

**Archaeological Assessment
LRT Line A
Ballymount Great
Co. Dublin**

Licence no. 00E0538 Ext

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For
RPA

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Illustration

Figures

Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	Previous investigations
Figure 3	Site matrix
Figure 4	Overall plan of recorded features
Figure 5	Burnt mound plan
Figure 6	Section through burnt mound pit
Figure 7	Ditch F1031: possible ring barrow
Figure 8	Plan of possible Iron Age ditches
Figure 9	Section through F1002 (showing later re-cut, F1013)
Figure 10	Section through F1022
Figure 11	Plan of early medieval ditch, F1010
Figure 12	Section through F1010
Figure 13	Plan of possible early medieval ditch, F1024
Figure 14	Section through F1024 and F1021
Figure 15	Plan of medieval ditch, F1002

Plates

Plate 1	Burnt mound pit, prior to excavation, from the south
Plate 2	View of the possible ring barrow ditch after excavation, from the west
Plate 3	View of a section through the possible ring barrow ditch (F1031), the early medieval ditch, F1024 (visible as the darker fill), and post-medieval furrow, F1022 (visible as a shallow deposit of topsoil at the top of the section) from the east, after excavation
Plate 4	View of the mound at Ballymount, with the excavated portion of the ditch (F1003) in the foreground
Plate 5	View of the annexe (F1022) to the main ditch, from the south (prior to excavation)
Plate 6	View of the early medieval ditch, F1010, from the east, during excavation
Plate 7	View of the early medieval ditch, F1024, from the east, during excavation

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report describes the results of excavations in the archaeological complex at Ballymount Great, County Dublin (NGR 30906 23046, Fig. 1).
- 1.2 The excavations took place within the Area of Archaeological potential around Ballymount Great (SMR 021:015) and concerned the large oval enclosure (SMR 021:015/6).
- 1.3 The archaeological investigations took place in advance of the proposed diversion of a stream through part of the complex so that it could be culverted perpendicularly to the LUAS rail track.
- 1.4 There have been earlier excavation campaigns within the enclosure, in 1982 under Geraldine Stout, prior to the construction of the M50, and in 1997 under Malachy Conway as part of the LUAS scheme. Some further excavation work was undertaken by the author in 2000 immediately prior to construction works. As a result of the previous investigations, a 40 m long portion of the ditch has been excavated (to date) along with some 80 m² of the interior.
- 1.5 A trench inserted across the ditch of the oval enclosure revealed stratigraphy more or less similar to that identified in 1982 and 1997 and allowed for the recovery of a potential dating sample. Other features, dating from the Bronze Age through the early modern period, were recorded during the course of the excavation. A geophysical survey, by John Nicholls of Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd, was carried out of the interior of the enclosure, to provide a broader background to the excavated evidence.
- 1.6 The excavations were carried out by John Ó Néill, on behalf of the Light Rail Project, under an extension to license number 00E0538. During the excavations assistance was provided by Sinéad Phelan, Ludo Baumont, Teresa Bolger, Abi Cryerall, Ines Hagen, Aimée Little, Peter Kerins, Bernice Molloy and Astrid Nathan.

2 Historical background

(By Dr. Sean Duffy, Dept. of Medieval History, Trinity College)

- 2.1 The archaeological remains in the townland of Ballymount Great, parish of Clondalkin, barony of Uppercross, County Dublin, are very extensive. They include the levelled remains of an earthwork, enclosing a two-tiered mound with a berm at its base, making it closer to the barrow tradition than that associated with medieval mottes (perhaps constructed to serve a funerary or ritualistic purpose), and an early fosse with a terminus post quem of the ninth century but probably considerably earlier in date. Medieval remains, still visible or uncovered during excavation, include: a paved floor, possibly of early Christian date; a ninth-century bronze stick pin; a medieval, possibly thirteenth-century, cooking area; and a section of medieval limestone masonry wall, re-used in the seventeenth century, possibly as part of the bawn wall surrounding the manor house constructed at that point. The mound is surmounted by a square turret with a plain doorway and window, and chamfered brick corners, which may be a folly-type, landscape feature, though possibly seventeenth-century in date (Stout 1982).
- 2.2 The existence of such extensive archaeological remains at Ballymount is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that the name does not occur in the historical record until as late as 1621. This silence about a site that was both prominent and productive at an earlier period is difficult to explain. While our documentary sources are incomplete it is, nevertheless, possible to account for virtually every other surviving townland in this area in documentary sources that emanate from the medieval and early modern periods: it would be extraordinary if Ballymount simply went unrecorded previously. Neither is it the case that the site was previously of no consequence, since the archaeological evidence points to the contrary. That leaves only one likely explanation: that Ballymount is recorded in 1621 for the first time because the name was only adopted at that point, the site having previously been known by another name.
- 2.3 The 1621 reference to Ballymount occurs in the Irish patent rolls for the reign of James I, in connection with a grant of lands by the Crown to Sir William Parsons, the Surveyor General for Ireland (ancestor of the Earls of Rosse). Being Surveyor General afforded Parsons ample

- opportunity to acquire lands, and this he eagerly did, especially in the case of Wicklow, the county of which he created in 1605. As commissioner of plantations he took charge of the plantation of Ulster in 1610, of Wexford in 1618, of Longford and Ely O'Carroll in 1619, and of Leitrim in 1620. He himself was an English undertaker in Ulster and gained 1000 acres of arable land near Clogher in Co. Tyrone, a similar amount near Dungannon, and likewise at Tullagha in County Cavan. He also obtained 1500 acres in Wexford and 800 in Leitrim. In 1620, when he was created a baronet, he received a grant of the former royal manor of Saggart in County Dublin, and other lands amounting to a yearly rental to the crown of £100.
- 2.4 These lands are listed in a royal letter-patent dated 25 January 1621, as follows:
- Ballymergin alias Ballymarge, near Killmannagh, Corbally alias Corballis, near Tassegard, Salesbawne, Fingowre, Killardan, Byrraght, the King's wood near Tassagard, and 15 acres near Ballmallace, Keranstown alias Caranstown, near Ballymergin; the castle and lands of Newhall, 40 acres near Jobstown; the castle, manor, town and lands of Killmannagh alias Killnemannagh, 1 carucate; the cell of Killmannagh near the parish of Tawlagh.
- 2.5 There then follows a list of lands in County Tyrone which Parsons also acquired at this point, but the document concludes by stating that:
- “All the lands in the County of Dublin, together with the lands of Clondalkin, created the manor of **Bellamont** (*I.R.C. 1830, 526*).”
- 2.6 Of the names listed in the grant, all recur repeatedly in earlier descriptions of the area, and in earlier records of land transactions there, with the solitary exception of 'Bellamont'. Yet this location is, nevertheless, important enough for the entire estate to be grouped together under its name. One is forced to the conclusion that 'Bellamont' is not, as is generally assumed, an anglicisation of the Irish 'Ballymount' - which is, in any case, a most improbable name, the first component being Gaelic, the second most definitely not -but precisely the reverse; that Ballymount is a gaelicisation of 'Bellamont', an elegant new name which Sir William Parsons selected for the manorial headquarters of his new Dublin estate, and the site of his manor house, and means, needless to say, 'beautiful mount' in reference to the pre-existing mound on the spot.

- 2.7 However, Parsons's great scheme for the development of the manor came to nothing as a result of the civil wars of the 1640s and his forced withdrawal from Ireland. In November 1646 it was reported that '**Ballemount** is burnt by the rebels' (Lomas 1905, 334-5), and we have no evidence that it was reoccupied. One can well imagine how a once formidable residence could rapidly go into decline and its very name be corrupted. In the three great inquisitions of the 1650s, the Civil Survey (1654), the Down Survey (1657), and the Census (1659) it is spelt, respectively, **Ballymounte**, **Ballimount**, and **Balymount**, and so it has remained.
- 2.8 But that is not the name which distant officialdom applied to the location. In 1662, Charles II referred to 'Sir William Parsons Bart., late of **Bellomont**, County Dublin' (Mehaffy 1905, 576). By then the title to the baronetcy had been conferred on an English soldier and diplomat, Henry Bard, who, in 1645, was created Viscount **Bellomont**. When his heirs failed, Lord Wooton of Wooton in Kent was granted, in 1681, the title Earl of **Bellomont**. The Parsons family still had their eyes on it: in that same year when the earl of Arran, (guardian of Sir Richard Parsons, heir to William Parsons's titles and lands), wrote to the earl of Ormonde stating that
- “My Lord Wooton having taken the title of **Bellamont** ...I hope you will not be any hindrance if I can get that title for Sir Richard” (Litton Falkiner 1911, 58).
- However, the family never did recover the title, which, in 1689, was conferred by William of Orange on Richard Coote of Colooney. His heirs had died out by 1767, when what was called the earldom of **Bellamont** was granted to a cousin, Charles Coote of Cootehill, County Cavan, though the title finally became extinct at his death in 1800 (Clokayne 1912, 105-7).
- 2.9 Ballymount is not, therefore, a mere townland, but a name, albeit corrupted, that preserves a memory of a distinguished and now defunct Irish peerage, the holder of which had, until the Act of Union, a seat in the Irish House of Lords. As such, its history is not the history of a townland, but of an assemblage of lands grouped together under that title, as listed in the 1621 grant to Sir William Parsons.

- 2.10 It is important to try to tie down the lands listed as being part of this new manor of Bellamont. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the grant is the fact that it begins with a place called 'Ballymergin alias Ballymarge'. This might be taken for the modern townland of Ballymanaggin (par. Clondalkin), but it is described as 'near Killmannagh' and Kilnamanagh is some distance away, across the parish boundary in Tallaght. Furthermore, the variant readings of it that occur in sixteenth and seventeenth-century documents (Ballymergy, Ballym[a]lcy, Ballymergan) do not look likely to have produced the modern 'Ballymanaggin' and it may well be a now historically submerged site: since it is 'near Kilnamanagh' it is quite likely to be at or near Ballymount. It is worth pointing out that the suggestion that 'Ballymergy' may in fact be Ballymount was made by A.K. Longfield (wife of H.G. Leask) in her 1960 edition of the Fitzwilliam Accounts (Longfield 1960, 125).
- 2.11 'Corbally alias Corballis, near Tassegard' is the townland of Corbally, just southeast of Saggart. 'Salesbawne' occurs repeatedly in earlier records, then vanishes at about the time that Oldbawn appears, and is possibly the same place (perhaps from Seanbhádhún), Fingowre is also attested at an earlier date but has left no later trace in the records. 'Killardan' is Killinardan, but 'Byrraght', though also attested earlier, has likewise vanished without trace. 'The King's wood near Tassagard' is probably the modern townland of Kingswood between Cheeverstown and Baldonnell. The '15 acres near Ballmallace' are in the townland of Ballymaice between Killinardan and Glenasmole. 'Keranstown alias Caranstown, near Ballymergin' is potentially significant. It is the small townland of Carranstown, otherwise known as Kingswood (though not the same Kingswood mentioned above) that lies between Ballymount and Belgard. Its northeastern boundary is not much more than 500m from the mound at Ballymount, and the fact that it is described as 'near Ballymergin' strengthens speculation that the latter may in fact be synonymous with Ballymount.
- 2.12 If we work on the assumption, which seems a not unreasonable one, that the remains at Ballymount may, in the medieval period, have been recorded under a variant of the name Ballymergin, then the history of Ballymergin and the other lands making up the manor of Ballymount can be traced, initially, by following the history of the royal manor of Saggart, in the Vale of Dublin, of which it formed one of the outlying manorial centres. Perhaps the earliest surviving reference to it occurs in the Irish exchequer roll for Michaelmas Term 1295

which records the receipt from Simon de Camera, one of those to whom the manor had been let 'at farm', of 60 shillings 'of the farm of Tassagard [Saggart], for **Balymargyn**' (Sweetman 1881, 113).

- 2.13 Unfortunately, Saggart, which suffered much from the resurgent activity of the Irish of the Wicklow massif, is one of the more poorly accounted royal manors, and when next we hear of Ballymergin it is in 1332, when William le Dyer, the extern provost of the manor, a post which Simon de Camera had previously held, accounted to the Exchequer for £16 11s. 9d. of 'extern rent for **Balymargyn**' and other outlying lands of the manor (P.R.O.I. 1903-27, no. 43, 61). Ballymergin appears regularly as part of the 'external rents' of the manor of Saggart in the years that followed, but by the fifteenth century the area was very much on the frontiers of the Pale, subject to hostile assault, and yielding no profit to the Crown. As a result, much formerly royal land was leased out or alienated to powerful local landholders, able, by their presence on the ground, to maintain some level of governmental control.
- 2.14 If we wish, therefore, to trace the later history of Ballymergin, we must follow the fortunes of the family of Talbot of Belgard, a cadet branch of the lords of Malahide. With their caput at Belgard, by the end of the fifteenth century they became the most prominent lay landholders in the area when Robert Talbot, son of John Talbot of Feltrim, purchased Killinardan, Ballymaice, Ballinascorney and 'Fyngower' from the fitzWilliam family, lords of Merrion (Kingston 1955, 81). However, it was stated in 1525 that Robert Talbot of Belgard held, not only these lands, but 'Corbally, Salisboan, **Ballymergy**, Kingswood near Saggart, Killinardan, 'Fyngon', Byrragh and 16 acres near Ballymaice' (Griffith 1991, 13).
- 2.15 With some surrounding lands later added, this is precisely the estate, which Sir William Parsons was to rename Bellamont almost exactly a century later. Under Parsons it saw its finest hour, but his fall from grace saw it fall into ruin, a decay that continued unabated in the years that followed.

3 The Enclosure Site

- 3.1 Most of the area of the enclosure affected by the proposed LRT alignment had been excavated by Geraldine Stout in 1982 (Stout 1998) or Malachy Conway in 1997 (Conway 1997). These excavations had revealed a small number of internal features, the profile of the ditch and the possible existence of an outer bank. While the upper fills of the ditch of the enclosure to the north of this complex produced a stick-pin of tenth/early eleventh century date, no dating evidence was recovered from the lower fills of the ditch. The location of the various excavations is shown in [figure 2](#).
- 3.2 Since a small part of the ditch was unexcavated along the route of the proposed realignment, this was removed in 2000, to try and obtain some evidence for the actual date of construction of the enclosure, either in the form of artefacts or a reliable dating sample. Ultimately, the short 2000 campaign was unsuccessful in this regard (Ó Néill 2000).
- 3.3 The 1982 excavations had provided evidence that the ditch may originally have had an external bank and uncovered several pits and post-holes within the area enclosed by the ditch. The 1997 excavations study excavated much of the remainder of the enclosure ditch and outer bank material, revealing sherds of Dublin-type wares in the clay deposit sealing the top of the ditch. The possibility that the site was of prehistoric date was proposed by Geraldine Stout in her 1998 article, although the exact date, or broad period, was uncertain.
- 3.4 All the previous excavations had revealed a series of three deposits within the ditch, each composed of a varying number of lenses. The ditch was itself was around 2.45 m in width and up to 1.30 m in depth. In profile it was slightly funnel shaped, with a flat base measuring around 1.30 m in width. The primary ditch fill was up to 0.40 m deep and was mainly a grey-brown silty fill with some comminuted charcoal and tiny fragments of shell and animal bone. A secondary fill of mid-brown clay overlay the primary silts. This layer was more compact and found to be up to 0.60 m in depth.

- 3.5 The section of the ditch excavated in 2000, measured 2.80 m in width at the top and was 1.65 m in depth. The base of ditch measured 1.10 m in width. The primary fills were present to 0.90 m from the base of the ditch, but were mainly around 0.50 m deep. The secondary fill was mostly removed by the re-cut, and was between 0.10 m and 0.30 m deep. Practically no datable material was recovered from either the primary or secondary fills of the ditch. Some tiny fragments of charcoal and bone were noted. The ditch was re-cut to measure 0.85 m in depth and around 2.10 m in width at the top with steep sides and a concave base. Charcoal and burnt clay were recovered from the basal fill of the re-cut similar to previous excavations. A deposit of mid-brown clay sealed the eastern side of the upper ditch fills, suggesting that ploughing had partially removed the top of the ditch.
- 3.6 On the basis of the three campaigns to 2000, it appears that, after the primary fills had accumulated in the ditch, it was re-cut. A further series of deposit developed within this re-cut ditch, including an initial deposit of burnt clay and charcoal and, later, silty clays.
- 3.7 In brief, the finds from the previous excavations suggest that the re-cut ditch pre-dates the tenth to early eleventh century date provided by the stick-pin recovered from the fills. By the thirteenth century a clay mantle had begun to develop over the ditch, as evidenced by the sherds of Dublin-type wares. While some iron fragments were noted in the primary ditch fills, in previous excavations, no further evidence was retrieved which would allow for a more direct assessment of the date of the enclosure.
- 3.8 Thus, the 2002 excavation began with the understanding that an enclosing ditch and outer bank were present on the site, possibly constructed in the Iron Age. Some time before or around the tenth or eleventh century

4 Phasing

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 A number of phases of activity were identified on the site. While many of these phases were identifiable within the overall stratigraphic matrix on the site, a number of features could only be assigned assumed or estimated positions within the overall chronology. A matrix indicating the various relationships of the features recorded during the excavation is included as **figure 3** and an overall plan of the recorded features is included as figure 4.

4.2 Bronze Age? (*Pre-enclosure activity*)

4.2.1 Two areas appeared to pre-date the enclosure of the site; to the north where a pit and some burnt stone and charcoal were present and, to the south, a ditch. In the northernmost area that was excavated, traces of a burnt mound were uncovered. Given that some 95% of dated burnt mounds date to the period between 3800 BP and 2450 BP (e.g. Brindley, Lanting and Mook 1989/90), the Ballymount site probably predates the enclosure ditch. At the southern end of the site part of the arc of a ditch (F1031) was truncated by a series of features, including F1022, which was associated with the main enclosure ditch. Given the presence of some fragments of burnt bone (yet to be clearly identified as either human or animal), it may be that this represents part of a circular enclosure, which extends beyond the southern limits of the excavation.

4.3 Iron Age? (*The Main Enclosure*)

4.3.1 The main enclosure ditch, F1002, was exposed across the site. The excavated portion demonstrated the existence of a medieval re-cutting of this feature. A second ditch, F1022 was found to contain the same upper fill as F1002 and is considered to have been open for at least part of the time that the main ditch was open.

4.4 Early Medieval Features

4.4.1 When the main enclosure ditch had become silted up, a further ditch was opened across the northern portion of the site (F1010). This was cut by a medieval re-cut of the main

enclosure ditch (F1013), at a time when F1010 had fully silted up. No relationship was clearly established with the original enclosure ditch (F1002), although it is assumed that it pre-dates F1010. It is possible that some of these features may be dated to an earlier or later period, once post-excavation work is complete.

4.5 *Medieval Features*

4.5.1 A number of definite medieval features were identified across the site. The re-cut of the main ditch (F1013) occurred when the main ditch had fully silted up. A further linear feature (F1024) at the southern end of the site truncated F1022. This is probably medieval in date. A number of pits were considered to be of possible medieval date (e.g. F1050).

4.6 *Post-Medieval and Early Modern features*

4.6.1 A number of post-medieval and early modern features were identified on the site, including a large pit (F1030), a stone drain (F1006) and a furrow (F1020), which follows the line of those depicted by Béranger. During a geophysical survey of the site, a number of anomalies were also identified as being related to these furrows.

5 Bronze Age? (Pre-enclosure activity)

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Two sets of features appeared to pre-date the main enclosure, as mentioned above. These are described below.

5.2 Burnt Mound

5.2.1 An area of burnt stone and charcoal (F1004) was identified in the northwestern corner of the excavated area where the layer of iron pan was present. It covered an area measuring 1.40 m (north-south) by 1.10 m (east-west). Further investigation revealed that the spread filled a pit (F1003), with evidence of two phases of use (see figure 5, figure 6 and plate 2).

5.3 Burnt Mound: Phase 1

5.3.1 The original dimensions of the pit F1003 were 1.10 m (north-south) by 0.94 m (east-west), with a depth of around 0.42 m. The fill of this feature was a deposit of burnt stone and charcoal (F1004). The Phase 2 pit (F1012) cut this feature, removing much of the original pit. The edge of F1003 was not clear on excavation, as the fills of F1003 and F1012 could not be clearly distinguished on excavation.

5.4 Burnt Mound: Phase 2

5.4.1 A pit measuring 1.50 m (north-south) by 1.00 m (east-west), with a depth of around 0.50 m was cut across the pre-existing trough (F1003). The fill of this feature was a deposit of burnt stone and charcoal.

5.5 Possible circular enclosure

5.5.1 The earliest feature within the overall stratigraphy of the site was F1031, a 10.5 m long section of ditch, which was V-shaped in profile (see figure 7). This feature only survived in a number of areas and had been heavily truncated, so much so, that no complete

section survived (see plate 3). This ditch (F1031) was found to contain F1043 (the basal fill), F1032 and F1046 (the upper fills). The cut for this feature was roughly V-shaped in profile, although it had been severely truncated in many places and could only be reconstructed through cross-comparison of various sections. Measuring some 1.80 m to 1.90 m across at the top, this feature appears to have been originally excavated to a depth of around 1 m. The lower fill of the ditch was recorded as F1043. This was a stiff grey plastic clay with orangey/brown mottling (probably flecks of decayed sandstone or iron pan). Some flecks of charcoal and land snails were present. Some burnt bone and animal bone were recovered from this layer. This layer was present to a maximum depth of 0.30 m. The upper fill of the ditch was recorded as F1032 and F1046 (in two separate locations, subsequently recognised as the same feature). This was a layer of compact stony grey-brown clay that contained animal bone, charcoal and land snails, present to a maximum depth of 0.70 m. A portion of F1031 was removed by F1022, stratigraphically related to the main enclosure ditch. Subsequently F1024, another ditch or gully, removed much of F1031. The large well, F1030, truncated the eastern end of F1031. The excavated section traced an arc measuring some 8.68 m (internally), with a depth of 0.70 m. If this is representative of a larger feature, this suggests a circular enclosure of some 27.5 m internal diameter (*c.* 31.3 m external diameter). Without supporting data, this is a fairly tentative hypothesis, although burnt bone was recovered from F1043, the basal fill, suggesting this ditch may be a portion of a ringbarrow.

6 Iron Age? (The Main Enclosure)

6.1 Main Enclosure: Ditch F1002

6.1.1 The large ditch excavated during previous investigations was exposed for some 25 m of its course (see figure 8, figure 9 and plate 4). The ditch was also partly exposed by the insertion of a section of culvert beside the newly constructed railtrack, where it was not identified during the earlier excavations. This revealed that the ditch took a sharp turn in towards the centre of the enclosure. There was no evidence of the outer bank recorded in the previous excavations. Some 11 m of the ditch was fully excavated. The remaining portions lay outside the area to be affected by the diversion of the stream. The traces of the ditch, which were exposed at the southern side of the site, could not be safely excavated due to the proximity of the track. The ditch was some 3 m across at the top, but varied between 2.70 m and 3.30 m along its length. The later re-cut could be identified as extending the upper width of the ditch by some 0.20 – 0.30 m in places. In section, the ditch was V-shaped with sharp sloping sides, particularly at the top, and a 1 m wide base. The ditch was a maximum of 1.95 m in depth. An 11 m long portion of the ditch was fully excavated.

6.2 The Ditch Fills

6.2.1 The basal fill of the ditch (F1054) was a sedimentised peat with a high content of visible organic remains including twigs, seeds, sedges, rushes, leaf litter, insects and other decaying detritus. This fill was present to a depth of around 0.30 m. The base of F1054 contained a fine layer of peat and silt, marking the boundary between the natural and the basal fill. Due to the waterlogged nature of the ditch, during excavation, this feature was noted, but no samples, animal bone or wood was specifically identified with this layer. Where it could be examined it was found to be no more than 10 mm or 20 mm deep. The basal fill was overlain by a fairly sterile grey loamy clay (F1016). The recorded fills, although waterlogged, can be paralleled in the dry fills encountered in the previous excavations to the southeast. This fill was present to a depth of around 0.40 m. This fill had settled towards the base, and was present to a depth of 0.55 m from the top of the southern side of the ditch. The later re-cut, F1013, had removed the upper portions of F1017 on the northern side of the ditch. The upper ditch fill (F1017) had been mostly

truncated by a re-cut to the ditch (see F1013 below). This fill was present to a depth of around 0.41 m (at its lowest point) and 0.85 m (at its highest point). The ditch (i.e. F1002) turned back into the excavated area where several sections of culvert had been inserted. This suggests that there may have been an entrance present here, breaking the ditch on the axis of the pool (on the first and second edition OS maps) and the mound.

6.3 *Ditch F1022*

- 6.3.1 A north-south ditch, F1022, truncated F1031 (described above) and appeared to share its upper fill with the main ditch (i.e. F1002), suggesting it was opened at the same time as the main ditch or some time during its functional life (see figure 11 and plate 5). This feature was filled with, firstly, a deposit of stone (F1022), and then a deposit of silty clay (described as F1028 but probably the same as F1017 as described above). The exposed section of the ditch measured some 11.40 m in length from where it joined F1002 on sites northern side. The southern end terminated inside the southern limits of the excavation. At this end, F1022 cut F1031 and was truncated, in turn by F1024. The southern 7.30 m of this feature were excavated with the remainder left intact as it lay outside the area to be affected by the culvert. The excavated portion varied between 2.10 m and 1.60 m in width, was V-shaped in profile, and a maximum of 0.95 m in depth. The main fill of this ditch feature was a silty clay (F1028), indistinguishable from F1017 (the upper fill of the main enclosure ditch F1002). At the southern the fill contained a large quantity of stone, described as F1023. The stone was solely sub-angular and angular limestone, up to 0.20 m in length, with some pieces of sandstone present. This deposit was present to a depth of around 0.56 m.

7 Early Medieval Features

7.1 Features post-dating the enclosure

7.1.1 A series of features were constructed on the site in the period after the silting up of the enclosure ditch. One further section of a V-shaped ditch (F1010) was excavated outside the enclosure, to the north of the site. This ditch was truncated by the re-cutting of the main ditch (see F1013 below). The upper fills of F1010 produced the shank of a ringed-pin of 11th century date, although the exact context of this find was unclear as it occurred at the edge of pit, which was clearly cut into the upper fill of the ditch. No clear relationship could be established between F1002 (the main enclosure ditch) and F1010. The later re-cut (F1013) was excavated through the upper fills of F1010, and is described in the medieval section below. It must be stated that post-excavation work could reveal that F1010 pre-dates F1002.

7.2 Ditch F1010

7.2.1 This feature was not noted in the track corridor, during monitoring of ground disturbance works. Nor is it clearly present on the geophysical survey of adjacent portions of the interior (although the possibility that it extends into that area cannot be disproved by the geophysics either). The cut (F1010) itself measured between 1.50 m to 2.20 m and was V-shaped in profile (see figure 11, figure 12 and plate 6). The northern edge was cut into the deposit of iron pan, which had formed across the northern half of the site, while the southern edge was cut through glacial clays. The ditch contained a basal organic fill (F1039) overlain by a further layer of organic material (F1037). A substantial dump of re-deposited iron-panned natural (F1038) overlay F1037 in the centre of the ditch. This divided the later fills of this ditch into two, with a single fill to the west (F1040: this is the deposit cut by F1013) and a different fill (F1036) to the east (where it is overlain by F1041). A later pit (F1011) was also cut into the top of the ditch.

7.3 Ditch F1024

7.3.1 An east-west ditch or gully was recorded as cutting F1032 and F1022 (see figure 14, plate 3 and plate 7). The exposed portion of this feature was 11.60 m and varied in width between 1.90 m and 1.20 m at the top, and between 1.00 m and 0.80 m at the base. This

ditch was roughly U-shaped in profile, with slightly sloping sides. The feature was constructed after the deposition of F1023, the stone-filled deposit within F1022 (it cut through this deposit, mostly truncating it in this area). While F1024 extended beyond the western limits of the site, the eastern limit lay beyond the line of F1022, but did not extend as far as the main enclosure ditch (F1002). The fill of this feature was a compact grey-brown silty clay with some stone inclusions (F1025). This survived to a depth of around 0.50 m. Four undiagnostic mould fragments and some animal bone were recovered from this feature.

7.4 ***Pit F1011***

- 7.4.1 A later pit (F1011) was also cut into the top of the ditch (particularly through F1041). The pit measured some 1.50 m in diameter and was present to a depth of around 0.20 m. The lower fill (F1042) was a grey sandy gravel, to a depth of 0.14 m. This was overlain by a dense layer of charcoal-rich clay (F1009) to a maximum depth of 0.15 m.

8 Later Medieval Features

8.1 *Re-cutting of the main ditch*

8.1.1 At some time after the construction of the Phase 3 ditch, the circuit of the main enclosure ditch was re-excavated, on a smaller scale and not completely following the original alignment (it is not present on the 'return' marking the entrance). This activity was carried out once the ditch had become completely backfilled (i.e. after F1017 had formed). The upper fills of the re-cut ditch contained Dublin-type wares. This ditch also truncated the Phase 3 ditch described above.

8.1.2 A pit excavated into the upper fill of the large well (described above), also contained some sherds of Dublin ware and may also date to this period (see figure 15).

8.2 *Lintel drain, F1033*

8.2.1 A collapsed lintel drain was identified as crossing the site. This measured some 0.26 m in width and was a maximum of 0.27 m in depth. The drain could be traced for some 12 m, and there were suggestions that it was present for up to 17 m. It cut the top of F1017 (the fill of F1002), F1032 (the fill of F1031) and F1025 (the fill of F1024). The drain could not be clearly identified across the line of F1013 (the 12th or 13th century re-cut of F1002), although may be to do with the direction of drainage, with the drain largely removed on the north. This feature may have been of late medieval date, since a sherd of medieval pottery was retrieved from its fill, but no later artefacts were present.

9 Post-Medieval and Early Modern features

9.1 Later use of the site: Post-Medieval. A series of furrows were identified on the geophysics and are depicted on Béranger's late eighteenth century watercolour. These show the site being ploughed in a northwest to southeast direction. A furrow (F1020) was identified in the southern area of the site.

9.2 *Pit/Well (?)*

9.2.1 A large sub-oval cut (F1030) across the top of the main enclosure ditch (which had become backfilled by F1017 at this point) was found to contain a setting of timbers at the base. This probably represents a well. An active spring which continually pumped water into this feature, made excavation very difficult. The timbers were set around the break of slope at the base of the pit. Some peat (F1053) had accumulated behind the westernmost side where the timbers survived best. The fills of the pits were quite mixed and up to four further fills were recorded, including F1027, F1029, F1044 and F1045.

9.3 *Land drain*

9.3.1 A stone-filled land drain was also present on the site.

10 Conclusions

10.1 Conclusions

10.1.1 It is clear, from the most recent excavations, that the Ballymount Great site contains a monument of some complexity. While it may still be premature to make any great claims for the site, the excavated features in and around the enclosure may date from the Bronze Age to the medieval period. Surviving features of the post-medieval and early modern periods were also noted.

10.2 Post-excavation work

Post-excavation work is currently under way. Samples retrieved from the waterlogged features are being processed for plant and faunal remains. A quantity of wood recovered from the ditch, in particular, and charred plant materials from many of the other features is currently being analysed. Animal bone was also recovered from many of the features. It is hoped that viable radio-carbon samples will be processed for the (a) burnt mound; (b) earliest ditch (F1031) and (c) the main enclosure ditch. A number of samples, including twigs, were recovered from primary levels of the main ditch and these should ensure that an accurate date is returned. A full report and analysis of the structures and features present on the site will be prepared when such analyses are complete.

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Appendix 1: Features by Phase

Pre-enclosure: Bronze Age?

Neither of activities described below can be stratigraphically demonstrated to pre-date the enclosure, although it is assumed that the burnt mound activity is likely to be Bronze Age in date, while the short section of a gully may be part of a ringbarrow (largely removed by later activity).

Glacial deposits on the site were recorded as F1000. A large deposit of iron was also recorded as F1007. A layer of fine, silty yellow clay, which was present at the southern end of the excavated area was recorded as F1026, this layer appeared to be an *in situ* mineral soil cut by the features present on site. It may have been introduced, although this is unlikely. Topsoil was recorded as F1001.

F1000 (glacial till)

F1001 (topsoil) med post sherds; creamware; lignite bracelet, iron objects; **burnt bone**; *animal bone*.

F1026 (Yellow clay: natural?); 2 pieces of fired clay on the surface; *animal bone*.

Burnt Mound

Phase 1

F1003 (pit cut: probable trough)

F1004 (fill of F1003); *animal bone*; **soil sample**

Phase 2

F1012 (pit cut: probable trough: truncates F1003)

F1005 (fill of F1012); *animal bone*.

Ditch (possible barrow?)

F1031 (cut: V-shaped profile)

F1043 (primary fill of F1031); *animal bone*; **burnt bone**;

F1032 (upper fill of ditch, contains mould fragments: cut by F1022) *animal bone*.

F1046 (upper fill of ditch)

Enclosure: Iron Age

The main enclosure ditch was excavated (described below) along with a section of another ditch, which appears to be related.

Main enclosure ditch.

F1002 (ditch cut: returns at southern end: suggests that an entrance was present)

F1054 (basal ditch fill: waterlogged: high organic content); *animal bone*; **2 organic bulk samples; wood.**

F1016 (sterile loam overlying F1054); *animal bone*; **burnt bone; charcoal.**

F1017 (upper fill of F1002, indistinguishable from F1028 within F1022); slag; *animal Bone*; **soil sample.**

Annexe to main enclosure.

F1022 (ditch: cut at right angle to main ditch: shares at least upper fill); *animal bone*; **charcoal.**

F1023 (dump of stones at southern end of F1022: cut F1024); mould fragment; *animal bone*; **soil sample.**

F1028 (fill of F1022: contains F1023: same as F1017); quartz flake; *animal bone*; **burnt bone; soil sample; charcoal.**

Medieval

There appears to be a period of abandonment of the site, represented by the natural in-filling of F1002 (particularly F1016 and F1017). A series of features then represent increased activity within the site in the period from around 800 AD onwards).

Ditch

F1024 (Ditch or gully: U-shaped profile)

F1025 (fill of F1024); 4 mould fragments; *animal bone*; **soil sample**.

Ditch

F1010 (Ditch: V-shaped profile); 2 pieces of slag; *animal bone*.

F1039 (Basal fill of F1010)

F1037 (Primary fill of F1010: similar to F1039); **soil sample (organic); wood; charcoal**;

F1036 (Stoney fill within F1010); *animal bone*.

F1038 (Fill of F1010: over F1039); *animal bone*.

F1041 (Fill of F1010: over F1036); *animal bone*; **charcoal**.

Ditch: re-cut of main ditch.

F1013 (Ditch: cuts F1017 and F1010)

F1015 (Basal fill of F1013); 4 pieces slag; med coarse ware; flint; *animal bone*.

F1014 (Middle fill of F1013); flint flake; two mould fragments; *animal bone*; **soil sample**.

F1008 (Upper fill of F1013); pantile; slag; 3 sherds; med pot sherd; iron object; *animal bone*.

Pit

F1011 (Cut: in top of F1013)

F1042 (Basal fill of F1011)

F1009 (Deposit of burnt material in top of F1011); **soil sample**.

Lintel Drain

F1033 (Cut for drain: some stone lining, but mostly destroyed)

F1034 (Lower fill of F1033); *animal bone*; **soil sample**.

F1035 (Upper fill of F1033); med coarse ware.

Pit

F1050 (Cut)

F1051 (Fill of F1050); 2 med potsherds; **burnt bone**; *animal bone*.

Furrow

F1020 (Cut); 2 mould fragments.

F1021 (Topsoil fill of F1020); pantile; 2 iron objects; *animal bone*.

Well

F1030 (large cut: truncates return of F1002: cuts F1031)

F1053 (basal fill of F1030: contains timber setting: high peat content): **2 soil samples (organic)**;

F1045 (fill of F1030)

F1029 (fill of F1030); iron object; slag; **burnt bone**; *animal bone*; **2 soil samples**.

F1044 (fill of F1030)

F1027 (upper fill of F1030); pipe stem; flint; slag; iron objects; **burnt bone**; *animal bone*.

Stone drain

F1006 (Stone filled drain)

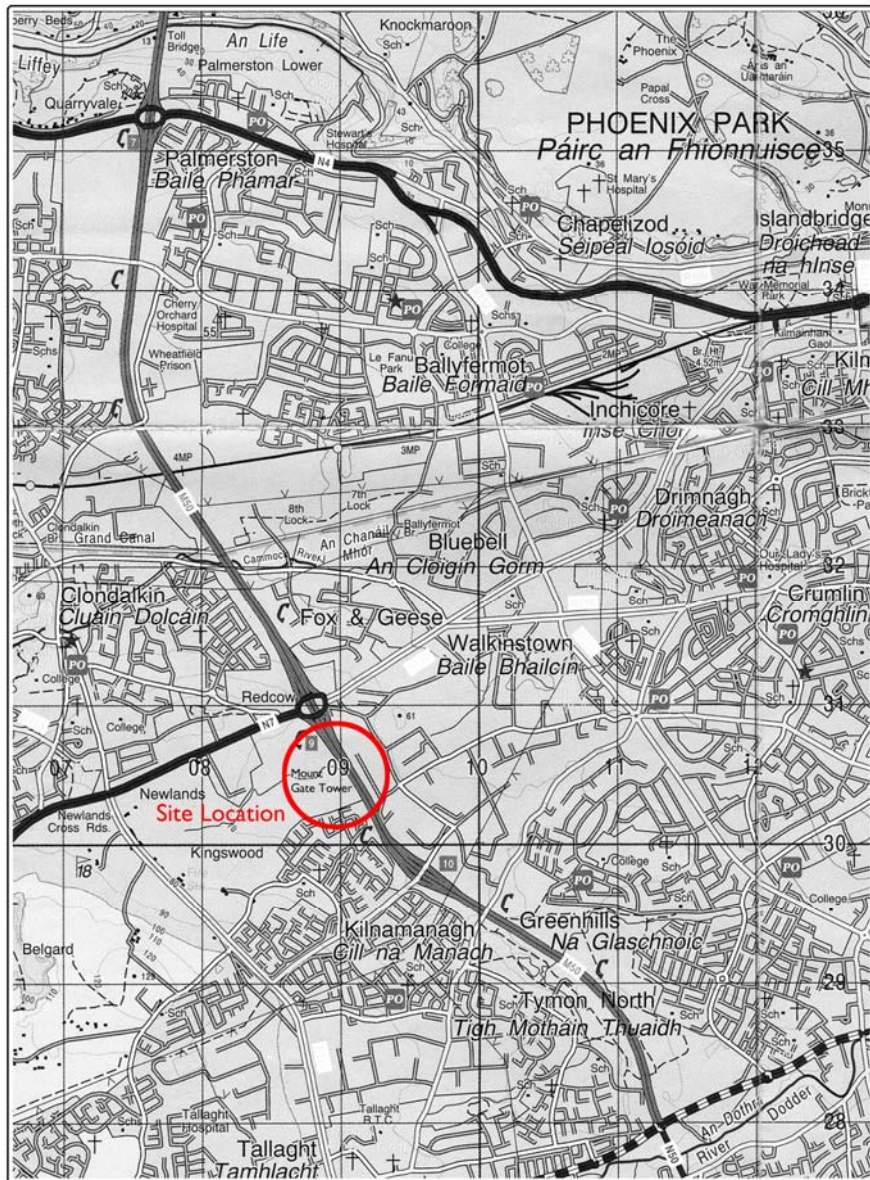
Appendix 2: Numerical List of Features

The following is a list of the excavated features, given in numerical order. Each number is followed by a brief description or an outline stratigraphic relationship. This is followed by any recorded finds, faunal samples (*italics*), burnt bone (***bold and italics***) and other samples (**bold**). The samples and finds are currently being examined as part of the post-exccavation work on the site.

F1000	Glacial till
F1001	Topsoil. produced medieval and post-medieval pottery sherds; creamware; lignite bracelet, iron objects; <i>burnt bone</i> ; <i>animal bone</i> .
F1002	Ditch cut: returns at southern end: suggests that an entrance was present.
F1003	Pit cut: probable trough.
F1004	Fill of F1003; <i>animal bone</i> ; soil sample
F1005	Fill of F1012; <i>animal bone</i> .
F1006	Stone filled drain
F1007	Deposit of iron pan. Natural
F1008	Upper fill of F1013; pantile; slag; 3 sherds; med pot sherd; iron object; <i>animal bone</i> .
F1009	Deposit of burnt material in top of F1011); soil sample.
F1010	Ditch: V-shaped profile; 2 pieces of slag; <i>animal bone</i> .
F1011	Cut: in top of F1013
F1012	Pit cut: probable trough: truncates F1003
F1013	Ditch: cuts F1017 and F1010
F1014	Middle fill of F1013; flint flake; two mould fragments; <i>animal bone</i> ; soil sample.
F1015	Basal fill of F1015; 4 pieces slag; med coarse ware; flint; <i>animal bone</i> .
F1016	Sterile loam overlying F1054 in F1002; <i>animal bone</i> ; <i>burnt bone</i> ; charcoal.
F1017	Upper fill of F1002, indistinguishable from F1028 within F1022; slag; <i>animal bone</i> ; soil sample

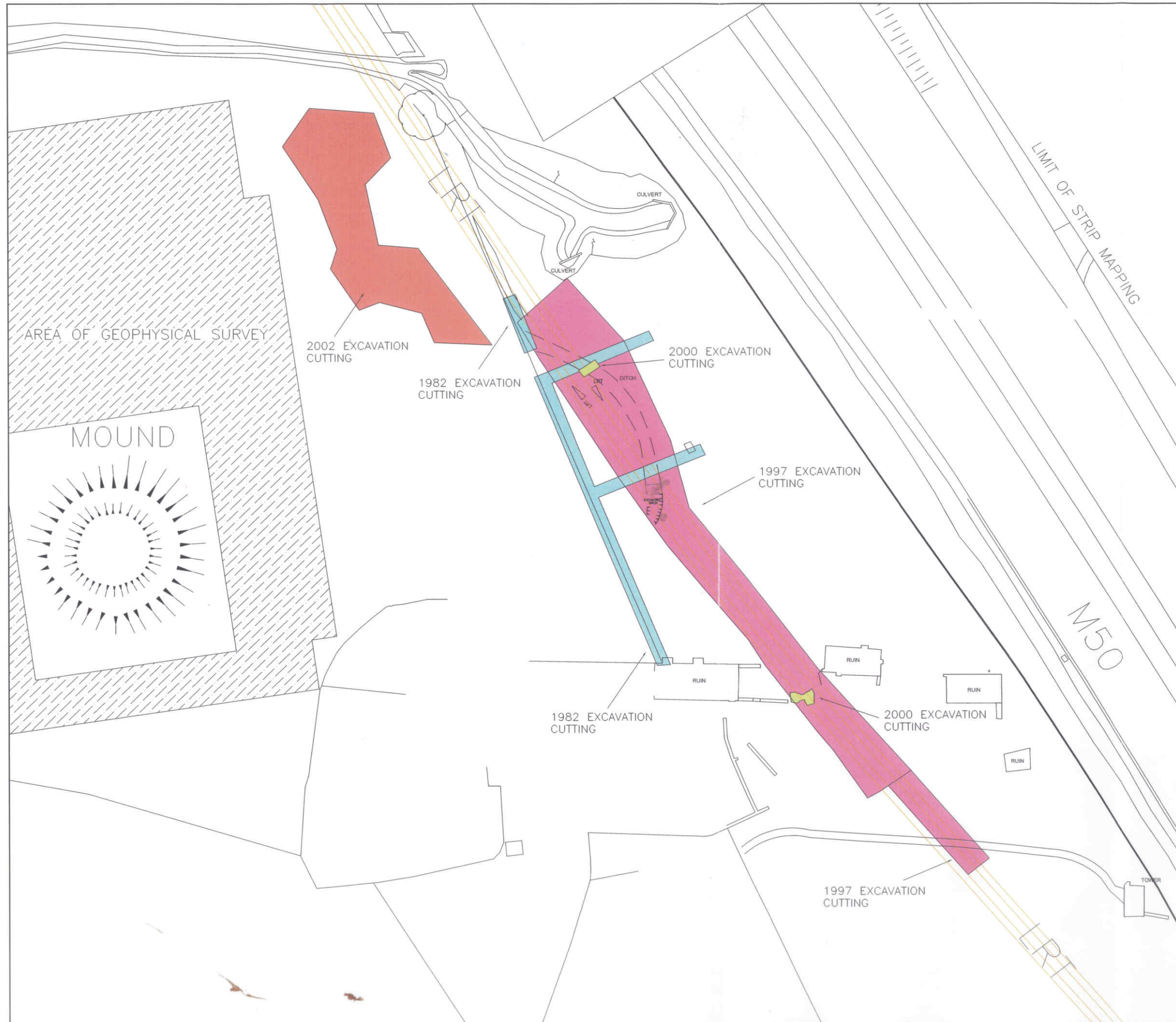
F1018 & F1019	
F1020	Cut; 2 mould fragments.
F1021	Topsoil fill of F1020; pantile; 2 iron objects; <i>animal bone</i> .
F1022	Ditch: cut at right angle to main ditch: shares at least upper fill); <i>animal bone</i> ; charcoal .
F1023	Dump of stones at southern end of F1022: cut F1024); mould fragment; <i>animal bone</i> ; soil sample .
F1024	Ditch or gully: U-shaped profile
F1025	Fill of F1024; 4 mould fragments; <i>animal bone</i> ; soil sample .
F1026	Yellow clay: natural?; 2 pieces of fired clay on the surface; <i>animal bone</i> .
F1027	Upper fill of F1030; pipe stem; flint; slag; iron objects; burnt bone ; <i>animal bone</i> .
F1028	Fill of F1022: contains F1023: same as F1017); quartz flake; <i>animal bone</i> ; burnt bone ; soil sample ; charcoal .
F1029	Fill of F1030; iron object; slag; burnt bone ; <i>animal bone</i> ; 2 soil samples .
F1030	Large cut: truncates return of F1002: cuts F1031
F1031	Cut: V-shaped profile
F1032	Upper fill of ditch F1031, contains mould fragments: cut by F1022; <i>animal bone</i> .
F1033	Cut for drain: some stone lining, but mostly destroyed
F1034	Lower fill of F1033); <i>animal bone</i> ; soil sample
F1035	Upper fill of F1033; med coarse ware.
F1036	Stoney fill within F1010; <i>animal bone</i> .
F1037	Primary fill of F1010: similar to F1039; soil sample (organic) ; wood ; charcoal ;
F1038	Fill of F1010: over F1039; <i>animal bone</i>
F1039	Basal fill of F1010
F1040	Fill of F1010, overlies F1037.
F1041	Fill of F1010: over F1036; <i>animal bone</i> ; charcoal .

F1042	Basal fill of F1011
F1043	Primary fill of F1031; <i>animal bone</i> ; burnt bone
F1044	Fill of F1030
F1045	Fill of F1030
F1046	Upper fill of ditch F1031
F1047	Fill of F1030
F1048	Fill of F1030
F1049	Fill of F1030
F1050	Cut
F1051	Fill of F1050; 2 med potsherds; burnt bone ; <i>animal bone</i> .
F1052	Same as F1048.
F1054	Basal fill of ditch F1002: waterlogged: high organic content); <i>animal bone</i> ; 2 organic bulk samples; wood.



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Fig. I Location map



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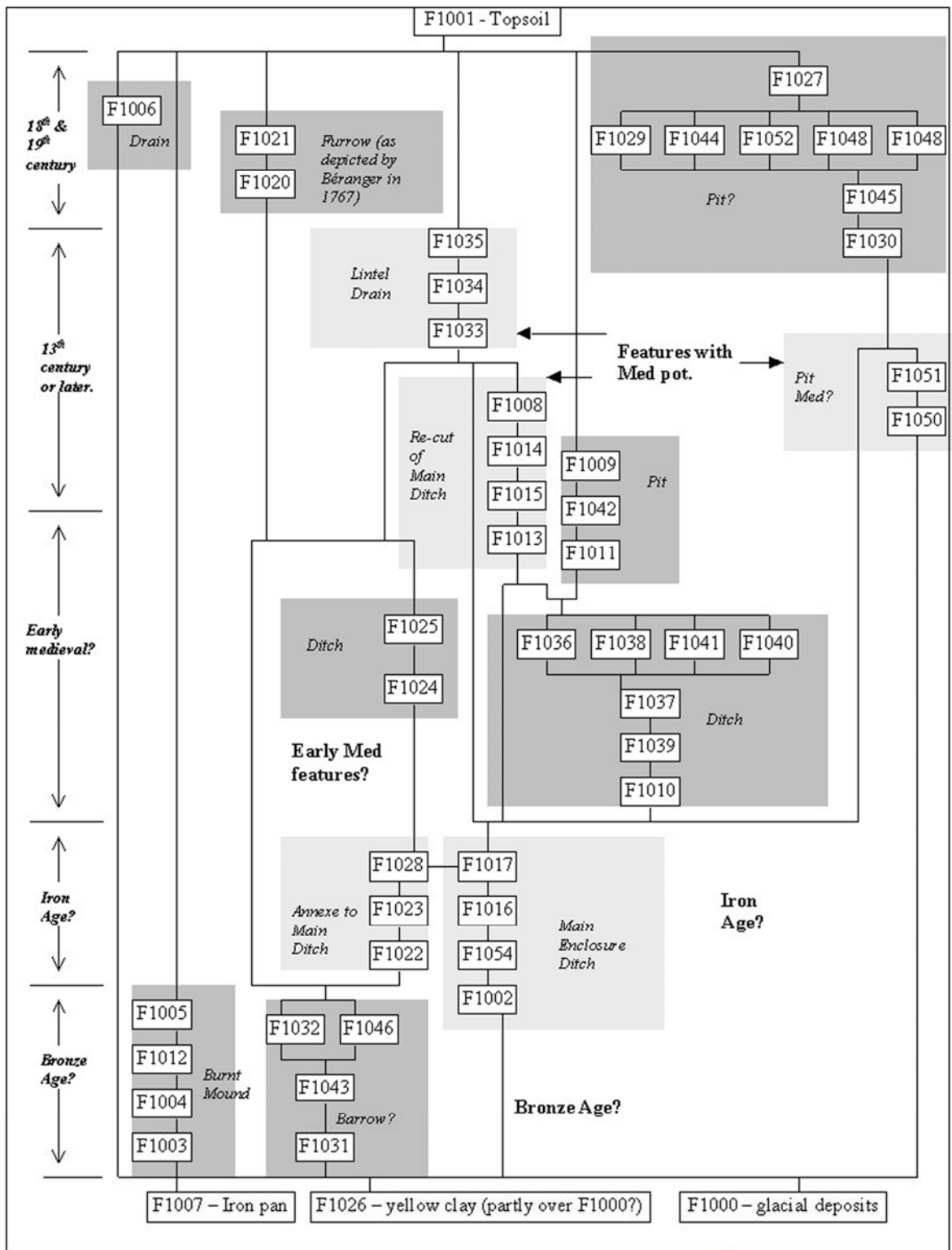
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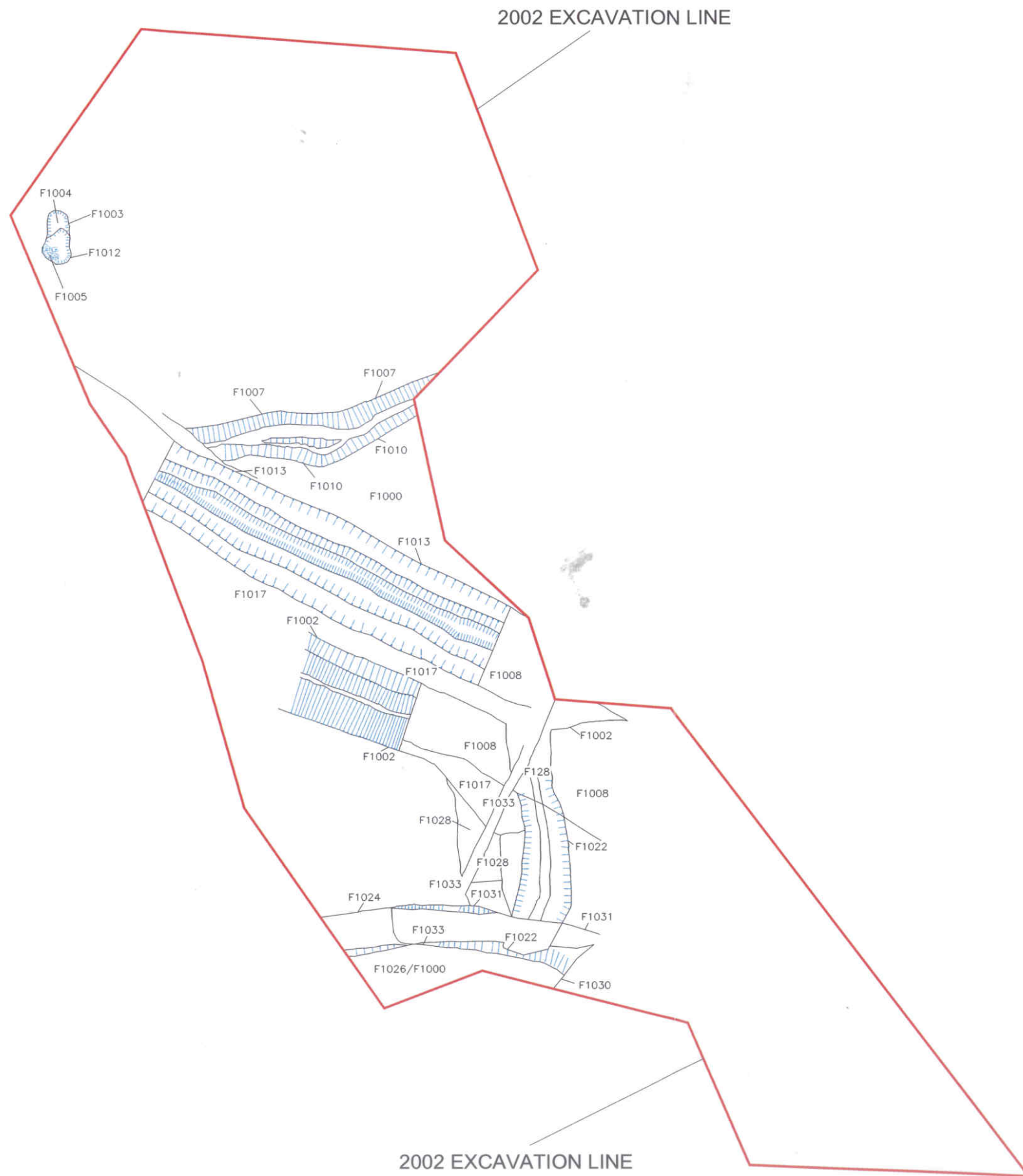
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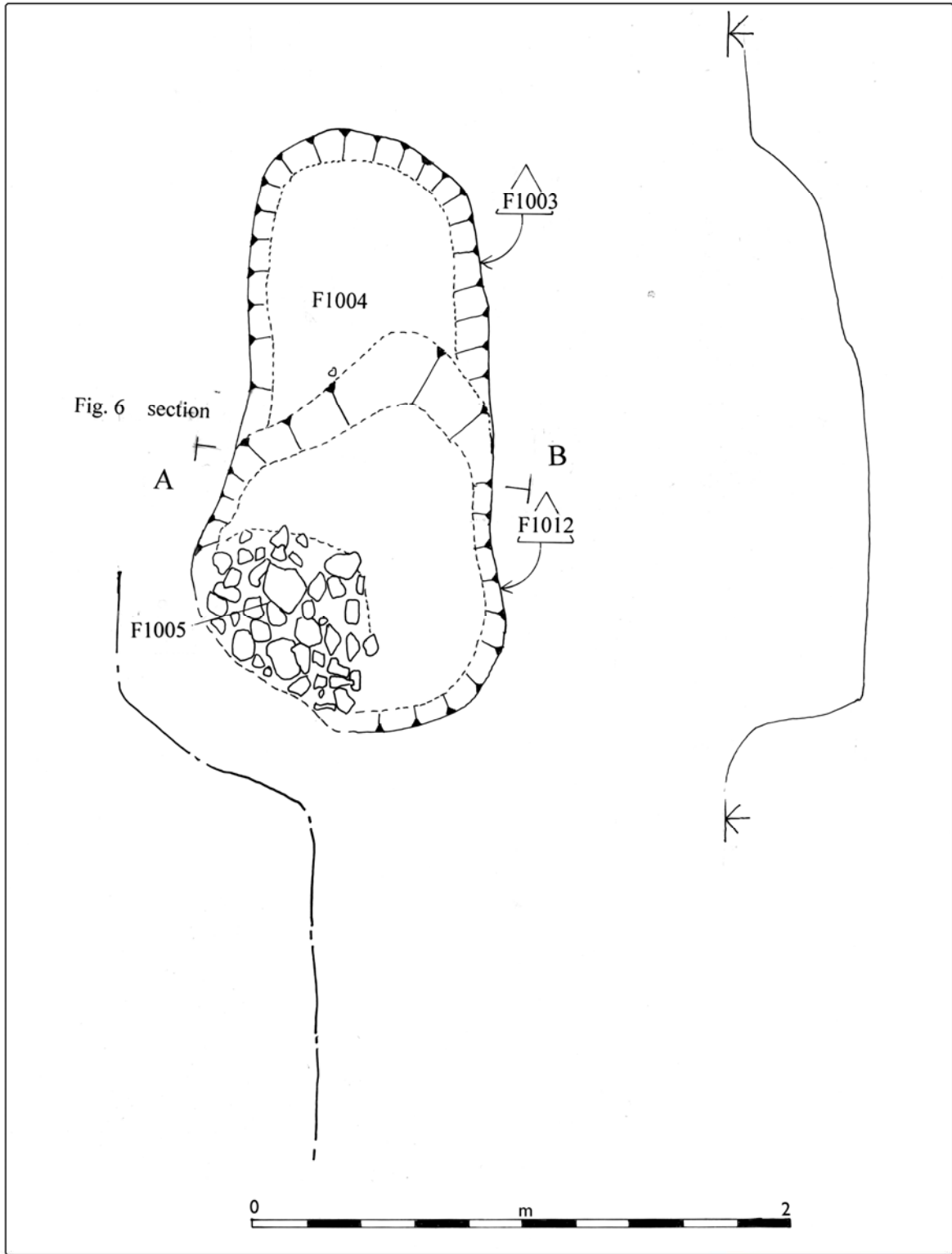
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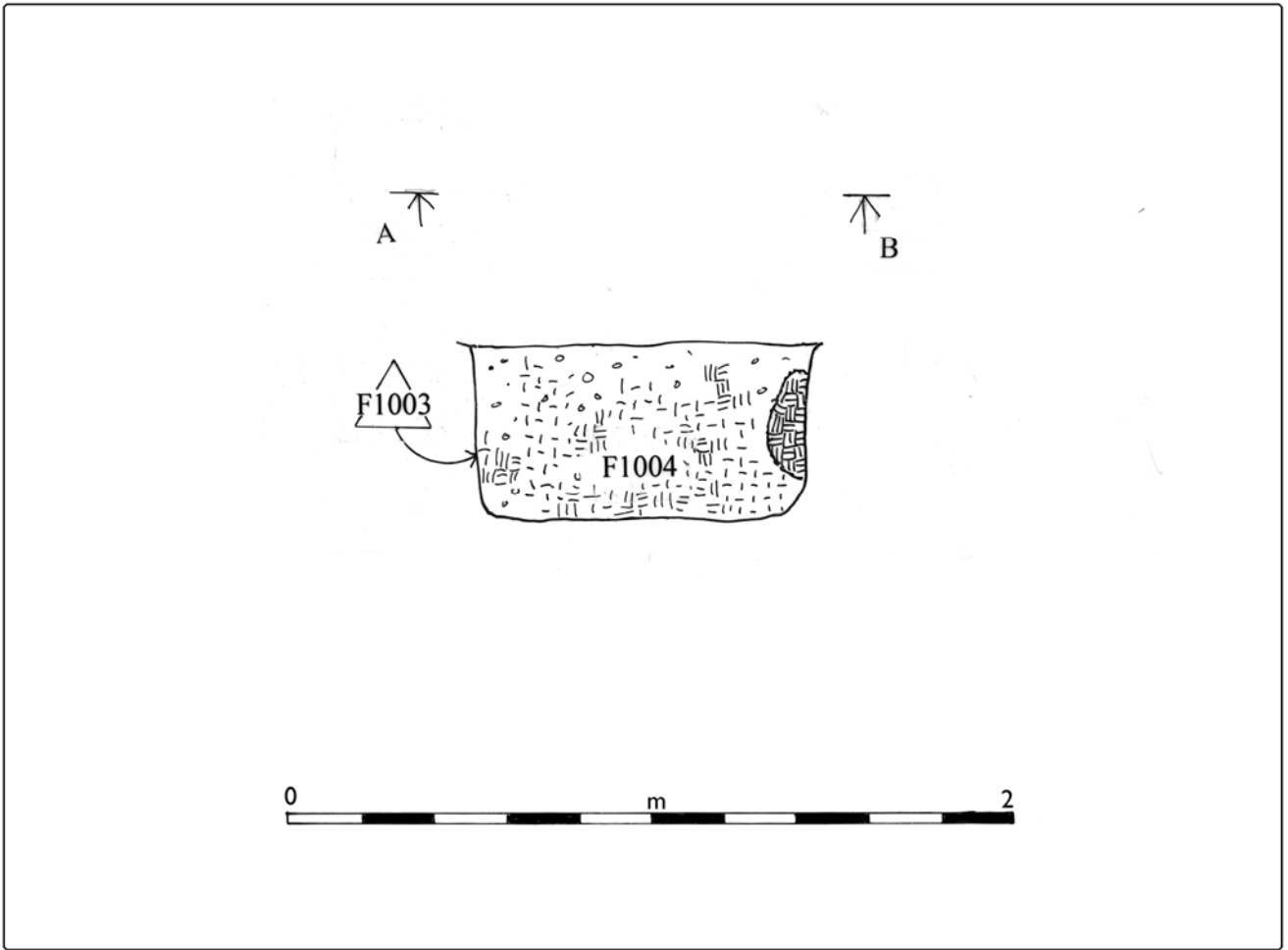
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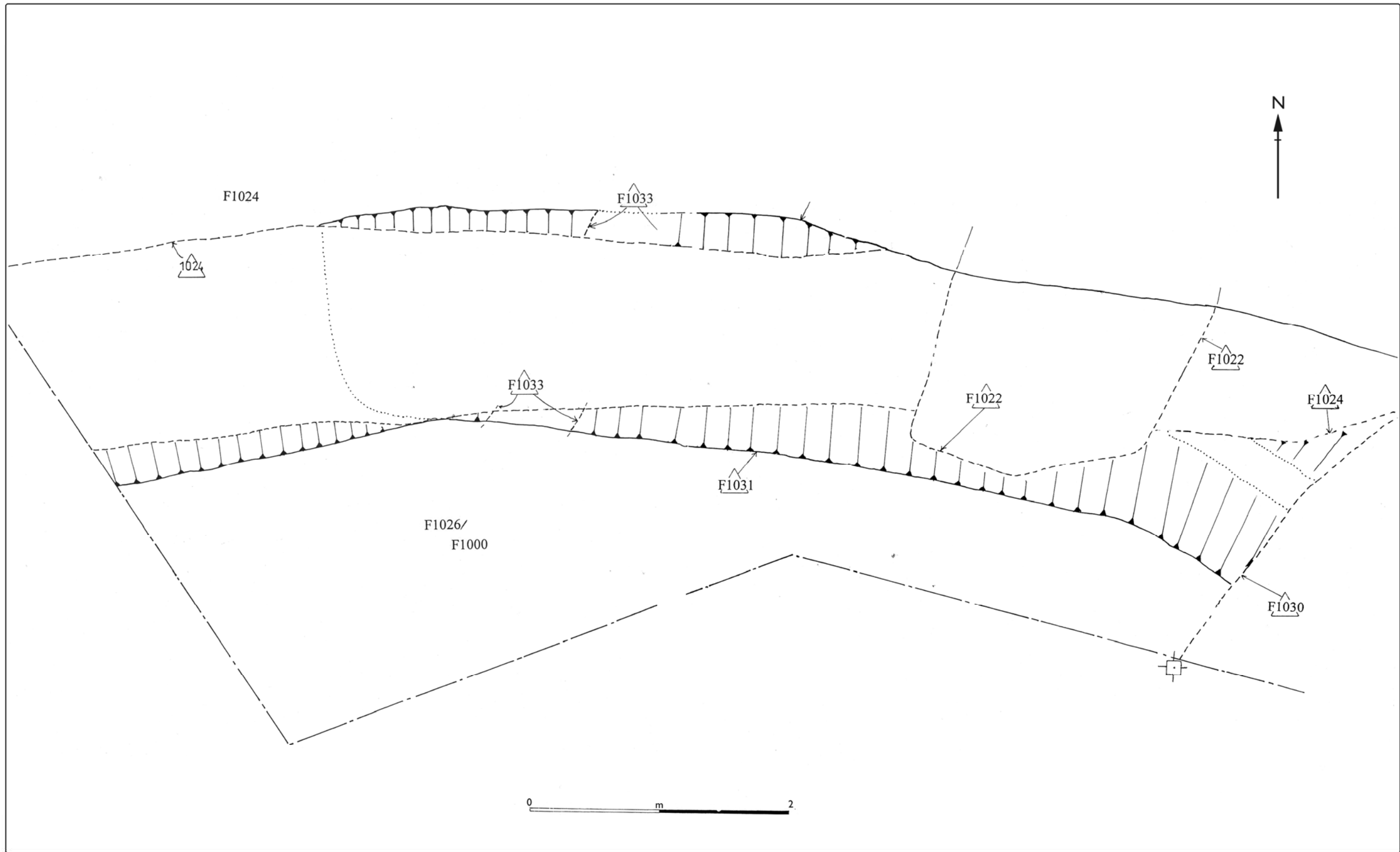
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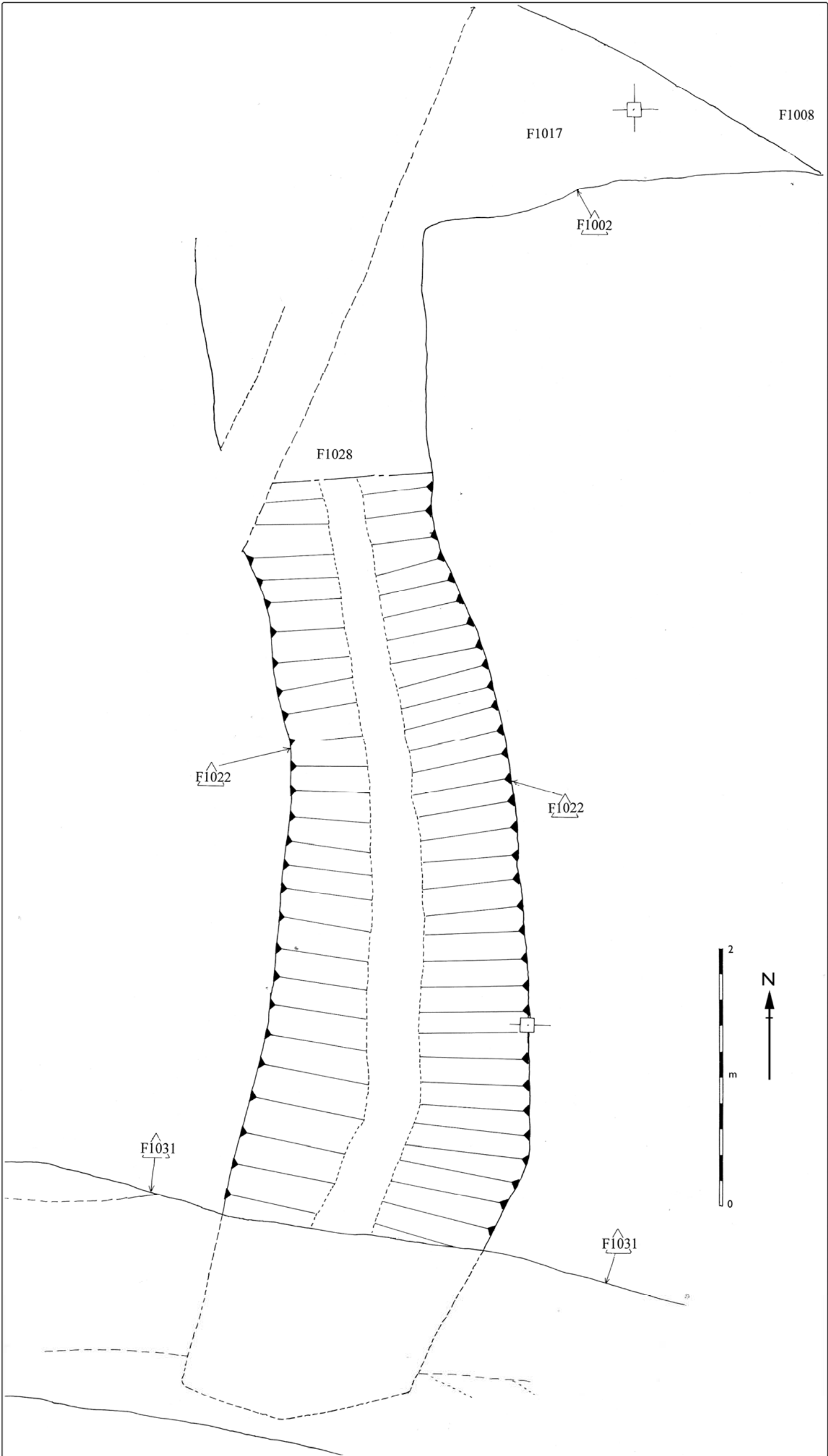
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Fig. 5 Burnt mound plan



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Fig. 6 Section - burnt mound pit

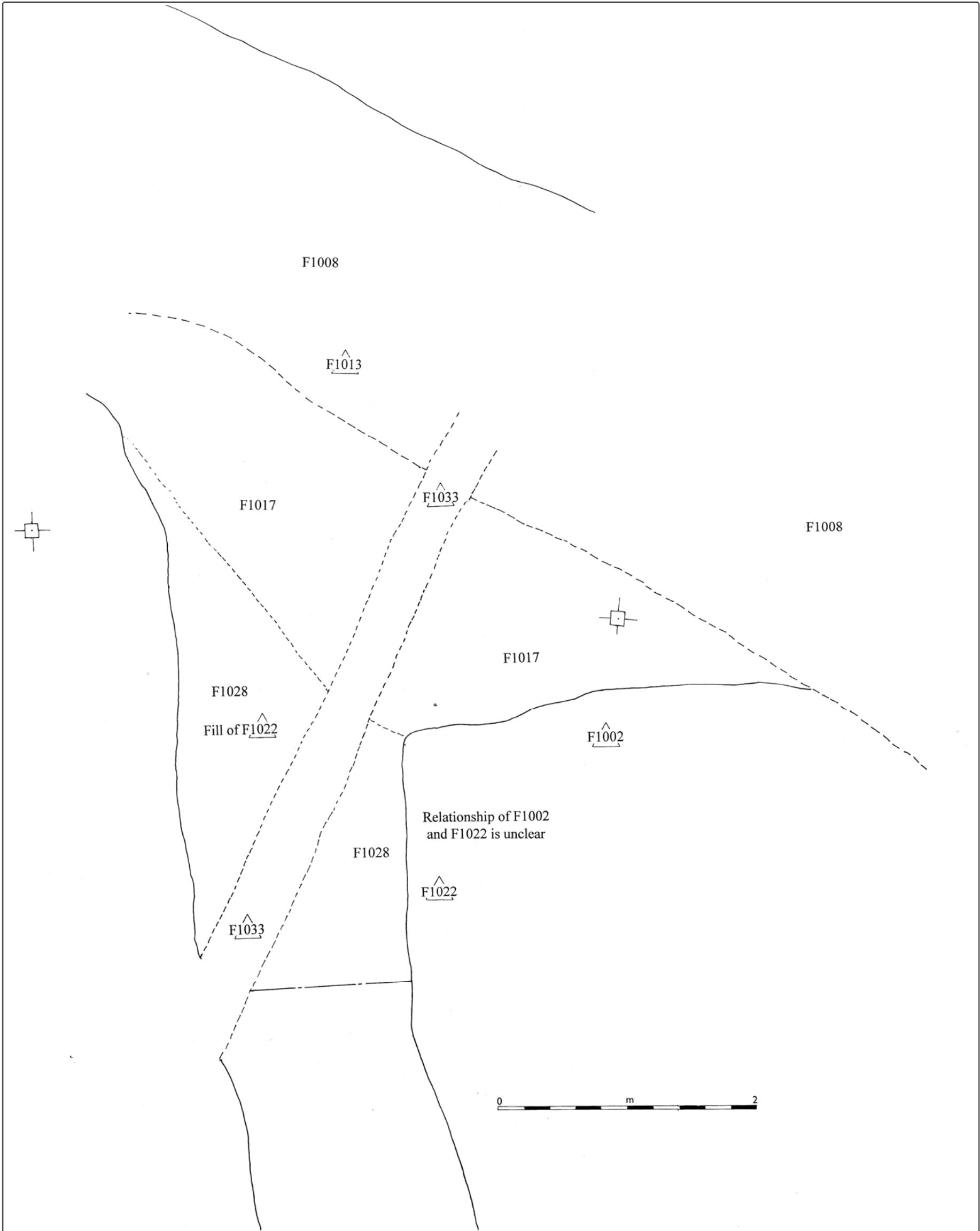


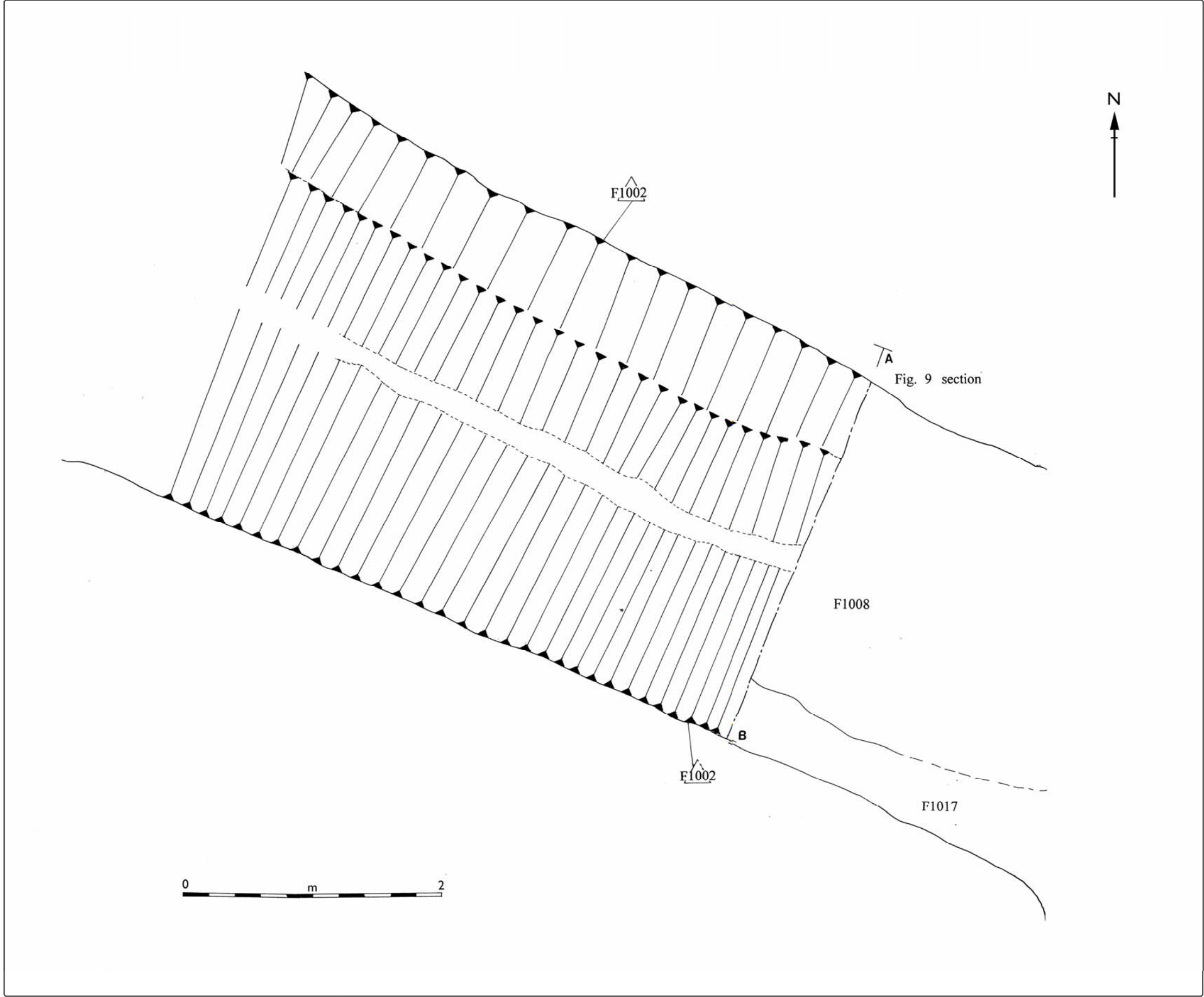
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Fig. 7 Ditch F1031



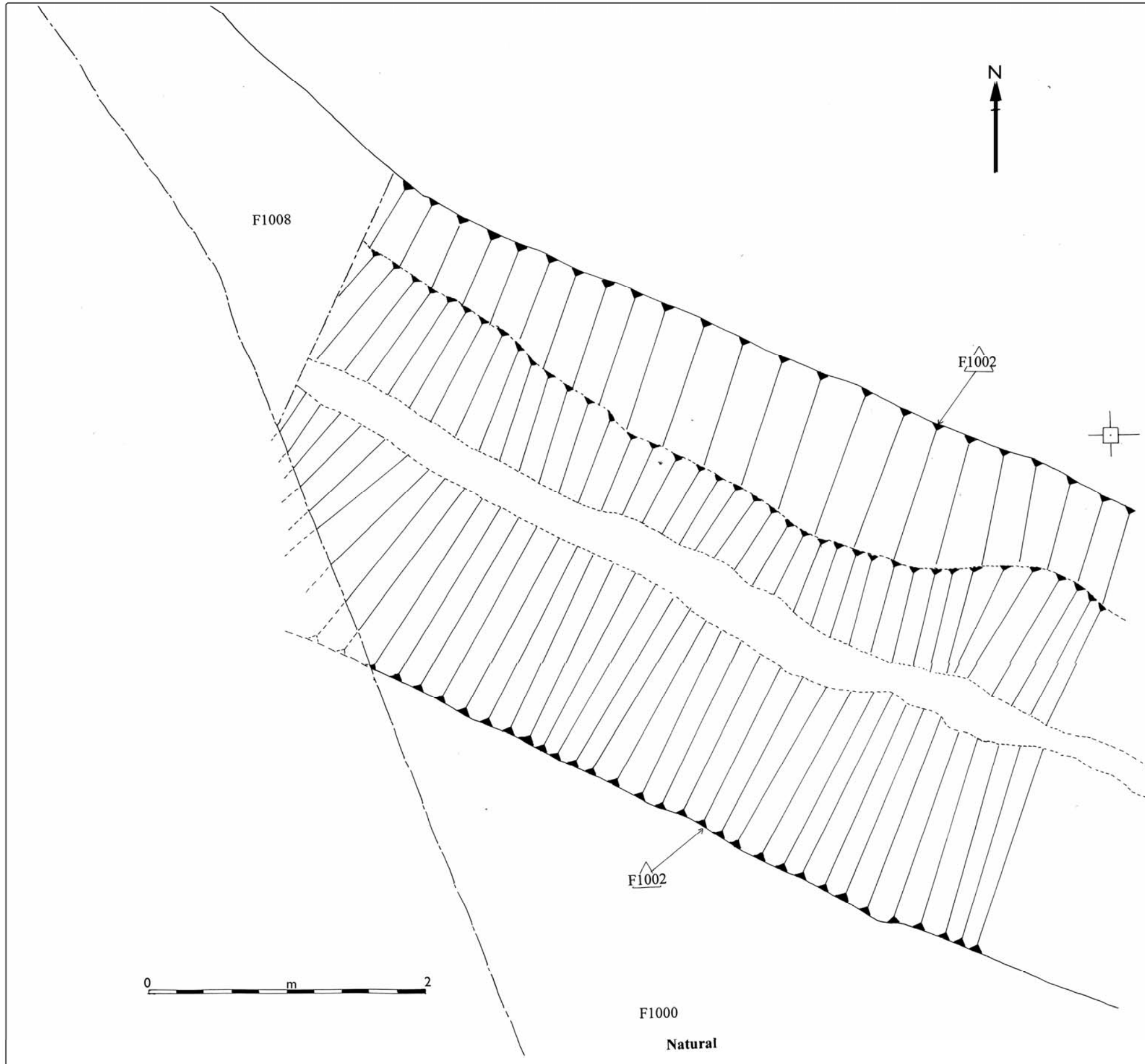

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Fig. 8a Iron Age ditches

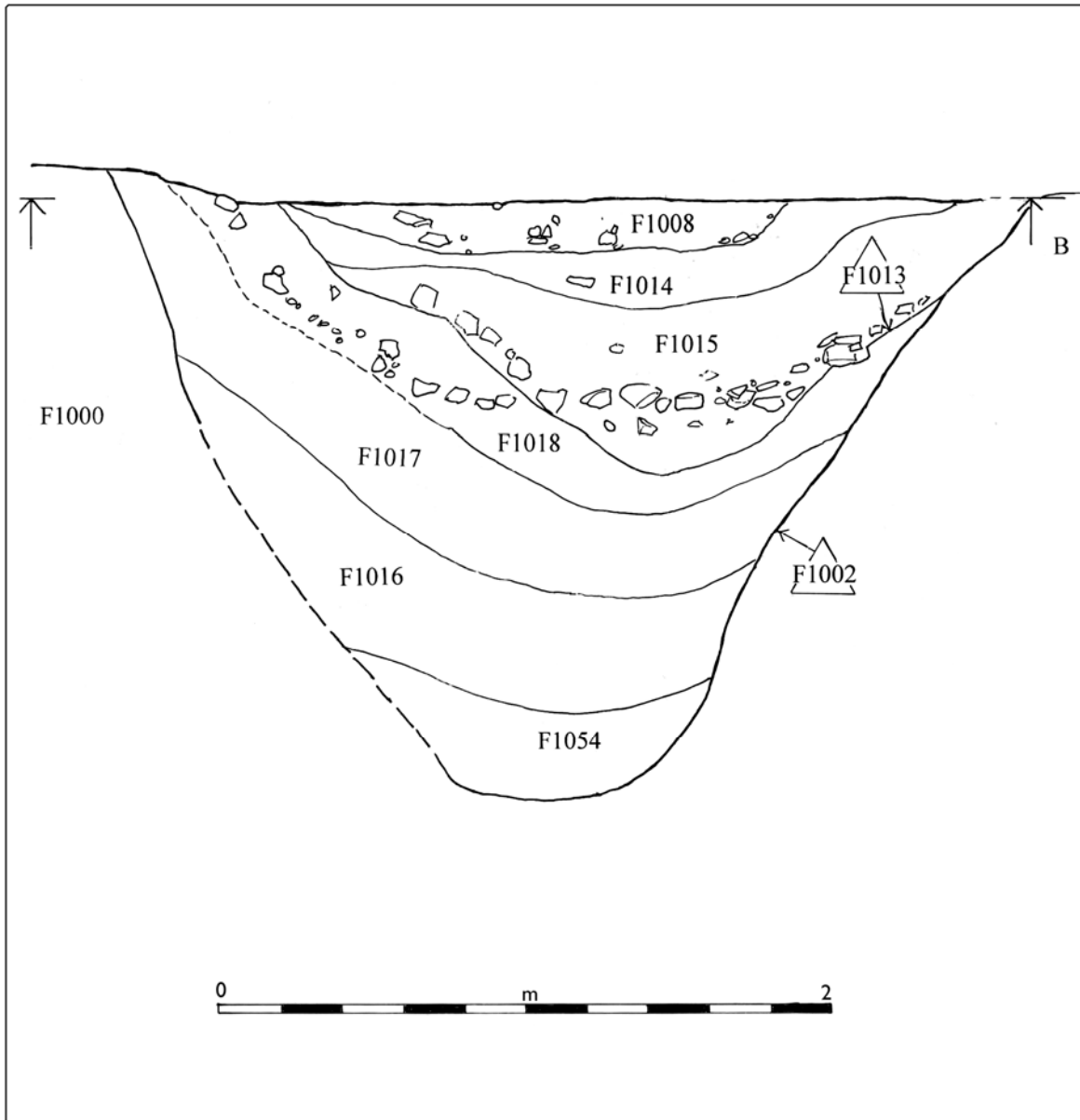




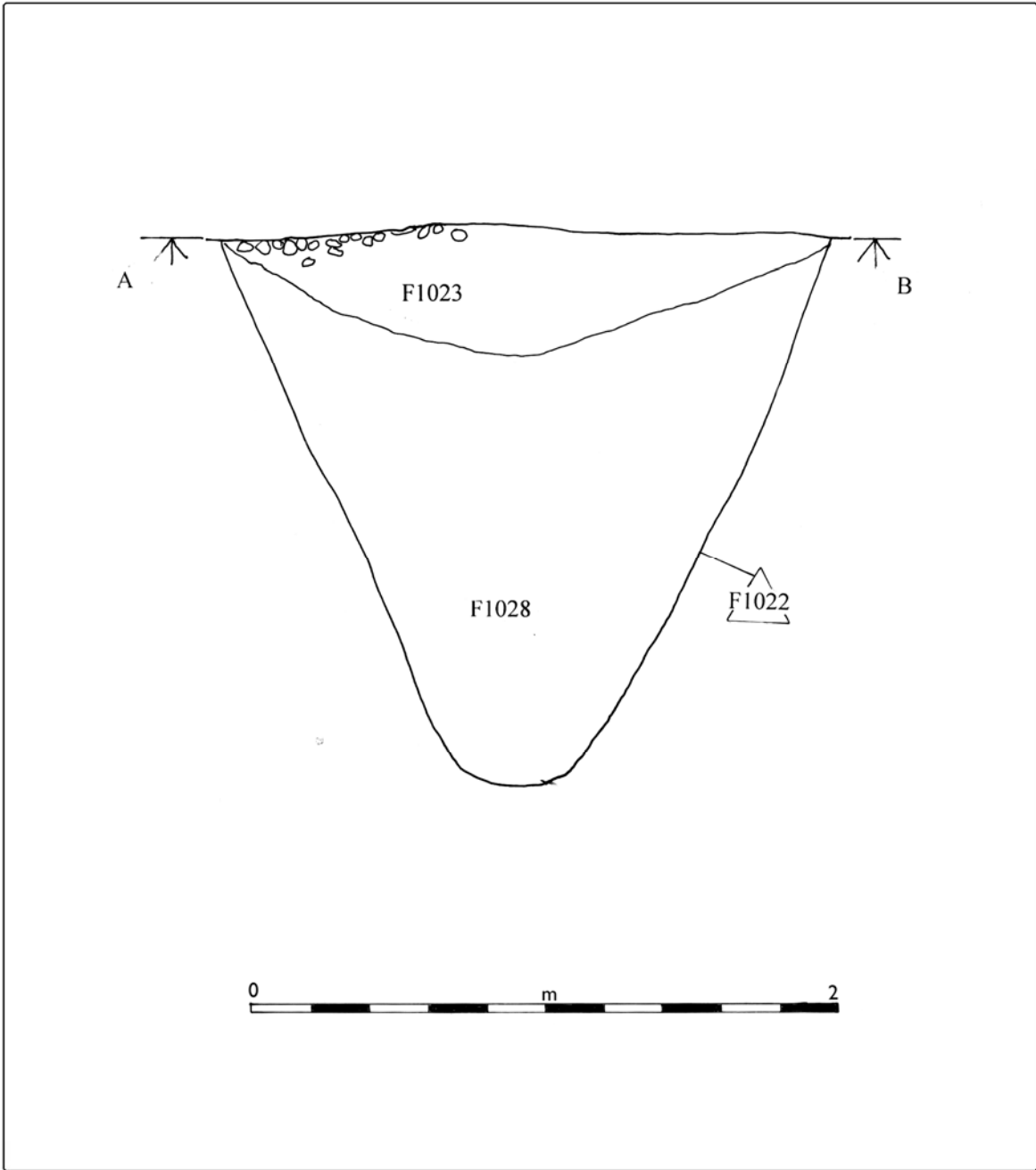
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Fig. 8c Iron Age ditches



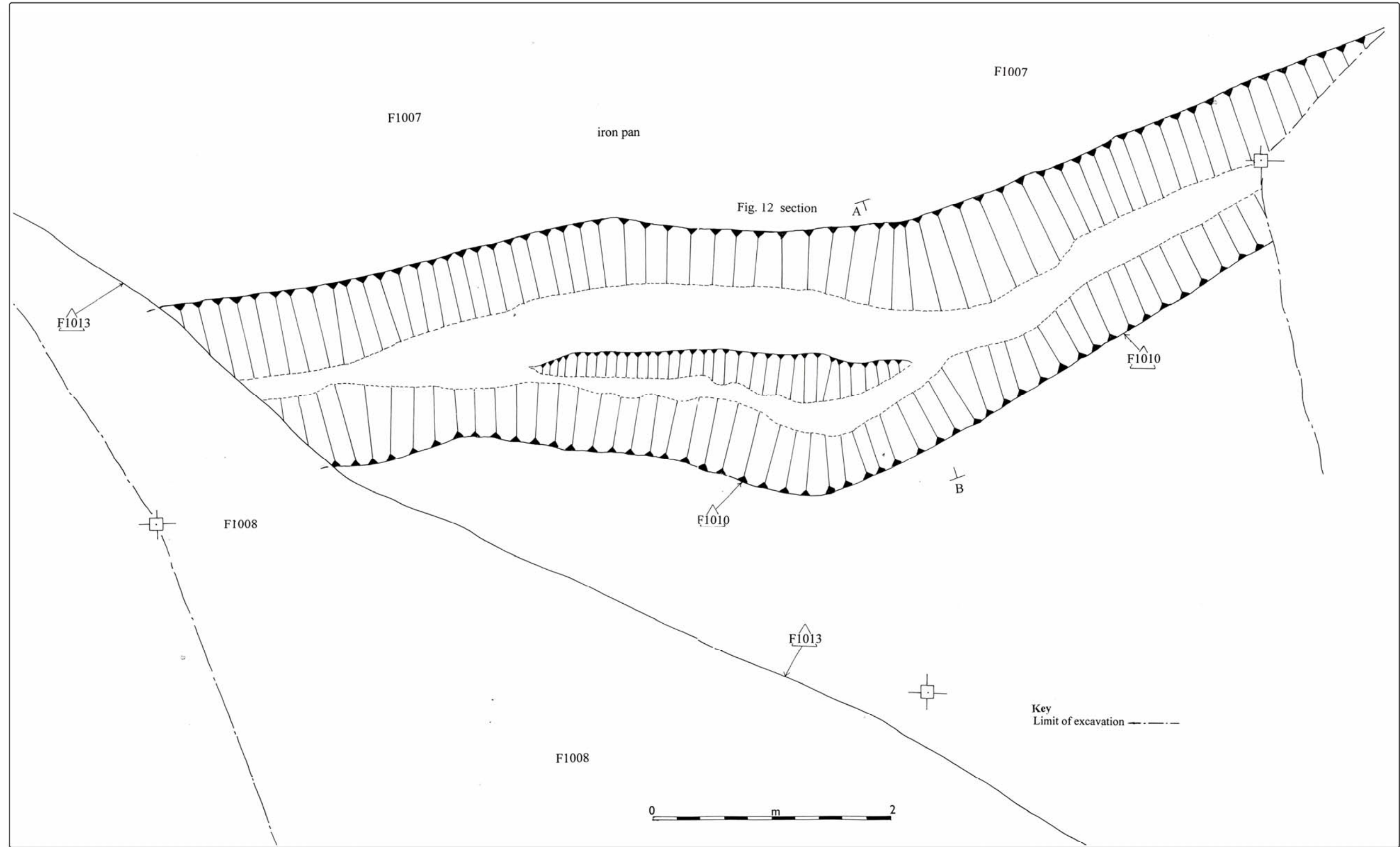
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Fig. 8d Iron Age ditches



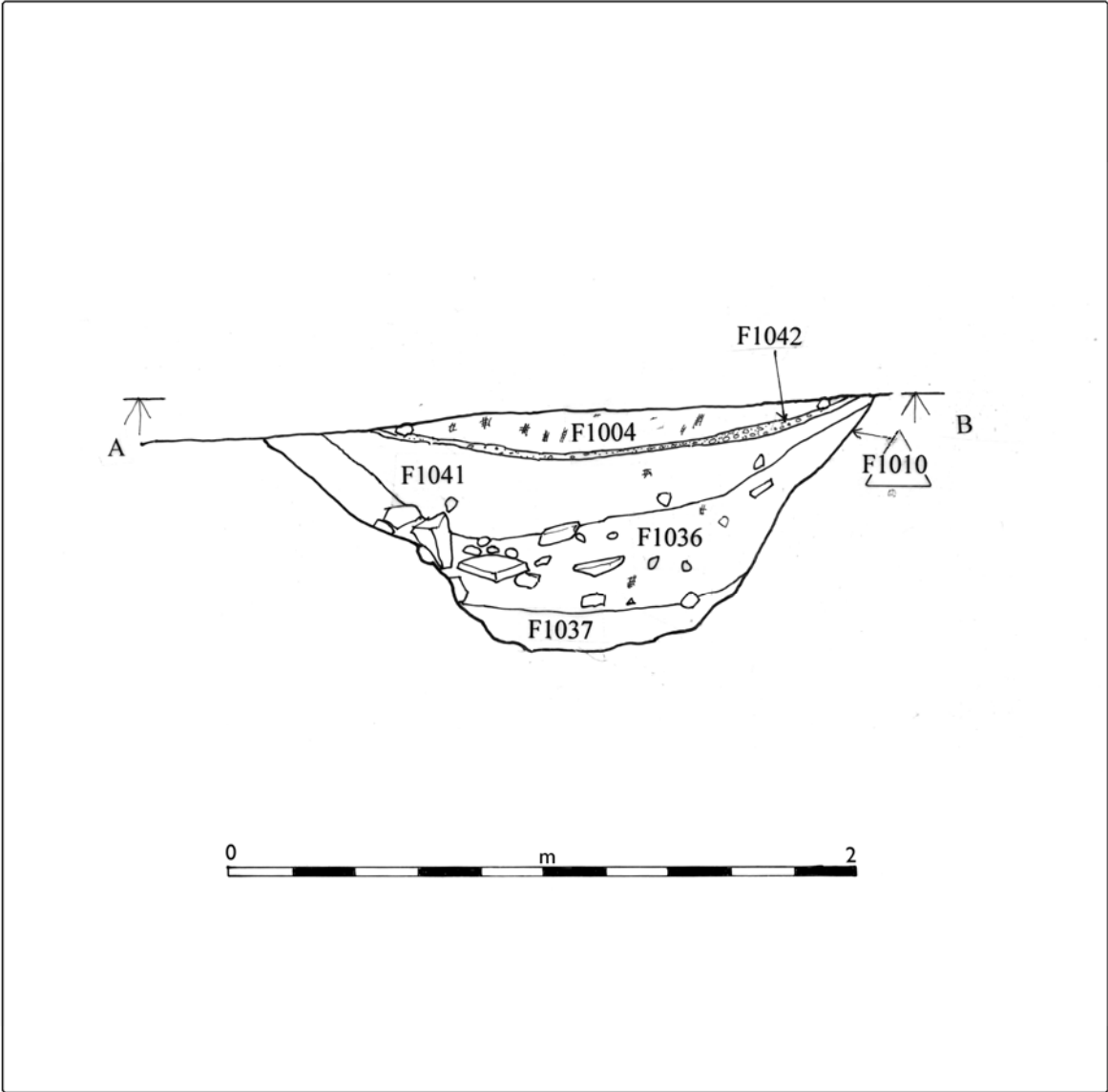
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Fig. 9 Section through F1002



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Fig.10 Section through F1022




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Fig.11 Early medieval ditch, F1010



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Scale As indicated
Fig.12 Section through F1010

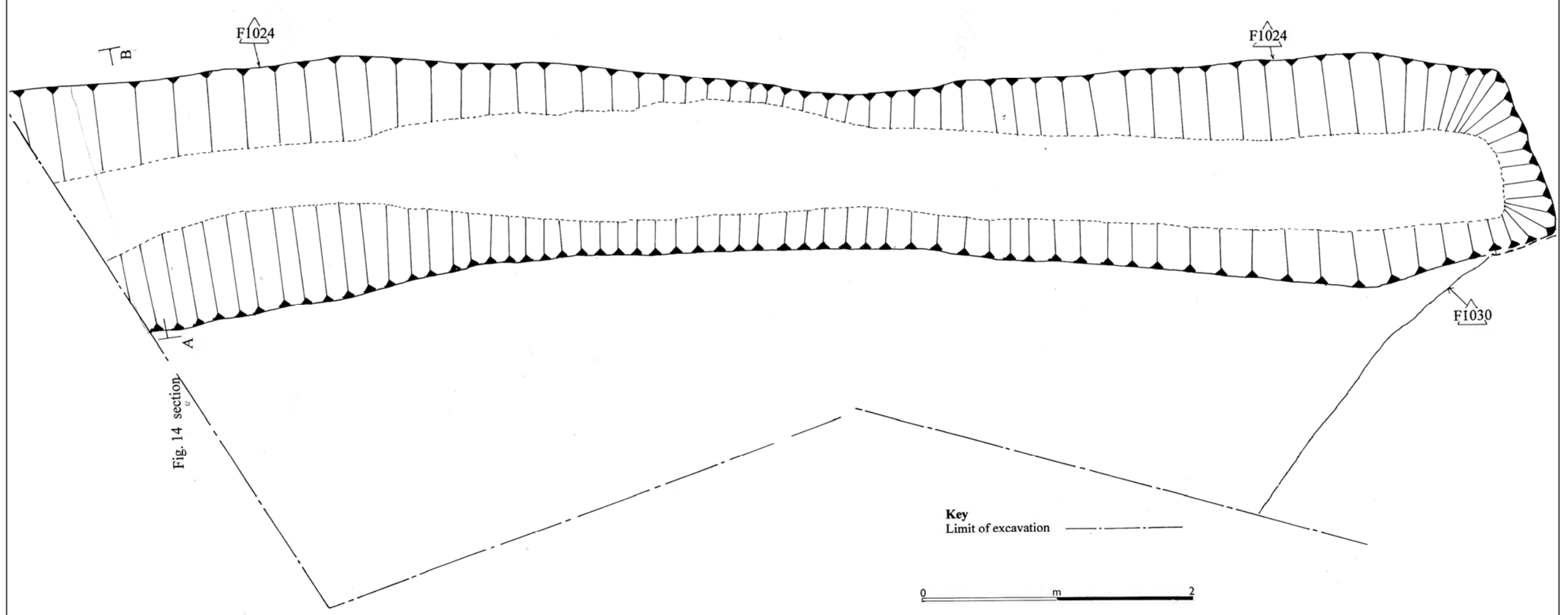
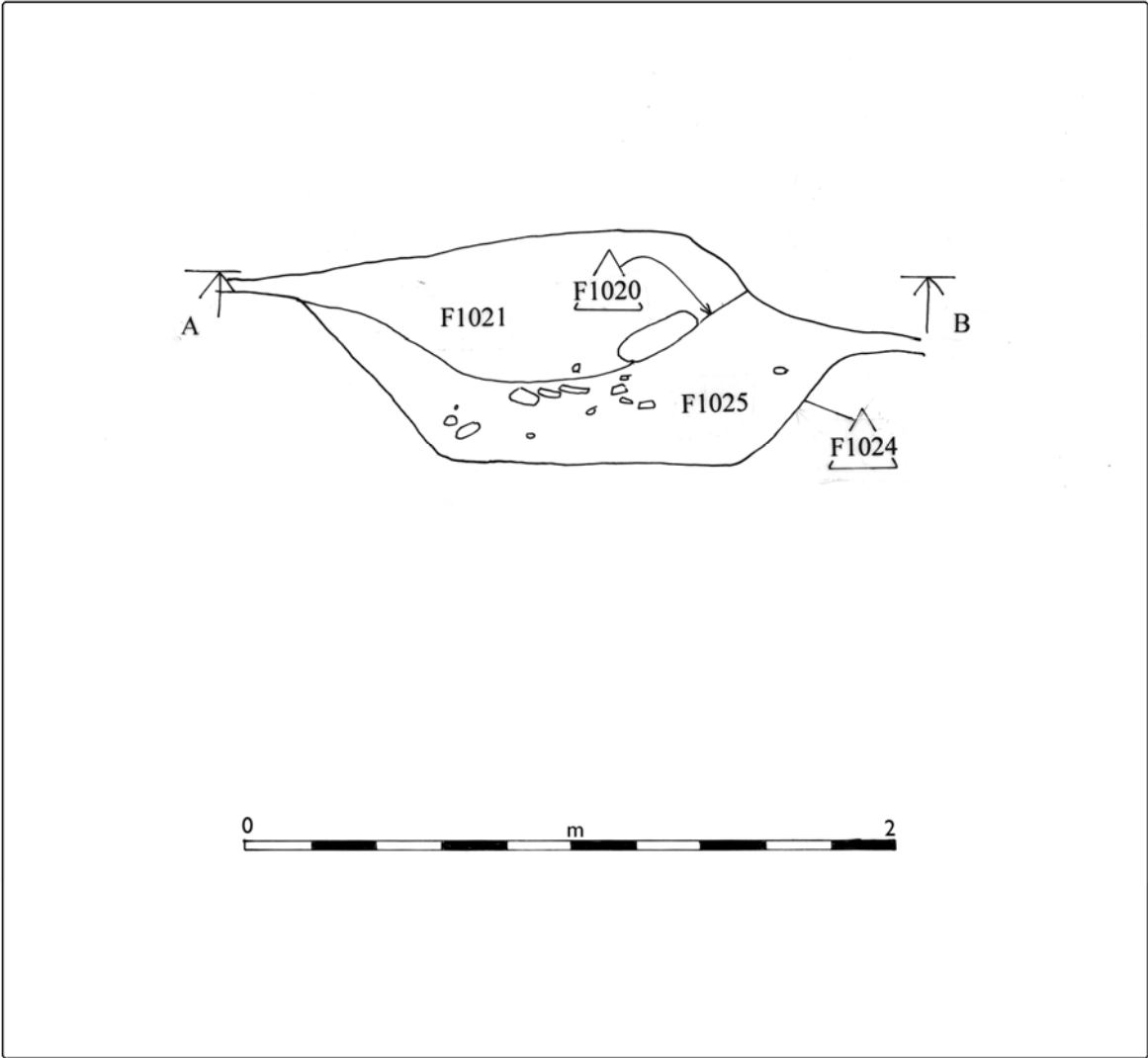


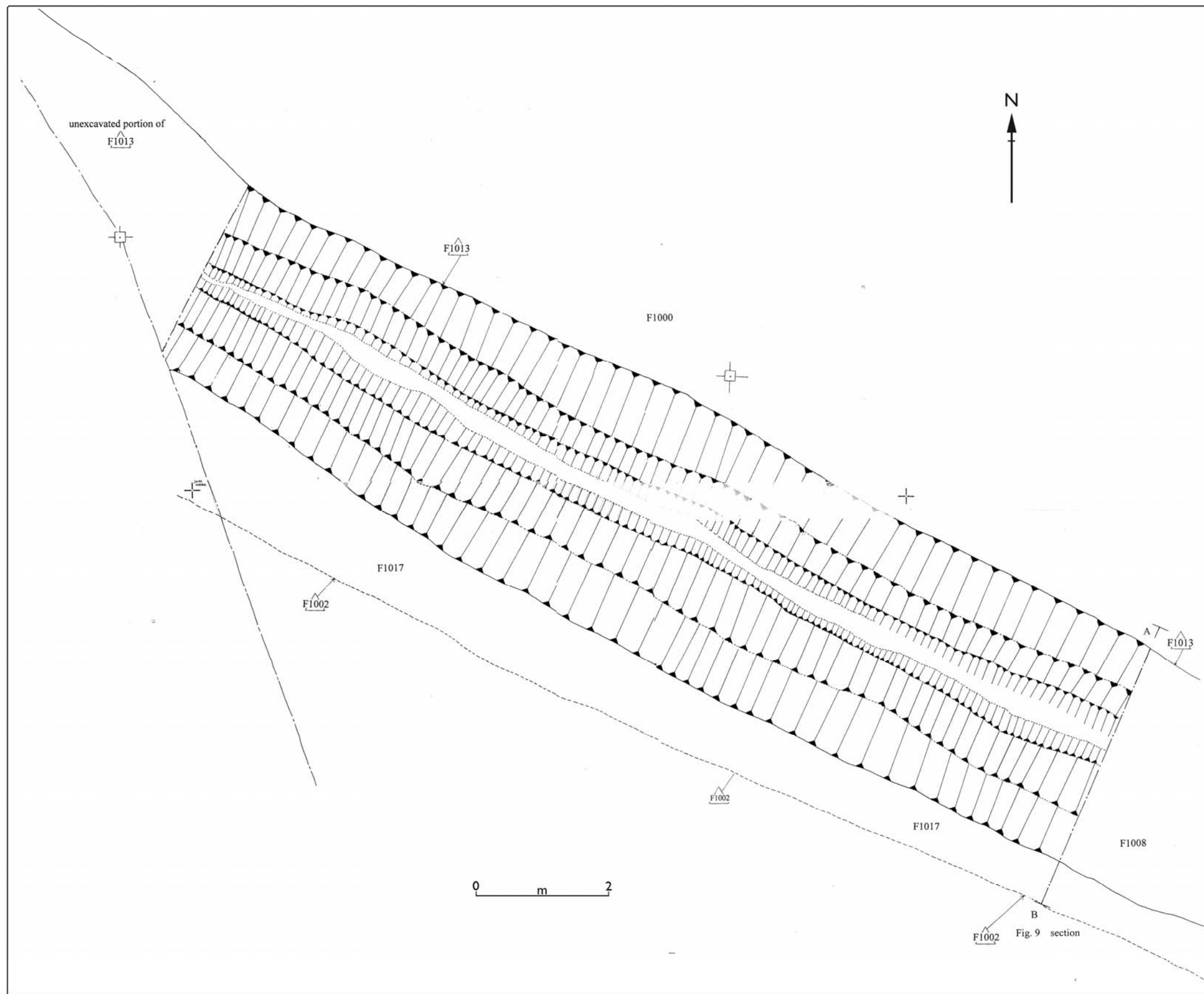
Fig. 14 section

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Fig.13 Early medieval ditch, F1024



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Scale As indicated
Fig.14 Section through F1024
& F1021



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Fig.15 Medieval ditch, F1002



Plate 1 Burnt mound pit, prior to excavation, from the south



Plate 2 View of the possible ring barrow ditch after excavation, from the west



Plate 3 View of a section through the possible ring barrow ditch (F1031), the early medieval ditch, F1024 (visible as the darker fill), and post-medieval furrow, F1022 (visible as a shallow deposit of topsoil at the top of the section). from the east, after excavation



Plate 4 View of the mound at Ballymount, with the excavated portion of the ditch (F1003) in the foreground



Plate 5 View of the annexe (F1022) to the main ditch, from the south (prior to excavation)



Plate 6 View of the early medieval ditch, F1010, from the east, during excavation



Plate 7 View of the early medieval ditch, F1024, from the east, during excavation