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1983 EXCAVATIONS AT PINSON MOUNDS: THE TWIN MOUNDS

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of the 1983 field season at Pinson Mounds near Jackson, Tennessee was to test a pair of large, conjoined burial mounds known as the Twin Mounds (Mound 6). The earthwork was selected for excavation because it represents the only large burial mound at this large Middle Woodland ceremonial site. Approximately one-third of the northern mound was excavated. The mound exhibits complex stratigraphy that is unique for the southeast. Four large sub-mound tombs containing a total of 16 individuals were excavated. Radiocarbon dates indicate that the mound was constructed around A.D. 80-100. Data from the excavations provide valuable information about the societies responsible for the Pinson Mounds.

Introduction

The Pinson Mounds site is located about 16 km south of Jackson, Tennessee, on the South Fork of the Forked Deer River. The site consists of at least 12 mounds, a large geometric embankment, and associated habitation areas (Fig. 1) that cover an area approximately 160 ha. The mound group includes five large platform mounds that range in height from 2.5 to 22 m. Recent research has demonstrated that all of the mounds at the site date to the Middle Woodland period and most were apparently built between approximately A.D. 1 and 200 (Mainfort 1984; Mainfort, in press; Mainfort, Broster, and Johnson 1982).

Located on the western side of the site about 200 m south of Ozier Mound (10-m tall ramped platform mound) is a pair of large, intersecting conical mounds known locally as the "Twin Mounds" or Mound 6 in William Myer's (1922) numbering scheme (Fig. 2). The northern mound is approximately 7 m tall and 26 m in diameter, while the slightly larger southern mound measures 8 m tall and 30 m in diameter. The height of the overlap area formed by their intersection is about 4.5 m. Using a standard formula for the volume of a paraboloid ($V = r^2 \cdot h/2$) gives volumes of 1,857 m³ and 2,826 m³ for the north and south mound

respectively, while the total volume for the earthwork is approximately 4,000 m³. Mound 6 is the ninth largest Middle Woodland burial mound recorded, and only 16 Middle Woodland burial mounds are larger than the northern Twin Mound alone (see Seaman 1977:285–288; his figures should be multiplied by .91 to make them comparable to the volume formula used here).

The presence of large platform mounds at a Middle Woodland site raises intriguing questions about the social and political structure of the societies responsible for their construction, and we felt that excavations in the Twin Mounds, which appeared to be burial mounds, would provide some insights about the societies represented at Pinson Mounds.

The northern Twin Mound was selected for excavation because it is the smaller of the pair and because it had been slightly damaged by a relic hunter in the 1880s (Myer n.d.). Parenthetically, our excavations revealed that the relic hunter actually reached the floor of the mound, but ironically the base of his pit was located between 4 large tombs, missing all of them. A more extensive report on the 1983 excavations is included in the forthcoming project completion report (Mainfort, in press).

Rather than attempting the complete excavation of the northern mound, we selected an excavation strategy that would enable us to determine the age and function of the mound, to document the construction sequence, and to make a preliminary evaluation of the mortuary program represented with a minimum amount of excavation. It is also important to note that since the site is protected by state ownership, the excavations proceeded slowly and cautiously with an emphasis on recording data, not simply removing the mound as quickly as possible in order to excavate the presumed burials at the base. There is far too little known about the internal structure of Middle Woodland burial mounds, a situation partly attributable to the haste with which most mounds have been excavated (e.g., Bohannon 1972; see Griffin, Flanders, and Titterington 1970 for pleasant exceptions). Previous excavations by the relic hunter had produced a depression about 3 m wide and 2 m deep in the eastern side of the northern mound. Our excavation strategy took advantage of his efforts. The primary excavation area was a 4-m wide trench (excavated in 2-m squares) on the east side of the mound, while a 2-m trench was excavated into the north side to ascertain the continuity of the stratigraphy (Fig. 3). Extensive excavation was preceded by systematic sampling with a hand-held split spoon auger to a depth of approximately 2 m within the areas selected for excavation. While providing some preliminary information about the stratigraphy of the mound, the auger tests' major value was the demonstration that the mound probably represented a single construction event, rather than an accretional earthwork.

Two meter squares were the standard unit of excavation, and, until the

construction sequence of the mound was well understood, these were removed in 20 cm increments referable to a vertical sequence of datum planes. All excavations were conducted by hand. General mound fill was not screened, although all cultural material encountered was saved and its provenience recorded. Fill from apparent features and prominent basketloads was saved for water screening. The loess soil that made up much of the mound fill is exceptionally stable and allowed us to forgo extensive stepping. Extremely hot and dry weather conditions also contributed to the stability of the deep profile. In addition to standard record keeping, an extensive videotape record of the excavation was obtained in conjunction with the production of an interpretive film for park visitors (Kwas 1984).

Stratigraphy

The stratigraphy of the northern Twin Mound is complex and reflects five major construction stages. These stages, as well as the individual strata within each stage, exhibit continuity between the eastern and northern excavation areas, implying that all major construction episodes have been documented (Figs. 4 and 5). Most of the strata are very distinctive relative to each other, a reflection of the high degree of planning and organization necessary to construct the mound.

The area selected for the mound was initially stripped of topsoil, exposing the reddish brown sandy clay subsoil that underlies most of the site. It appears that this surface was intentionally leveled to some degree. All of the recorded tombs, as well as a number of cremation pits and basins, were excavated directly into the subsoil (Fig. 6). These features appear to be contemporary. The only identifiable bone fragments from the cremation features are nonhuman, perhaps implying the ritual cremation of animal remains in conjunction with the mortuary ceremonies.

The first actual construction stage of the mound consisted of covering or sealing the ceremonial surface with a thin layer of brown clayey sand which was capped, in turn, by a layer of puddled gray clay averaging about 5 cm in thickness. An area approximately 24 m in diameter was covered during this construction stage. A number of large sandstone boulders were placed on the stage I surfaced adjacent to and partially overlying several of the tombs, and two large burned areas were observed on the gray clay surface on the east side of the mound. No cultural material was associated with the latter.

Two major construction events (stages IIA and IIB) are subsumed within the second stage of construction. Construction stage IIA is represented by a raised platform approximately 50 cm tall and 2 m wide that may have encircled all of the central burial area. The platform was best documented

on the east side of the mound, but an edge of it was also observed in one of the northern excavation units. Regrettably, there was insufficient time to excavate square N4008/E3998, which would have exposed a complete section of the platform on the north side of the mound. The platform is composed of three distinct soil zones. The lower two consist of mottled sandy clays, one loose, the other compact. These deposits were covered with a layer of white to pale tan sand that ranges in thickness from 1 to 10 cm.

Two rows of large posts are associated with the platform. The interior edge of the platform was buttressed by a number of posts averaging about 15 cm in diameter, as well as some small poles, each about 5 cm in diameter. The smaller posts appear to have partially supported the larger ones. Both the large and small interior posts were angled to the east or northeast, the former at about 18°, the latter, as much as 30°. All of the larger postholes (and at least one smaller one) were filled with the same sand used to cover the platform, indicating that the posts were removed just prior to the deposition of the sand.

A second row of large posts, ranging from 14 to 20 cm in diameter, was observed about 80 cm to the east of the interior edge posts. All posts in this row rotted in place, as demonstrated by their loose brown fill. These posts were set prior to the addition of the sand layer and average about 80 cm in height, of which about 30 cm extends above the top of the platform. Like the interior edge posts, these are angled to the north or northeast at about 18°. This row of posts apparently served to support the loose fill containing redeposited cremations and/or burned animal remains that were placed on the interior portion of the ramp during construction stage IV.

The construction of a core or primary mound over the central burial area was completed during construction stage IIB, and this construction episode is roughly contemporary with the completion of the sand covered platform. The core mound was probably circular at its base and was relatively flat on top. The two major soil zones making up this mound, designated zones F2 and F3, grade into each other (see Fig. 5). Zone F3 includes hard, dry basketloads of sandy clay intermixed with some elongated lenses of reddish orange sand, while zone F2 is more moist and lacks sand lenses. Basketloads of reddish brown subsoil are prominent in zone F2. The absence of an apron of water-sorted soil around the edges of this mound suggests that it was not exposed to weathering for a lengthy period. The sides of the core mound were covered with pale sand similar to that used to cover the raised platform, but the top is composed of four distinct, thin layers that communicate a sense of great care and attention to detail on the part of the builders. From bottom to top, these consist of 4-cm thick deposits of orange sand, white sand, dark gray sandy clay,

and reddish brown sandy clay; the latter is redeposited subsoil. Clearly the selection of these colors held great symbolic importance to the people involved in the construction of the mound.

A considerable number (we observed over 50) of thin poles averaging over a meter in length and 5 cm in diameter were driven into the sides of the core mound, apparently prior to the application of the sand cap. Poles were not observed on the flat top of the core mound. The poles were generally angled to the east or northeast and rotted in place after being covered by later mound additions. Although only a few complete pole impressions were exposed in the wall of our excavation units, the poles seem to have been placed at roughly 50 cm intervals. The poles served no apparent structural purpose, but may have been used to display ritual paraphernalia or totemic symbols.

The completed core mound was apparently a circular structure with a flat top and stood about 2 m tall, with a diameter of roughly 12 m. Between this mound and the raised platform was an open area approximately 1 m wide (see "gray clay" below zone F1 in Fig. 5) that may represent a ceremonial walkway. Collins (1926:91-92) recorded an apparently flat-topped core mound with a multilayered sand cap at the McRae Mound in eastern Mississippi, but no parallels are known for the poles associated with the core mound.

During construction stage III, the core mound was covered with a thick (approximately 150 cm) layer of basketloaded fill. The first construction event within this stage consisted of filling the inferred walkway with compact dark brown and gray fill, as well as some probable cremations that were deposited while still hot. Most of this fill is covered with a very thin deposit of pale sand that represents a continuation (perhaps accidental) of the sand that covered the platform. This suggests that the walkway was filed prior to the addition of sand to the top of the platform.

The addition of a mantle (zone F1) that covered the core mound represents the major construction event within stage III. In contrast to zone F2, this fill contains fewer individually identifiable basketloads and lacks the distinct subsoil loads so prominent in zone F2. The F1 mantle was capped with a thin layer of gray ashy clay. At the completion of construction stage III, the mound was about 5 m tall and 14 m in diameter (excluding the raised platform).

Two thick strata (zones D and E) were added to the mound during construction stage IV. However, prior to their deposition, numerous dark basketloads that appear to represent cremations or ritually burned animal remains were placed on the sand-covered platform to a height of over one meter. Discolorations in the surrounding soil matrix indicate that most, if not all, of these loads were deposited while still hot, suggesting that they do not represent simply redeposited occupation midden or features,

but rather material that was burned as part of the mound-building ritual process and specifically intended for placement on the raised platform. Further, the platform itself was constructed specifically as a repository for this material. No human remains have been identified from these deposits, but several fragments of deer bone and some nonlocal ceramics are represented.

After the deposition of material on the platform was completed, a greasy dark grayish brown mantle averaging about 50 cm thick (zone E) was placed over the mound. A considerable amount of cultural material, including nonlocal chert, ceramics, mica, copper, animal bones, and calcined bone, was recovered from zone E; this stratum may represent the addition of numerous redeposited cremations and other ceremonially burned materials similar to the looser deposit immediately above the platform.

Zone E was covered by a deposit of yellowish brown sandy clay with a maximum thickness of about 60 cm (zone D). Additional nonlocal artifacts, as well as some charred seeds, were recovered from this stratum, but cultural materials were less frequent than in zone E. Construction stage IV was completed by the application of a layer of gray clay ranging from 5 to 20 cm in thickness. The stage IV mound was nearly 6 m tall and 22 m in diameter.

The construction of the northern Twin Mound was completed by the addition of two strata during construction stage V. The first and lower of these (zone C) was a deposit of compact mottled brown clay averaging 40 cm in thickness. Within this stratum, at and just below the top of the mound, but only on the north side, were placed a number of large sandstone boulders that formed a cap over this part of the mound. Burials 1 and 2 were located directly beneath the sandstone cap in squares N4004/E4000 and N4004/E4002, respectively. Neither burial is intrusive. Burial 1 is a poorly preserved young adult male that was buried in a flexed position with the head to the northeast. A green speckled schist boatstone containing 32 angular fragments of several distinct varieties of Fort Payne chert was located in the chest area (Fig. 7). Several small mica fragments were found in the mandibular region and several molars exhibit copper staining. A group of small shell beads, perhaps a bracelet, was located near the left wrist. Burial 2, a young adult, lacked associated grave goods, and no postcranial remains of this individual were preserved. On the north side of the mound, the base of zone C articulates with the edge of the gray clay floor (construction stage I), but on the north side the stratum extends beyond the clay floor.

The final addition to the mound (zone B) was a layer of loose dark brown sandy clay that is over a meter thick at the base of the mound. On the north side of the mound, the interface between zones B and C is marked

by a hard mineralized deposit, but this feature was not observed in the eastern excavation units. In most areas, an old humus zone was evident above zone B; the old humus was covered by spoil from the relic hunter pit on the east side.

When completed, the northern Twin Mound was approximately 7 m tall and 26 m in diameter. Although stratigraphically complex, the mound appears to be the product of a continuous set of mortuary activities. Unfortunately, it was not possible to evaluate the stratigraphic relationship between the northern and southern mounds during the 1983 field season. Although it seems likely that the mounds are contemporary, this remains an untested hypothesis.

Sub-Mound Features

Most of the cultural features were encountered below the gray clay floor at the base of the mound (Fig. 6). These included six large tombs (Features 48, 49, 51, 53, 54, and 57), probable cremation pits (Features 62, 63, 66, 67, 71), crematory basins (Features 64, 65, 68, 69, 70, 72), and a number of posts, some of which had been removed and the postholes used as repositories for cremated remains (PM 30, 31, 32, 42, 43, 61). The crematory basins are small, shallow pits with round bottoms, while the cremation pits are relatively straight-sided. All of these features were excavated directly into the subsoil and appear to be contemporary.

Although large soil samples from the cremation features were water screened, very few cultural remains were recovered. Interestingly, none of the calcined bone fragments from these features could be identified as human, while a number of specimens are definitely nonhuman. At this point, these features cannot be viewed as part of the mortuary program per se, but rather as ceremonial features that were used in conjunction with mortuary rituals. Mica fragments were recovered from four cremation features (Features 64, 65, 68, and 69) and, with the exception of Feature 69, these represent the best candidates for nontomb features containing human remains. Feature 69 is an interesting anomaly, as it is located virtually at the center of the mound and is the only cremation feature within the central burial area. In addition to some mica fragments, the feature contained a bear vertebra, the distal end of a deer ulna, some smaller bone fragments, and a chert flake. The contents and location of Feature 69 suggest that it served an important ritual function. The post molds at the base of the mound do not seem to be part of a charnel structure. However, the area immediately to the south of the Twin Mounds has produced evidence of a Middle Woodland mortuary camp (Mainfort 1980; Morse and Polhemus 1963) that is probably contemporary with Mound 6. Additional research at this locality is planned.

Four of the six sub-mound tombs located during the 1983 field season were completely excavated; the remaining two were left undisturbed. Extensive soil samples were taken from all of the excavated tombs, but the recovered materials await further analysis. The tombs are all located within an area bounded by the edge of the sand-covered core mound and all were covered by the puddled gray clay floor discussed earlier. Tomb architecture varied considerably. Features 49 and 54 were covered with logs that had been burned in situ, while Feature 51 was covered with a log and pole superstructure, as well as several layers of matting, and Feature 48 was covered only by matting. All of the individuals in Features 48, 51, and 54 were oriented along an east-west axis, while three of those in Feature 49 had a north-south orientation. A total of 16 individuals were recovered from the tombs and all interments appear to represent primary inhumations. No evidence suggests that the tombs functioned as burial crypts (*sensu* Brown 1979).

Feature 48 initially consisted of a roughly rectangular pit measuring 2.8 m long, 1.3 m wide, and 70 cm deep, with the long axis oriented east-west. At the base of the pit was a platform consisting of a layer of puddled gray clay and six small support logs (Fig. 8). The platform was covered with one or more layers of fabric. Placed within this facility were eight extended individuals, all of which were aligned along the long axis of the pit. The bodies overlapped one another, with three facing east and five facing west. All eight interments appear to be young females between 20 and 30 years old, but poor bone preservation made positive identifications impossible for Burials 12 and 14.

Most of the individuals apparently wore woven fiber headdresses that were decorated with very thin copper ornaments. Although most of the headdresses were represented primarily by stains in the burial fill, the headdress associated with Burial 7 was removed from the field virtually intact. This artifact is awaiting further analysis by appropriate specialists. A large deposit of *Marginella* beads (over 7 cm thick in some places), perhaps a decorated blanket, formed an S-shaped pattern over the interments and was presumably associated with the tomb as a whole, rather than with a specific individual.

Copper stains and fragments were associated with virtually every burial, but the only identifiable copper artifact was a decomposed neckpiece worn by Burial 8. Copper stains and fragments were observed in parietal regions of Burials 7 and 9, perhaps the remains of earspools. Several groups of beads were associated with specific individuals. The most notable of these were the freshwater pearl necklace (composed of at least five strands) worn by Burial 7, and a quantity of tubular shell beads arranged in several rows, possibly a decorated pouch or breastplate, in the chest area of Burial 12.

The top of Feature 48 was covered with a layer of split cane matting

that was partially supported by two large logs that were set into the subsoil just below the top of the burial pit. After the feature had been sealed under the gray clay floor (construction stage I), one or more layers of fiber or bark matting were placed over the top and a number of sandstone boulders were placed around the periphery. Some of the matting seems to have been burned, and calcined bone was found in association with charred matting near the northeast and southeast corners.

Feature 49 was located immediately to the east of Feature 48 and consisted of a large, ovoid pit that was covered with large logs. Unlike the other tombs, the long axis is oriented north-south. Fortunately, the base of Feature 49 extended through the sandy clay subsoil and into a deposit of yellow McNairy sand, resulting in good bone preservation. Four relatively old adult males were interred in the tomb, three of which were oriented north-south, with the heads to the north, while Burial 3 was placed along an east-west axis with the head to the east (Fig. 9). The latter was buried in a partially flexed position and exhibited green stains on the parietals, perhaps from contact with decomposed copper ear spoils.

A green schist pendant (Fig. 10) was located under the spine of Burial 4, one of the three extended burials. Located on the west side of the pit, Burial 5 lay under portions of Burials 3 and 6, suggesting early placement in the tomb. Fragments of copper ear spool were found near the left parietal. At the knees of Burial 5 were two engraved rattles that were fashioned from human parietals (Fig. 11). Each rattle was composed of a pair of circular cut cranial fragments that were held together by thongs. A number of small, yellow quartzite river pebbles were found inside the rattles. Only one of each pair of parietals was engraved and, interestingly, only the engraved pieces were well preserved. The motifs on the rattles are highly stylized and are similar to the design concepts seen on Weeden Island Incised ceramics, as well as on such various engraved Middle Woodland objects as the Little Turkey Hill cup (Phillips and Brown 1978:162) and the engraved parietals from Turner Mound 3 (Willoughby and Hooton 1922:56-58). Several strings of ovoid shell beads were also worn at the knees of Burial 5. The most poorly preserved individual in Feature 49, Burial 6 exhibited signs of osteoarthritis on several joints. A mica sheet with a decomposed wooden back lay in the pelvic region. The walls of Feature 49 were partially lined with the same puddled gray clay used during construction stage I of the mound. Ten fairly large logs were placed across the short axis of the burial pit and were subsequently burned. A charcoal sample obtained from one of the logs produced an uncorrected radiocarbon date of $1,925 \pm 80$ years: A.D. 25 (UGa-4909). After the tomb was covered by the gray clay floor, a number of large sandstone boulders were placed around the peripheries, particularly on the north and east sides.

Located approximately 2.7 m north of Feature 48, Feature 51 exhibited the most complex architecture of the excavated tombs, as well as the largest burial pit (Fig. 12). The feature is oriented east-west, but, despite its large size, contained only two burials, both of which were poorly preserved. Burial 15 was a young adult male that was buried in an extended position. The burial was represented primarily by soil stains. A large freshwater pearl bead was the only artifact associated with Burial 15. The fabric found near the cranium may be the remains of matting that covered the base of the tomb. A young adult of indeterminate sex, Burial 16 was placed on its right side in an extended position, with the right arm and leg slightly flexed. A large freshwater pearl bead was associated with this individual. After the interior of the tomb was lined with puddled gray clay, four north-south and east-west support logs were set into this clay along the upper edges of the burial pit. A layer of split cane matting was then placed over the top of the tomb. A number of smaller logs or rafters were placed on top of the matting across the short axis of the pit. An unknown number of small poles rested on the roof rafters and these were covered with three layers of woven fiber matting, each level of matting being covered by mottled gray clay. A large block of soil containing two in situ layers of matting was removed from the east end of the tomb.

Portions of the top of Feature 54 were disturbed during the 1880s excavation, but no serious damage resulted, although some of the sandstone boulders may owe their placement to the relic hunter (Fig. 13). Two poorly preserved adults were associated with this tomb, one of which (Burial 18) is an older female, the other of indeterminate (but probably female) sex. Burial 17 was placed on its side in an extended position along the south edge of the burial pit and seems to have been pushed against the wall in order to make room for Burial 18. The latter was interred in an extended, supine position. No artifacts were recovered from Feature 54. A considerable amount of gray clay was applied to the sides of the burial pit, and the top was covered by several small logs that were burned in situ. An uncorrected radiocarbon date of $1,780 \pm 95$ years: A.D. 170 (UGa-4911) was obtained from a charcoal sample collected from one of the logs. Some sandstone boulders were placed along the south edge of the pit on the gray clay floor, several of which were displaced by the relic hunter.

Feature 55 is a deep empty pit that was located adjacent to the southwest corner of Feature 54; these two features may be functionally related (see Fig. 13). Oriented along a north-south axis, Feature 55 had a roughly ovoid shape and extended into the sand deposit below the sandy clay subsoil. Although the collapsed fill within the pit was similar to that observed in all of the excavated tombs, no artifacts, skeletal remains, or evidence of a covering over the pit was found. This feature is located near the geometric

center of the mound and may have served some specialized ritual function of which no evidence remains. Features 53 and 57 were not excavated, but they appear to represent tombs. The former is located to the east of Feature 51 and consisted of an area of collapsed fill measuring 2.3 m long and 1.7 m wide, with the long axis oriented east-west. At least one-third of this feature lay under an unexcavated square (see Fig. 6). A concentration of large tabular sandstone exposed near the west end of Feature 48 was designated as Feature 57. The sandstone slopes down to the west and, therefore, is not associated with Feature 48. The tabular sandstone probably lined the edge of a burial pit, and it is likely that Feature 57 will prove to be the most elaborate tomb within the northern Twin Mound.

Conclusions

The Twin Mounds were constructed by Middle Woodland societies around A.D. 80–100. This earthwork is apparently contemporary with Mound 5, the large platform mound to the north (Mainfort, in press). The size and complexity of the Twin Mounds suggest that they functioned as a supralocal repository for the dead.

Although our excavations were limited, some important generalizations can be made about the formal structure of the tombs within the northern Twin Mound. First, only adults were interred in the tombs, and the individuals buried near the top of the mound (Burials 1 and 2) were also adults. Further, each tomb contained only individuals of the same age and sex. Especially noteworthy in this regard is Feature 48, which contained the remains of eight young women (all of whom wore decorated headdresses) and is suggestive of retainer burial.

The available data suggest some interesting spatial relationships among the sub-mound tombs. The large sandstone boulders placed along the northern edges of Features 48 and 49 (and perhaps to the southwest of Feature 54) appear to define north and south ritual precincts at the base of the mound. Such a dichotomy is also suggested by the formal characteristics of the tombs. The two southern tombs (Features 48 and 49) contained 12 of the 16 individuals interred in tombs, as well as virtually all of the grave goods recovered from the sub-mound tombs. Sandstone boulders were placed around the edges of these tombs. In contrast, Features 51 and 54 contained only two individuals each and two pearl beads. Feature 51 lacked associated sandstone boulders and the placement of at least some of those boulders near Feature 54 may be the result of the relic hunter disturbance. Yet, the northern burial pits are larger and clearly represent greater energy expenditure in their construction. The elaborate architecture of Feature 51 is also noteworthy in this regard.

Finally, the apparent north-south dichotomy observed at the base of the mound may be mirrored by the sandstone cap that covers only a portion of the northern half of the mound.

Interestingly, the Twin Mounds tombs seem to have been constructed specifically for burials, rather than initially serving as mortuary processing crypts. Many of the larger Middle Woodland burial mounds in the mid-south area, in contrast, represent earthworks built to cover various kinds of processing facilities. Excavations at the Bynum site (Cotter and Corbett 1951) produced evidence of a charnel house and a mortuary crypt, while the nearby Pharr Mounds (Bohannon 1972) were constructed over crematory facilities. Brown (1979) has recently noted that the log tombs at Helena Crossing (Ford 1963) functioned as processing crypts. Clearly the energy investment represented by these earthworks, as well as their symbolic messages, are qualitatively different than what we see expressed by the Twin Mounds.

Additional excavations at this complex pair of burial mounds are critical to understanding the social mechanisms that produced the unique Middle Woodland ceremonial center of Pinson Mounds.

Acknowledgments

Funding for the 1983 field season was provided by the Tennessee Department of Conservation. Robert Mainfort served as Principal Investigator and George Shannon directed the fieldwork. Lane Beck supervised the excavation of the tombs and analyzed the skeletal remains; her detailed description of this material will appear in the project completion report. Figure 1 was drawn by Parris Stripling, while Jerry Manes produced Figure 11. Robert Thunen and Mary Kwas reviewed a draft of this paper and offered a number of useful comments. A preliminary version of this paper was presented at the 40th Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Archaeological Conference.

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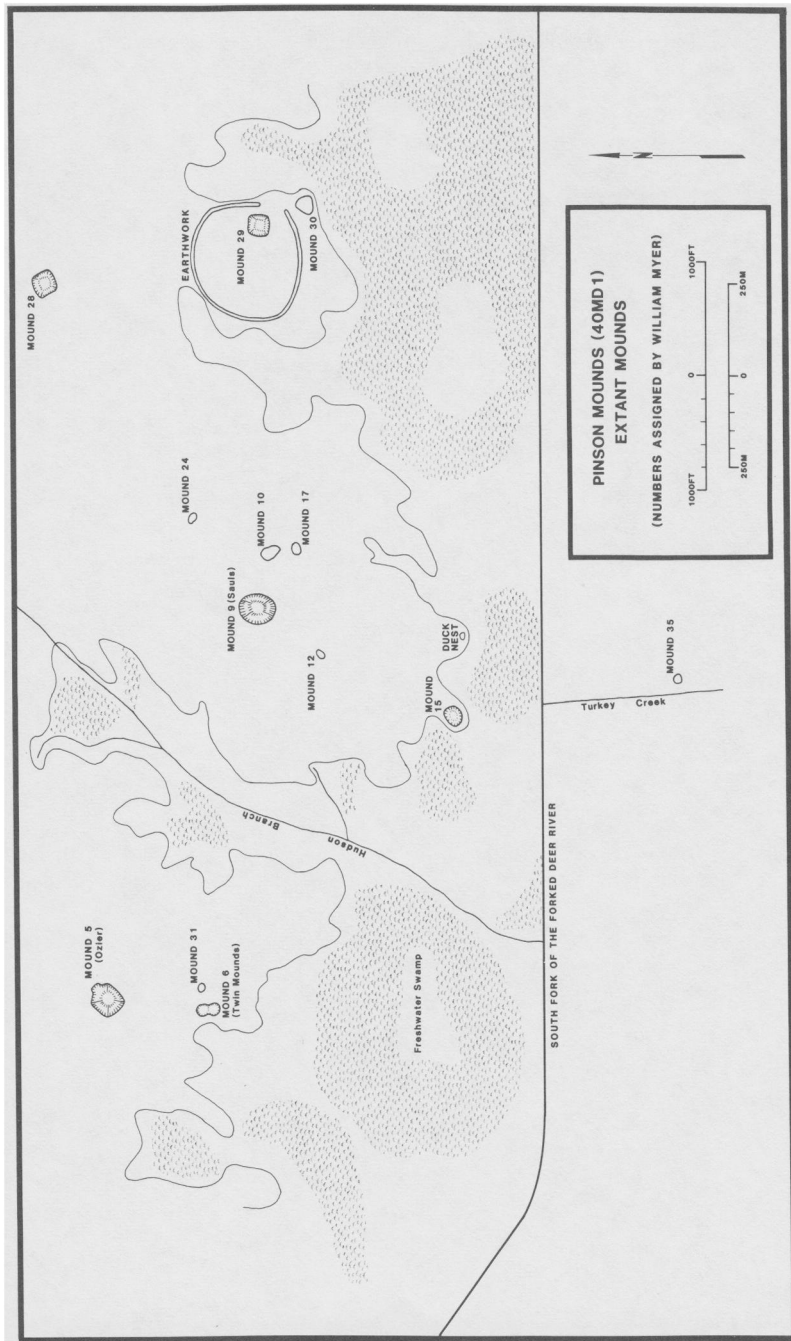


Fig. 1. The Pinson Mounds site.



Fig. 2. Mound 6 (the Twin Mounds).

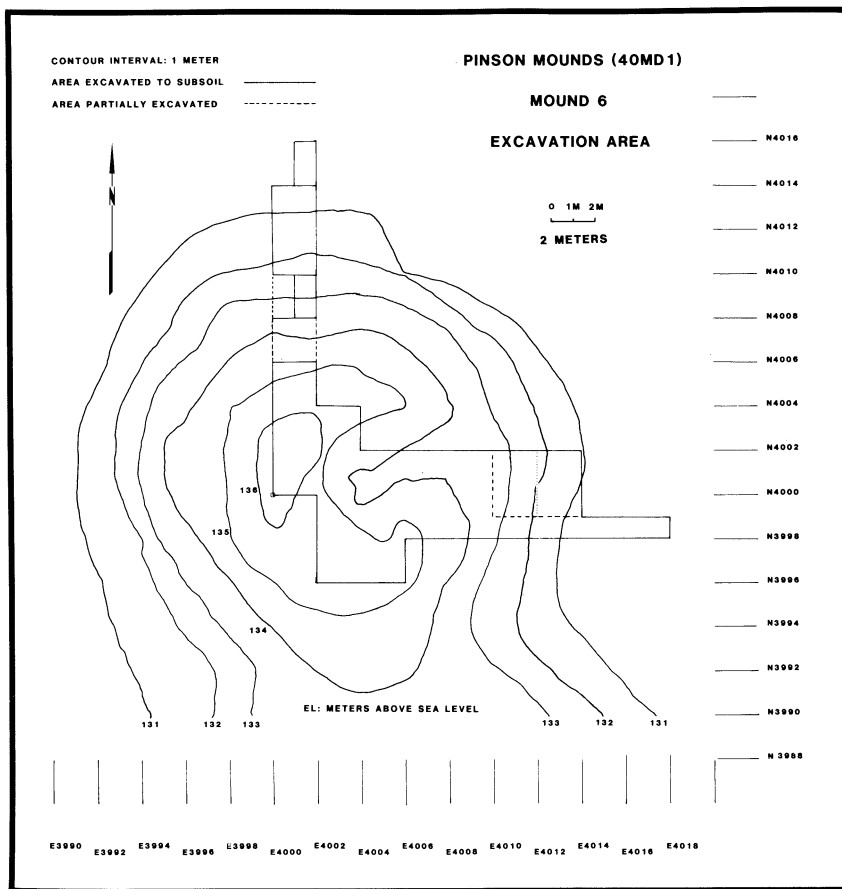


Fig. 3. 1983 excavation area.

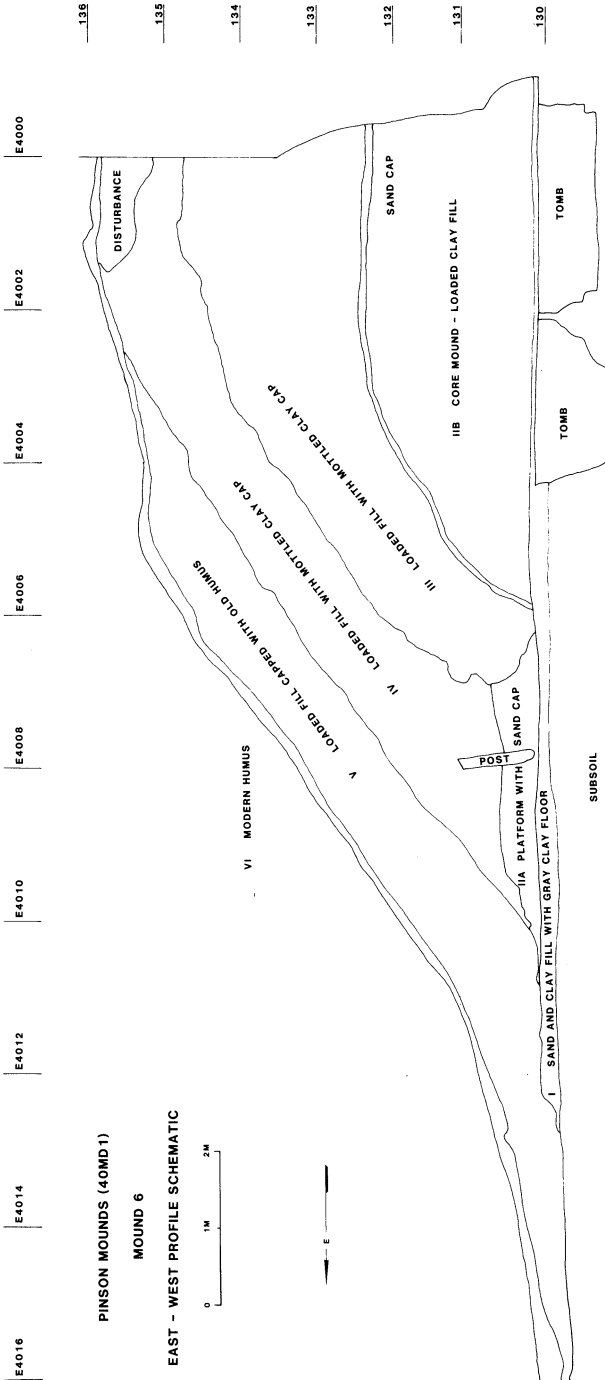


Fig. 4. N4000 profile showing construction stages.

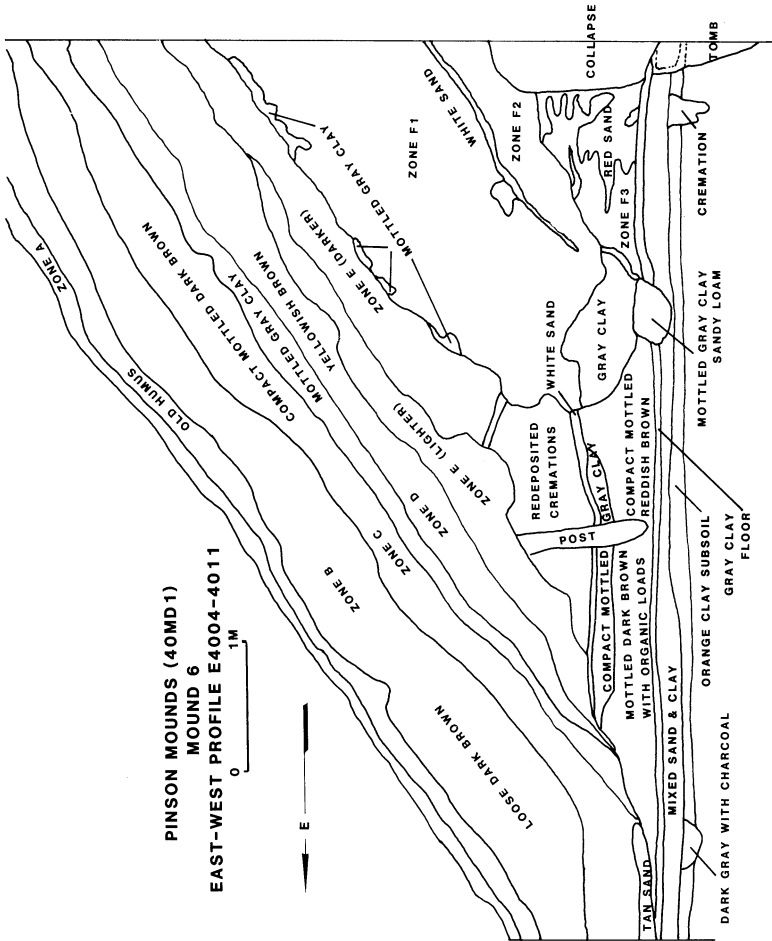


Fig. 5. Section of N4000 profile showing all stratigraphic zones.

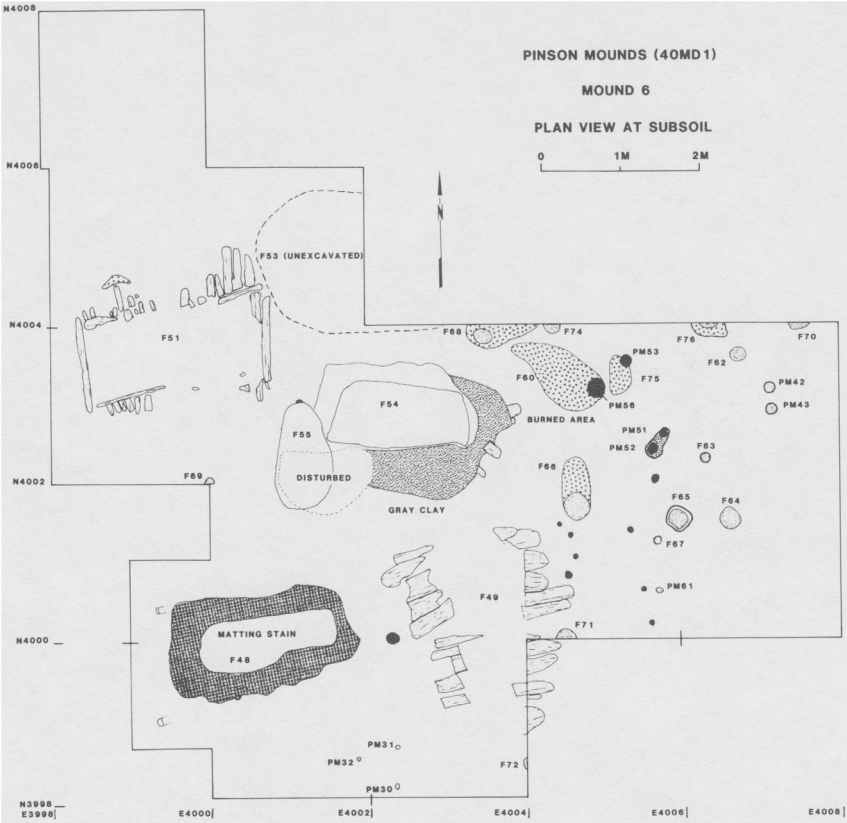


Fig. 6. Plan view at base of mound.



Fig. 7. Boatstone associated with Burial 1.

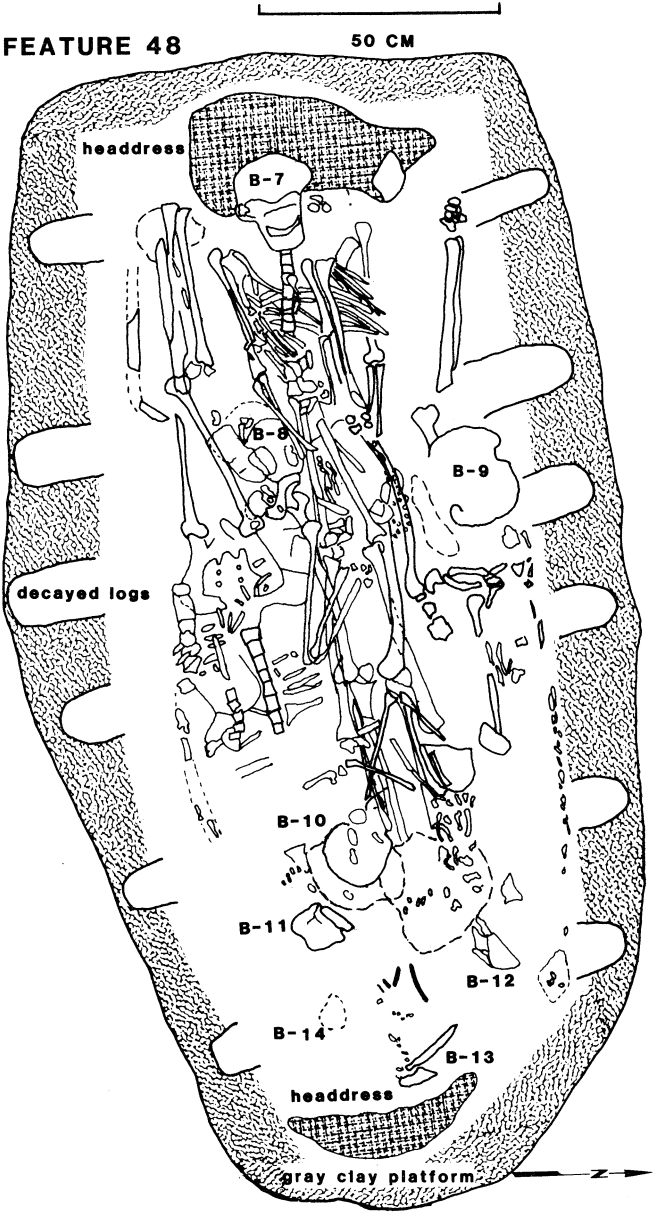


Fig. 8. Plan view of Feature 48.

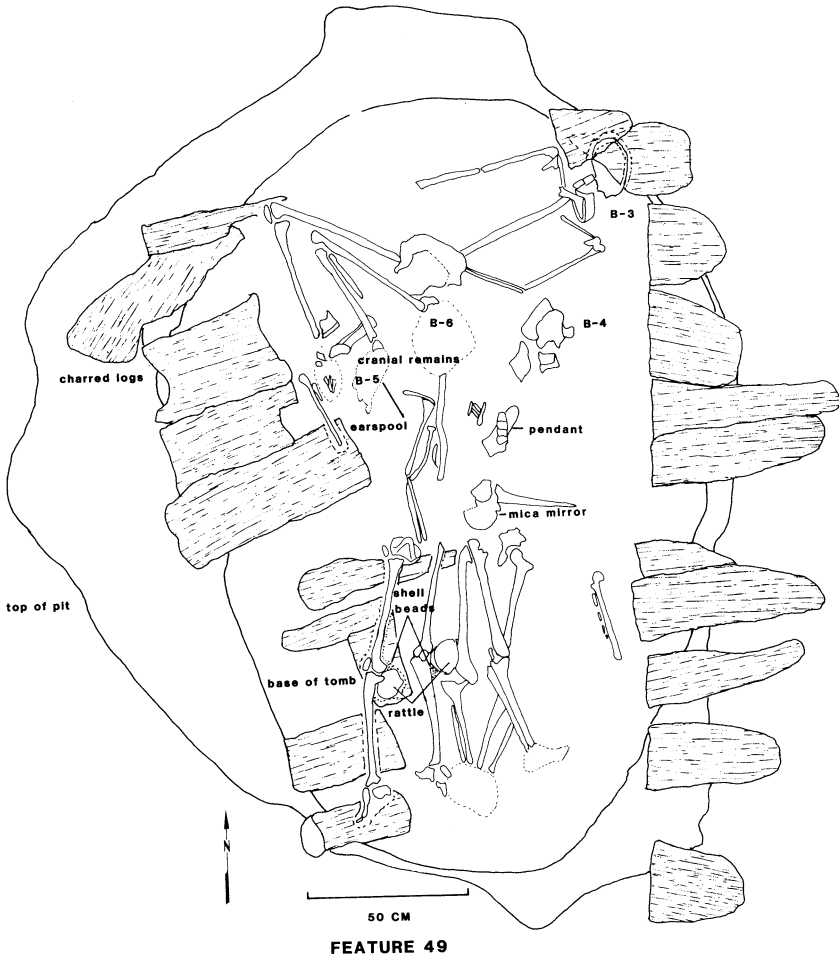


Fig. 9. Plan view of Feature 49.

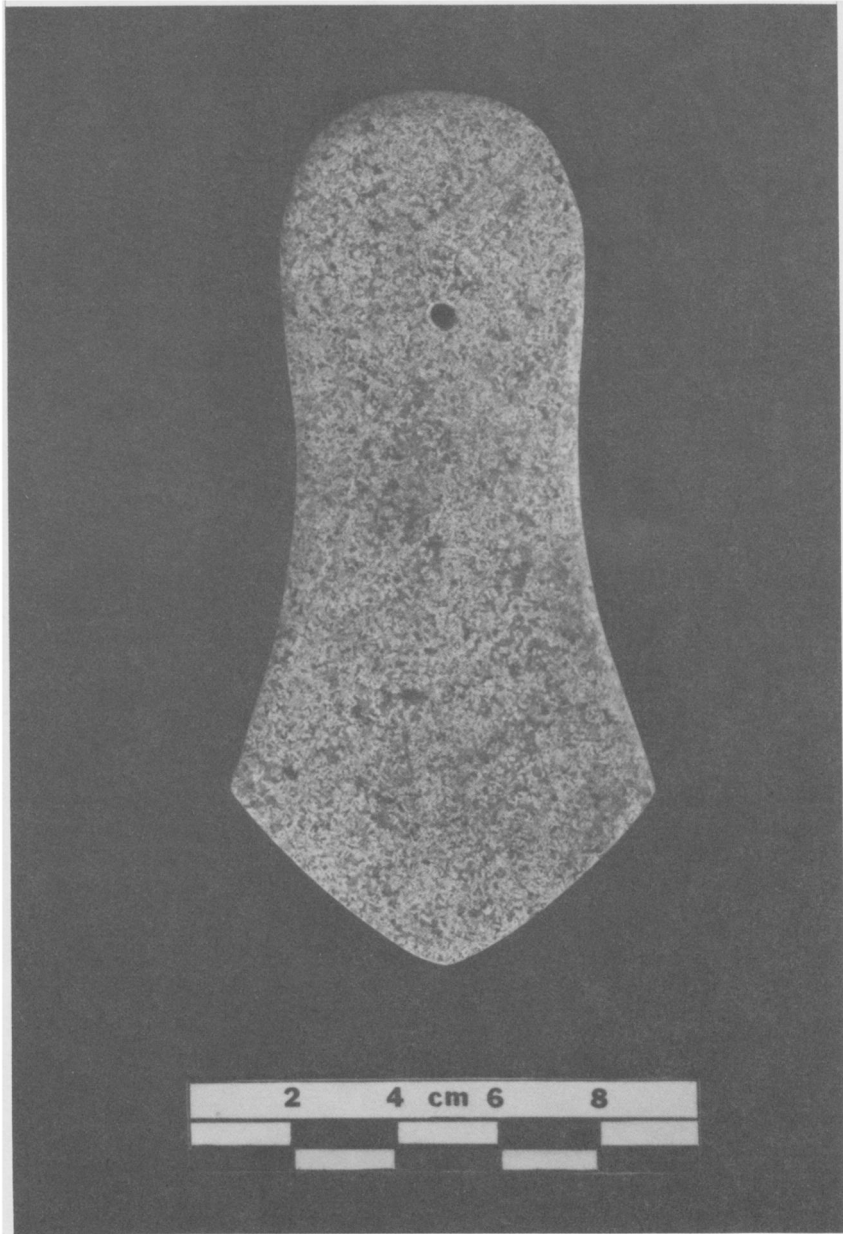


Fig. 10. Pendant associated with Feature 49.

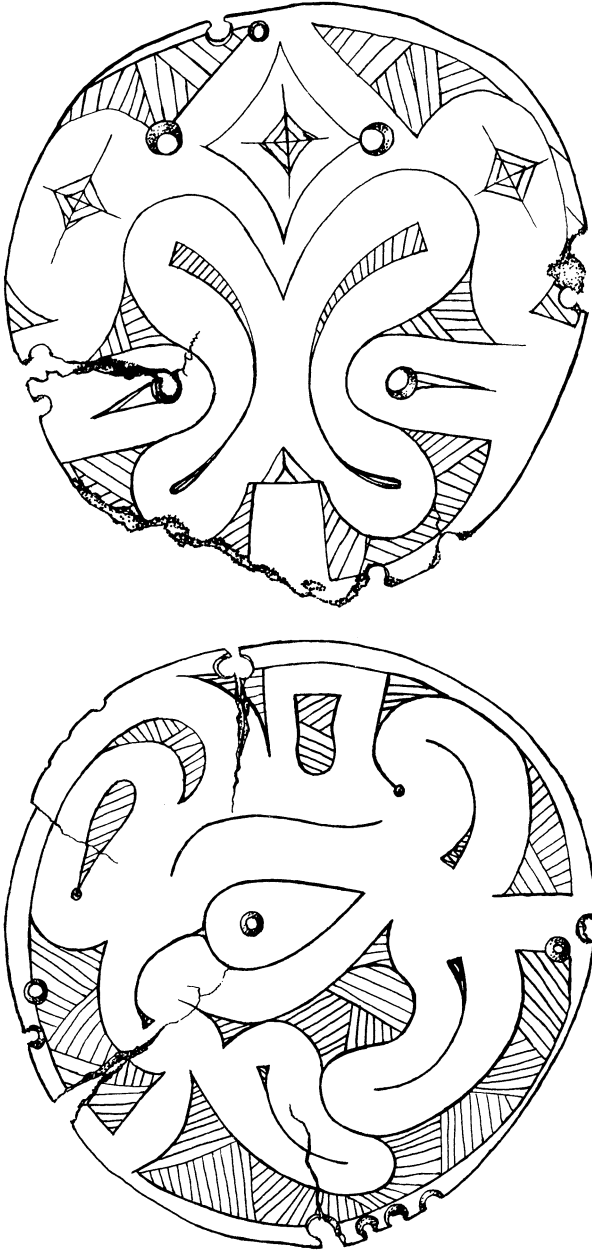


Fig. 11. Designs on engraved rattles.

FEATURE 51
VIEW TO NORTH

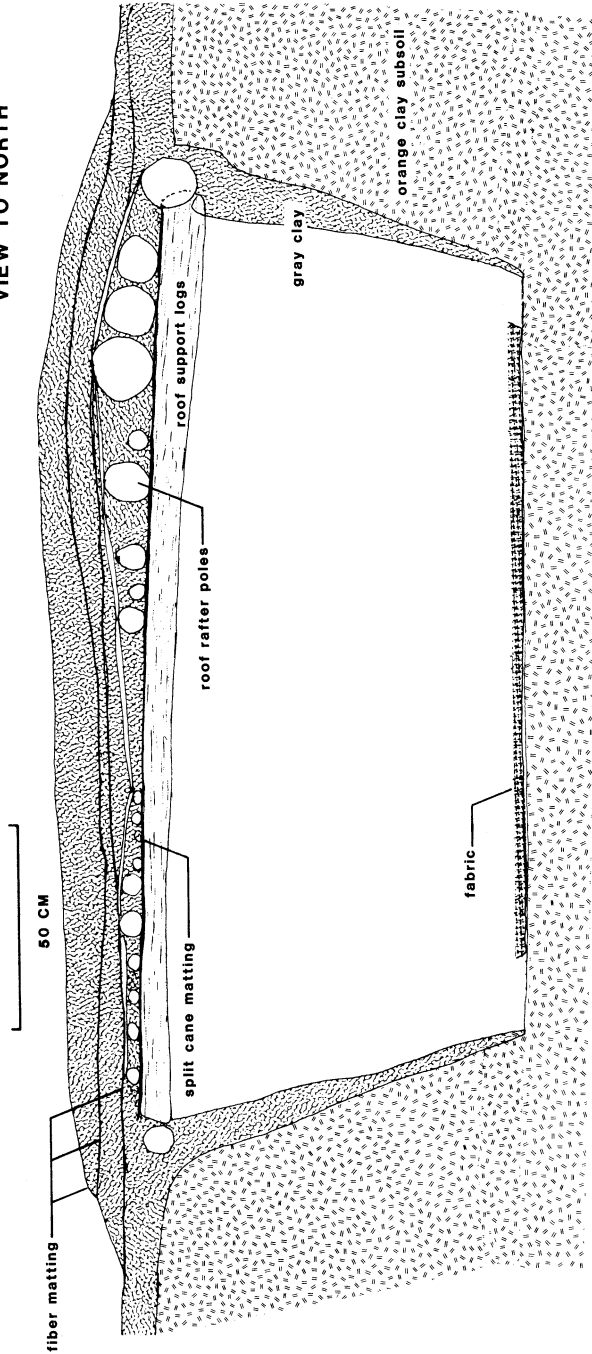


Fig. 12. Section view of Feature 51.

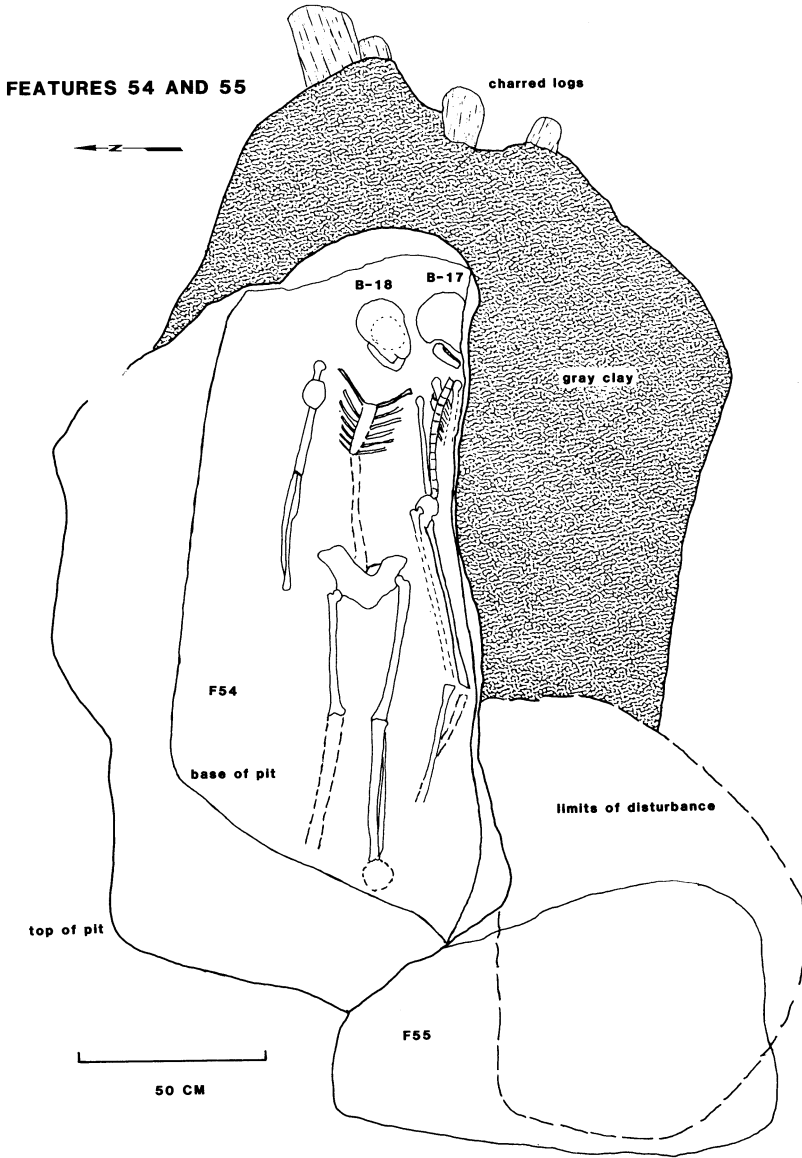


Fig. 13. Plan view of Feature 54.

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