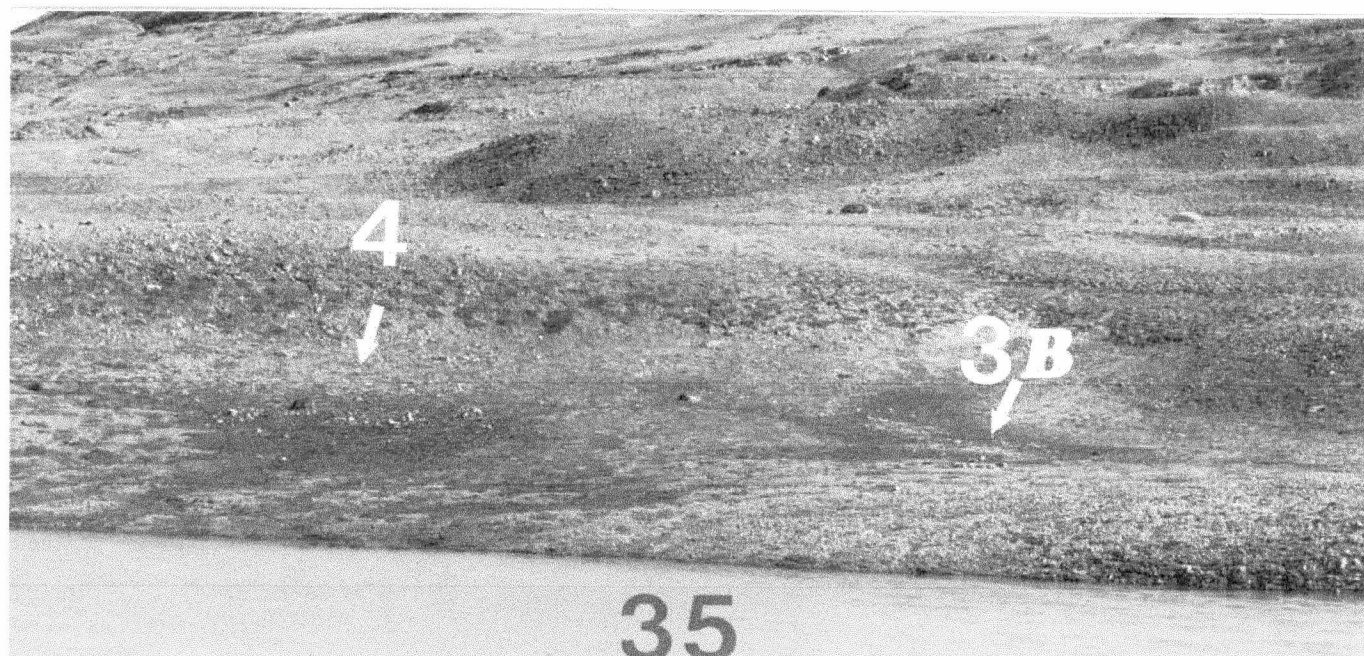
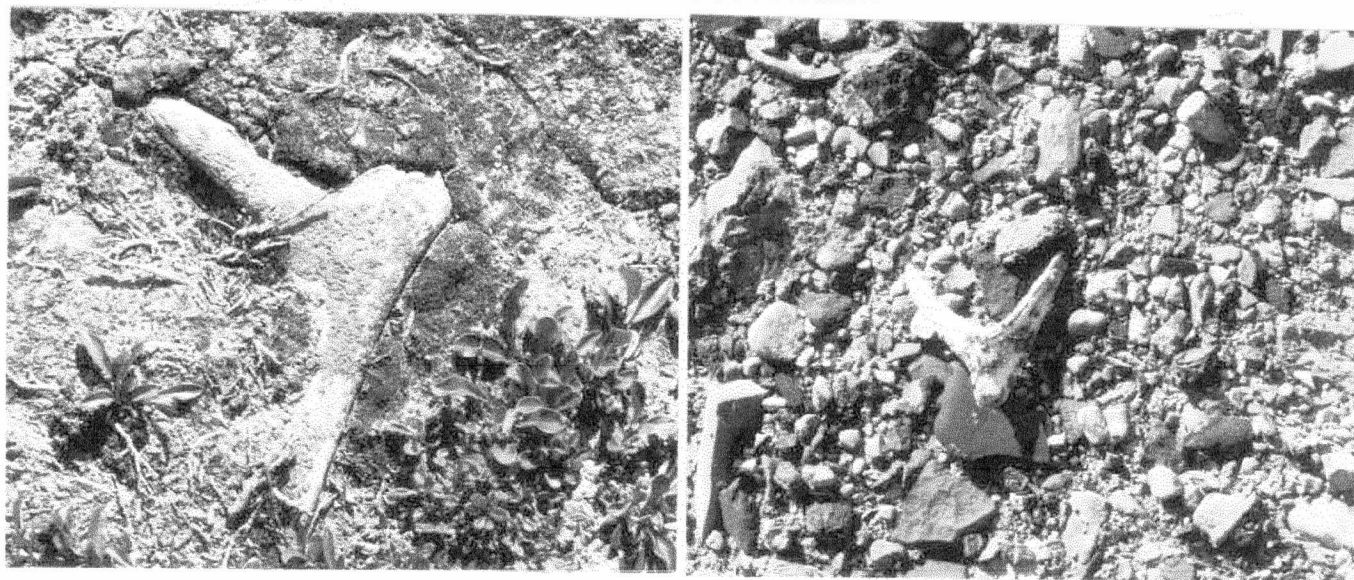


FRAGMENTS OF CARBOUS ANTLERS





FRAGMENTS OF CARBOUS ANTLERS



LEFT BANK



LOWER KRUMME LANGSØ 73 Ø.2



GPS 73 59.794 N 23° 48.097 W

ELEV. 165M



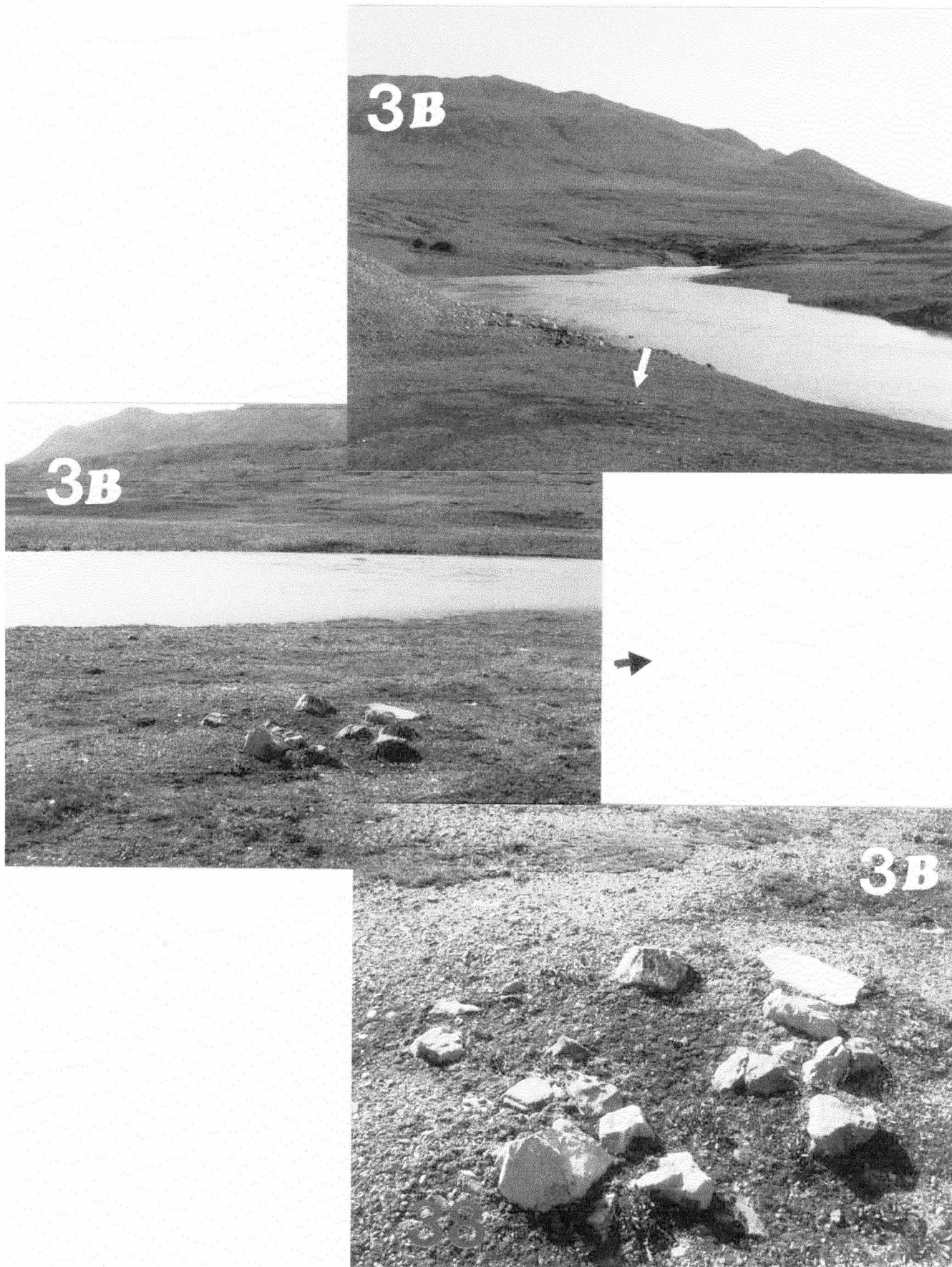
36

LEFT BANK

LOWER KRUMME LANGSØ 73 Ø.2



LOWER KRUMME LANGSØ 73 Ø.2



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26 November 2009

To the Deputy of THE GREENLAND NATIONAL MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES – NUUK – GREENLAND

Dear Professor Andreasen,

In my last letter of June 2009, covering the submission of the "Archaeological Report" on the results of the visit by the Arcturus Expedition to the Scoresbysund/Ittoqqorrtoormiit fjord system, I mentioned that I was joining Professor Michael Lea for an expedition to the Krumme Langsø region in Ole Rømmers Land during the Summer.

In 2004 Arcturus Expeditions visited the same region, but not the same places never finding traces of human habitat, apart from some recent "leftovers" in the Sødalen Delta and up the valley between Hjørnebjerg Island and Promenadedal; for this reason I was unprepared for the pleasant task of recording Mike and Iain Roy's 2007 findings. I enclose our Report on this year's observations.

The distance from the coast in Hold with Hope Land and Hudson Land, where Inuit sites have been recorded by Ritter and Glob, is significant, the orography and morphology of the land have been considered by Ray Woolmore and myself as an obstacle to human settlement. However after having visited the region early in the Summer season I appreciate the richness and extension of the grazing offered to the past herds of musk-ox and the caribou at the head of the lake, in Sødalen and on most lateral terraces and I am happy to have been proven wrong!

The most interesting site of all is, without any doubt, the terrace of the Hjørnebjerg Island and I hope that you can give us your opinion on the possible cultural period of its occupation. The possible winter dwelling found at the southern end of the lake is not enough to claim a permanent Inuit settlement around the lake unless we accept the idea of hunters of earlier cultures. I am inclined to believe that the hunters visited the region in the late Winter and early Spring when the lake is covered with ice, allowing the sledges to arrive at the head of the lake past two difficult rock walls; any boats, would have to be transported over a long distance.

If the finds are confirmed we would appreciate information on the digital address by which they are recorded in your Data Base in Nuuk.

I don't know if in the near future I'll be revisiting the National Park as it has become rather expensive to fly in there and the insurance for Search and Rescue when you are over 70 is quite high unless you find special arrangements. I have enjoyed my investigations in the past and the reconstruction of the migrations along the North East Coasts of Greenland and I am sure that there are many more sites to be discovered and studied, I only regret that I started too late in life to get interested in Greenland's ethno-archaeology!

Best regards, Jean Stenico

P.S. Did last year's report and GPS data from Scoresbysund fjords fill in some of the GPS "holes"?