Prehistoric Rock-Art at Spout House Hill, South Yorkshire

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Contents

Contents 1

Illustrations 2

Tables 3

1. **Summary** 4

2**. Location, geology and topography** 4

3. **Historical and archaeological background** 9

4. **Aims and objectives** 10

5. **Methodology** 11

6. **The motifs** 12

7. **The topographical context of the panels** 19

8 **Conclusion** 28

Acknowledgements 28

References 28

Appendix 1: Illustrations and tabulated data 31

Appendix 2: Additional Photographs 76

Illustrations

Cover illustration: Panel 17.

Figure 1: The location of the study area (red). ©Crown Copyright/database right 2020, an Ordnance Survey supplied service 4

Figure 2: Rock-art at Spout House Hill (and Bent Hills) in relation to geology. © Crown copyright/database right 2020. A British Geological Survey supplied service. 5

Figure 3: Unmodified outcropping and boulders on the east facing slope of Spout House Hill. Scale: 0-1m. Source: Tim Cockrell. 9

Figure 4: Distribution of panels at Spout House Hill by group. © Crown Copyright/database right 2020 An Ordnance Survey supplied service. 10

Figure 5: Rock-art panel groups one and two at Spout House Hill. Photographs are in lieu of scale drawings where those are absent. Scale bar: 0-1 metre. Source: Tim Cockrell. 11

Figure 6: Rock-art panel groups three and four at Spout House Hill. Photographs are in lieu of scale drawings where those are absent. Scale bar: 0-1 metre. Source: Tim Cockrell. 12

Figure 7: Gapped concentric cup-and-ring on panel 14. Source: Tim Cockrell. 13

Figure 8: Triangular arrangement of cup-marks on panel eight. Source: Tim Cockrell. 13

Figure 9: Cup-marks on panel seventeen. Source: Tim Cockrell. 14

Figure 10: A large outcrop of sandstone at Lordenshaw west, Northumberland. This panel has numerous examples of larger cup-marks, many of which are shallow and badly eroded, particularly to the left of the panel. Source: A. Bolton. 18

Figure 11: The single cup mark on the north face of panel eighteen. Source: Tim Cockrell. 15

Figure 12: A close up view of the three larger cup-marks on panel nine, facing north-east. Source: Tim Cockrell. 17

Figure 13: Spout House Hill, facing north-east from Swan height. Source: Tim Cockrell. 18

Figure 14: Tinker Brook Valley, the end of Ewden Valley and the Don Valley behind and to the right. Spout House Hill is to the left of centre. From Bent Hills, facing north-east. Source: Tim Cockrell. 18

Figure 15: The middle and lower Ewden Valley, facing east from Broomhead Moor, featuring the small plateau of Spout House Hill (right of centre), and the Don valley at Wharncliffe forest (centre, background). Source: Tim Cockrell. 19

Figure 16: The bottom of Ewden Valley where it meets the Don Valley at More Hall, facing east from panel five. Source: Tim Cockrell. 20

Figure 17: Panel thirteen, with The Height (background, centre) and the break of slope to its north end (background, left of centre). Source: Tim Cockrell. 21

Figure 18: A view of the lower Tinker Brook Valley, and behind, the centre of modern Sheffield where the Don has its confluence with the Sheaf, from panel seventeen. Source: Tim Cockrell. 22

Figure 19: The rock-art of Spout House Hill in relation to Tinker Brook Valley. Heights are indicated in metres AOD. © Crown Copyright/database right 2020. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service. 23

Figure 20: Plan of panel two. 31

Figure 21: Panel two. Source: Tim Cockrell. 32

Figure 22: Detail of Figure 21. Source: Tim Cockrell. 32

Figure 23: Plan of panel three. 33

Figure 24: Panel three facing west. Source: Tim Cockrell. 34

Figure 25: Plan of panel four. 35

Figure 26: Panel four. Source: Tim Cockrell. 36

Figure 27: Detail of Figure 26 (motif two). Source: Tim Cockrell. 36

Figure 28: Detail of Figure 26 (motif one). Source: Tim Cockrell. 37

Figure 29: Plan of panel five. 38

Figure 30: Panel five. Source: author. 39

Figure 31: Plan of panel six. 40

Figure 32: Panel six. Source: Tim Cockrell. 41

Figure 33: Detail of panel six (motif one). Source: Tim Cockrell 41

Figure 34: Detail of panel six (motif two). Source: Tim Cockrell. 42

Figure 35: Plan of panel seven. 43

Figure 36: Panel seven. Source: Tim Cockrell. 43

Figure 37: Side elevation of panel eight. 44

Figure 38: Panel eight. Source: Tim Cockrell. 45

Figure 39: Plan of panel nine. 46

Figure 40: Panel nine. Source: Tim Cockrell. 47
Figure 41: Panel nine, facing south-west. Source: Tim Cockrell. 47
Figure 42: Plan of panel ten. 49
Figure 43: Panel ten. Source: Tim Cockrell. 50
Figure 44: Plan of panel eleven 51
Figure 45: Panel eleven. Source: Tim Cockrell. 51
Figure 46: Panel twelve. Source: Tim Cockrell. 52
Figure 47: Detail of panel twelve. Source: Tim Cockrell. 53
Figure 48: Plan of panel thirteen. 54
Figure 49: Panel 13. Source: Tim Cockrell 55
Figure 50: Plan of panel fourteen. 56
Figure 51: Panel fourteen. Source: Tim Cockrell. 57
Figure 52: Detail of Figure 52. Source: Tim Cockrell. 57
Figure 53: Plan of panel fifteen 58
Figure 54: Panel fifteen. Source: Tim Cockrell. 58
Figure 55: Plan of panel sixteen. 59
Figure 56: Panel sixteen. Source: Tim Cockrell. 60
Figure 57: Plan of panel seventeen 61
Figure 58: Panel seventeen. Source: Tim Cockrell. 62
Figure 59: Detail of panel seventeen, facing north-east. Source: Tim Cockrell. 62
Figure 60: Detail of panel seventeen, facing east. Source: Tim Cockrell. 63
Figure 61: Plan of panel eighteen. 64
Figure 62: Panel eighteen. Source: Tim Cockrell. 65
Figure 63: Panel eighteen. Source: Tim Cockrell. 65
Figure 64: Plan of panel nineteen. 66
Figure 65: Panel nineteen. Source: Tim Cockrell. 67
Figure 66: Plan of panel twenty. 68
Figure 67: Panel twenty. Source: Tim Cockrell. 69

Figure 68: Plan of panel twenty one. 70

Figure 69: Panel twenty one. Source: Tim Cockrell. 71

Figure 70: Detail of panel twenty one. Source: Tim Cockrell. 71

Figure 71: Panel twenty two. 72

Figure 72: Detail of Figure 71. Source: Tim Cockrell. 73

Figure 73: Panel twenty three. 74

Figure 74: Detail of panel twenty three. Source: Tim Cockrell. 75

Figure 75: Spout House Hill, facing south from More Hall Reservoir in Ewden Valley. Source: Tim Cockrell. 76

Figure 76: Spout House Hill (left centre) facing south-west from Wharncliffe Moor, in the Don Valley. Source: Tim Cockrell. 76

Figure 77: Facing north-east from panel eight towards the junction of Ewden Valley With the Don Valley at More Hall. Source: Tim Cockrell. 76

Figure 78: The view north-west along Ewden Valley from panel nine. Source: Tim Cockrell r. 77

Figure 79: Facing south-east overlooking the Tinker Brook valley, Don valley and Sheffield City Centre from Panel six. Source: Tim Cockrell. 78

Figure 80: Panel ten after rain. Source: Tim Cockrell. 78

Figure 81: The view of the east end of Ewden Valley, and “The Height” above Wharncliffe Crags from Panel eleven. Source: Tim Cockrell. 79

Tables

Table 1: Distribution of motifs by group. 11

Table 2: Data from panel two. 33

Table 3: Data from panel three. 34

Table 4: Data from panel four. 37

Table 5: Data from panel five. 39

Table 6: Data from panel six. 42

Table 7: Data from panel seven. 44

Table 8: Data from panel eight. 45

Table 9: Data from panel nine. 48

Table 10: Data from panel ten. 50

Table 11: Data from panel eleven. 52

Table 12: Data from panel twelve. 54

Table 13: Data from panel thirteen. 55

Table 14: Data from panel fourteen. 57

Table 15: Data from panel fifteen. 59

Table 16: Data from panel sixteen. 60

Table 17: Data from panel seventeen. 63

Table 18: Data from panel eighteen. 66

Table 19: Data from panel nineteen. 67

Table 20: Data from panel twenty. 69

Table 21: Data from panel twenty one. 72

1. Summary

Twenty two panels of prehistoric rock-art were recorded at the small plateau of Spout House Hill, South Yorkshire, in the spring and early summer of 2020. They appeared to be in four concentrations representing at least two phases of activity relating to a period stretching from the Late Mesolithic or Early Neolithic to the Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age. One group (group two) arguably marks or commemorates the use of Ewden Valley by hunting or pastoral groups at an early date, while the remaining groups possibly mark or commemorate later value of the locale in a wider context.

2. Location, geology, topography and current use

Spout House Hill is located between Ewden Valley and Tinker Brook Valley, South Yorkshire, at NGR 427731, 394672 (centred), approximately 10 kilometres from the centre of Sheffield (Figure 1). The hill exists as a strikingly distinct spur of geology (Figure 2; Figure 12).

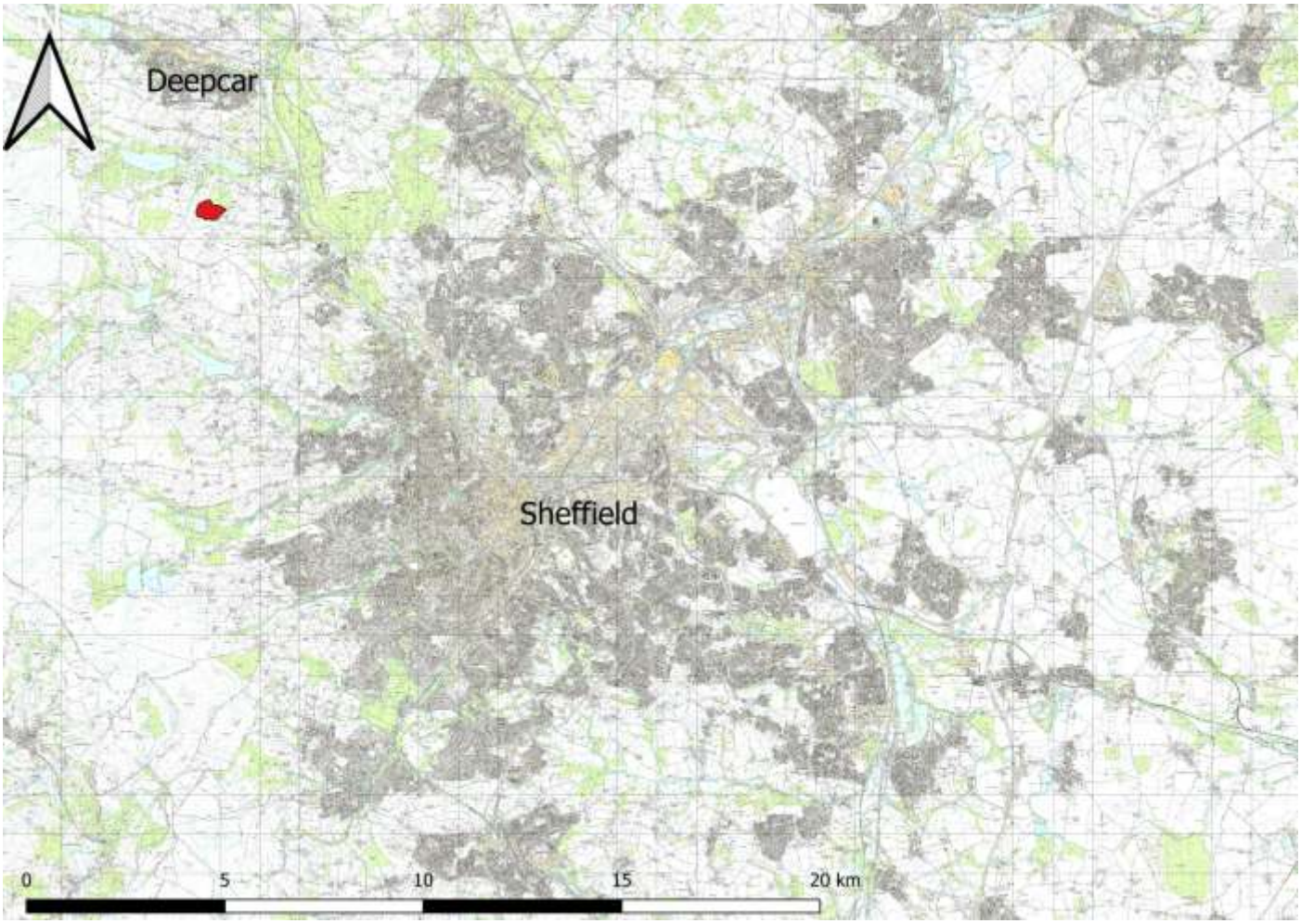

Figure 1: The location of the study area (red). © Crown Copyright/database right 2020 An Ordnance Survey supplied service.

The upland of which Spout House Hill forms a part is located at the eastern extremity of the Namurian Sandstones (Millstone Grit) Formations. The higher ground to the west and the south west overlooking Agden Valley includes Marsden Formation and Huddersfield White Rock variants, but the Spout House Hill spur itself is formed of Rossendale formation (Rough Rock) Sandstone (Figure 2). Rossendale formation

Mudstones and Siltstones surround this, except to the immediate south west, forming its lower slopes (BGS 2020). To the immediate east of the hill, Marsden Formation and Huddersfield White Rock Gritstone variants once more form the substrate, where the slope rapidly descends into the Don Valley. To the South of this area, forming the north facing slopes of Tinker Brook Valley, are located Mudstones and Siltstones, as well as Crawshaw Sandstone, belonging to the Pennine Lower Coal Measures Formations (Figure 2).

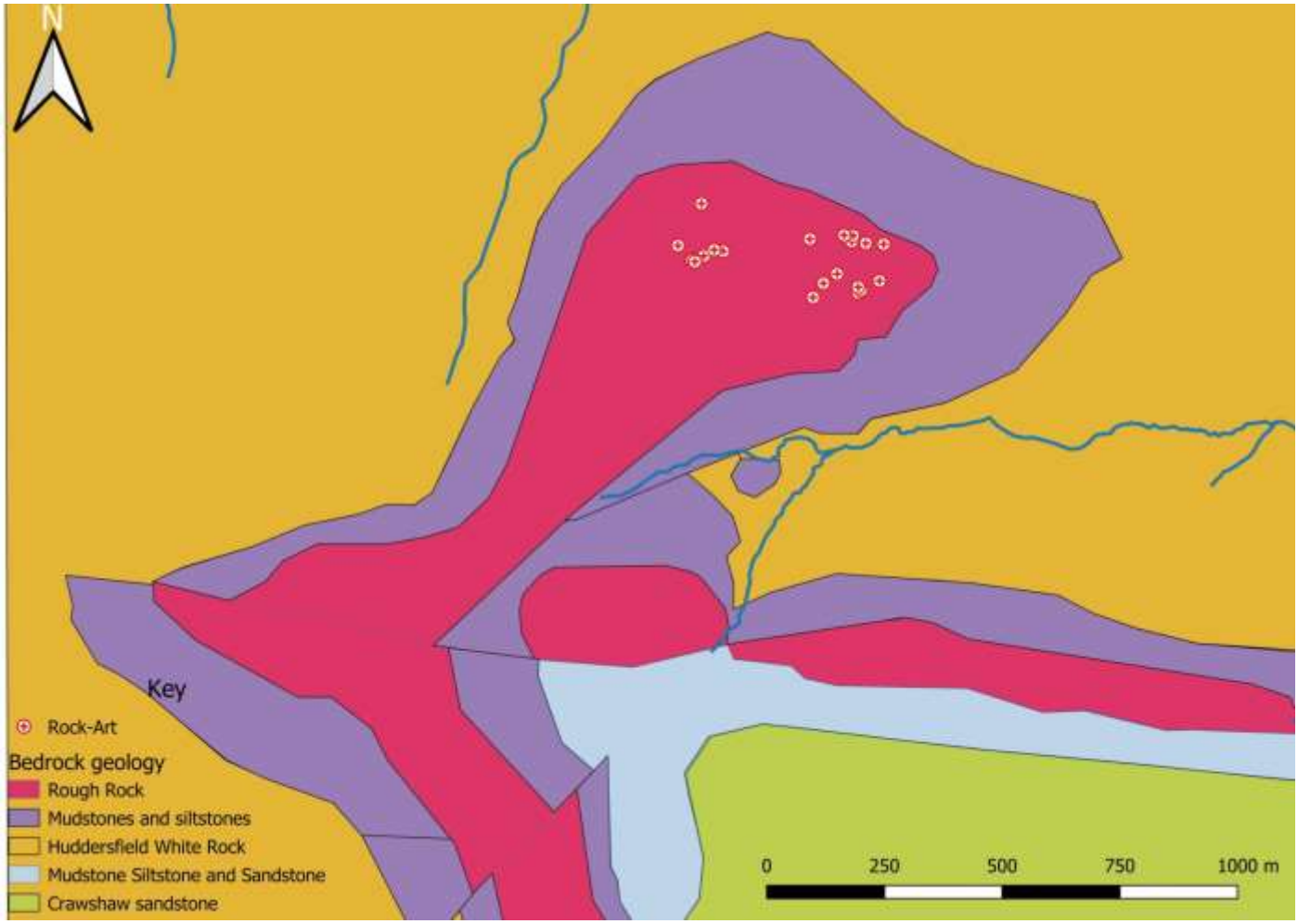

Figure 2: rock-art at Spout House Hill (and Bent Hills) in relation to geology. © Crown copyright/database right 2020. A British Geological Survey service.

The spur of Rough Rock forming Spout House Hill thus defines it, and is given further definition by the streams of Raynor Clough on its west side, a tributary of Ewden Beck, as well as Tinker Brook to its south, tributary to the River Don. The spur protrudes north-east from the valley side above Ewden Beck. A small rounded summit lies at its west end, but the rest of its top is characterised by a small plateau, with a slight incline facing east. The plateau, particularly on the south and east sides of the summit is often very wet, due to springs which rise there which feed into Tinker Brook. Spout House Hill dominates the lower half of Ewden Valley and the confluence of the Beck with the River Don at More Hall. Its south east facing escarpment and slopes equally dominate the much smaller valley of Tinker Brook, and its own confluence with the River Don at Wharncliffe Side.

The west facing side of the Don valley in the vicinity of Wharncliffe Forest and Chase are clearly visible in both directions. South, the area of the confluence of the River Don with the River Sheaf at Sheffield is

visible. In clear weather, the valley of the middle reaches of the Don is visible as far as the vicinity of Treeton, Canklow Hill and Rotherham, where the Don has its confluence with the River Rother. Beyond, the distant line of the Magnesian Limestone ridge can also be seen. To the north and east of Spout House Hill, views are obtainable in clear weather beyond the south facing valley sides of Ewden Valley, and even the Little Don Valley and the west facing side of the Upper Don Valley, particularly where dips in the ridges occur. Parts of the Dearne Valley are visible in such conditions, the Magnesian Limestone ridge beyond, and even the Vale of York and the East Yorkshire Wolds on the clearest days.

Spout House Hill is included within areas designated as "moorland" by Natural England (MAGIC 2020), as an isolated patch, although this particular patch of "moorland" consists almost entirely of coarse unimproved grassland, designated under the Dudley Stamp Land Use Inventory as "rough grazing" (MAGIC 2020). The hill and its immediate vicinity fall at the eastern extremity of the Peak District National Park. Currently, the hilltop is utilised for the pasturing of cattle by the farmer. Its immediate environs (apart from the woodland beyond its north facing escarpment) are utilised for the production of hay, in addition to its use as pasture. The hilltop is designated as Open Access Land open to the public, and is additionally crossed by public footpaths at various places.

3. Historical and archaeological background

The early history of this remote hilltop is understandably obscure. During the fourteenth century though, Spout House seems to have been part of the Onesacre estate, under the ownership of the Rous family (Hey 2002: 56). The name is of French origin. It is possible therefore that the estate was acquired at the time of the Norman Conquest, as favoured tenants of the Lord of Hallamshire. The estate passed into the ownership of the Steyed (Stead) family in the fifteenth century, in which it remained for 400 years (Hey 2002: 56). The Steads rose in prominence and wealth over that time, building Onesacre Hall and Spout House during the late seventeenth century. Spout House must have been sold on not long afterwards, because Thomas Marriot (1679-1754) left the fifty seven acres of Spout House Farm for the use of a minister in his will (Hey 2002: 62).

The nearest substantial contemporary settlement is at the foot of Tinker Brook Valley at Wharncliffe Side, although the hamlet of Brightholmlee is mid-way between. The name appears to be derived from an early English proper name, combined with the designation of a settlement amidst streams in a woodland glade. Thomas Jeffreys map of Yorkshire (1772) is indicative of the importance of Spout House, Brightholmlee, Swinock (Swinnock) and even Tinker Brook during the eighteenth century, all of which are included, but not Wharncliffe side, which is not present (Hey 2002: 79). Spout House is possibly therefore of greater antiquity than Wharncliffe side itself, which does not even seem to have been a substantially larger settlement than Brightholmlee at the time of the first edition ordnance survey map of the area (1855). The expansion of Wharncliffe side since then is probably related to its position on the main road north of the burgeoning city of Sheffield.

Brightholmlee contains two listed buildings, Old Hall Farmhouse and High Lee Cottage. Also listed is a guide pillar at the junction of Brightholmlee Lane and Brightholmlee Road with Thorn House Lane. To the immediate south there are also the listed buildings of Swinnock Hall and Cow House. There are three more

guide pillars to the immediate west, south-west and south of Spout House Hill, hinting at the recent historical importance of the area in journeys across the uplands by itinerant traders. These are referred to by the antiquarian John Wilson of Broomhead Hall in 1777 (Hey 2001: 23), as related by John Swinden of Spout House. David Hey suggested (1967) that a "saltway" crossed very close by, coming from Bolsterstone via New Mill Bridge packhorse bridge in Ewden Valley (dismantled, and re-erected in Glen Howe Park at the time of the construction of the reservoirs), climbing the valley side to Brightholmlee and thence to Wharncliffe Side. "Tinker" Brook, which rises where two of the aforementioned guide pillars are located, might well hint at the line of another routeway crossing the uplands. This seems to be supported by its inclusion on the aforementioned map of Thomas Jeffreys.

Spout House Hill was evidently regarded as an important local source of stone in the recent past, to judge from the number of small quarries that ring its perimeter. The County series 1:10,000 ordnance survey mapping shows that the largest of the quarries that fringe the hill were active at least by 1855, specifically labelled as Sandstone quarries. The first edition map also shows that the field of improved pasture separating panel eight from Group two (see below) was enclosed by this date. By the time of the second edition, published in 1911, the quarries were disused.

Archaeologically, little is known about the immediate locale. The antiquarian John Watson (1776) claimed that stone circles existed in his day to the immediate south west, on high ground. John Wilson (1719-1783), quoted by Joseph Kenworthy (1928:38-39), claimed that the remains of a moated "hall or great house" stood in How Wood in his day. How Wood lies immediately upstream from Wharncliffe Side along Tinker Brook. Kenworthy himself speaks of a mound, utilised as a quarry between 1880-1913, from which sherds of medieval pottery were recovered, and from which nearby was recovered a Neolithic polished stone axe (SMR 00529/01). It is unclear clear whether the "mound" was the same feature as the "remains" of the great house, or a separate large cairn.

Modern, professionally undertaken, archaeological work in the vicinity received international attention in the wake of the excavation of the important Mesolithic site at Deepcar in the early 1960s (Radley and Mellars 1964). Jeffrey Radley subsequently began searching for sites at similar locations in the area, including at the confluence of the River Don with Ewden Beck (Radley and Hepworth n.d.). Between 1965-1969 he and local amateur archaeologist Fred Hepworth recorded flint scatters from the locale. Their explorations extended to walks along Ewden Valley itself where, it is claimed, they noted the presence of Polisoirrs in the vicinity of the reservoirs when the water was low (Ken Hawley, pers.comm.). Their work has never been published. The untimely death of Radley in 1970 probably truncated what was ongoing work. Close to the site is Wilkin Wood, where a cup-marked stone first discovered in the late 1960s by Mr Terry Howard, was recently recorded by myself and Ian Kynaston-Richards (Cockrell *et al* 2017 (2020).

4. Aims and objectives

The main aim of the present study was to ascertain the extent and character of rock-art at Spout House Hill. Secondary aims included interpreting its purpose and significance. Objectives included the detailed recording of all visible examples of rock-art.

5. Methodology

Terminology

The term “rock art” is problematic, because one of the few things we can be certain of about such enigmatic markings is that they were almost certainly not “art”, a concept that owes its existence to a Cartesian world view, ideas of the post medieval enlightenment, and concomitant aesthetics. Unfortunately the term has become ubiquitous. Alternatives in use include “petroglyphs” and, where cup-marks are in question, “cupules”. Such terms, though less problematic in some ways, are no more ideal. Therefore the term used here is “rock-art”, with the hyphen serving to mitigate in part for its unfortunate modern meaning. The term “cup-marks” is utilised on the same basis. A “panel” is defined as any boulder, sheet or other chunk of bedrock outcropping upon which are inscribed rock-art motifs. Other terms used are derived from the published guidance of the Scotland’s Rock Art Project (ScRAP).

Recording

The present study is a record of the rock-art alone at Spout House Hill, rather than a comprehensive systematic survey of its archaeology. As Open Access Land, the area is open to the public although privately owned. Strict protocols govern what may be undertaken on such land and, in the absence of formally arranged work, these protocols were strictly observed. Anecdotally, other archaeological features were in evidence at the location. Many of these are probably connected with the relatively recent quarrying activities in evidence on the periphery of the hill. Others are probably of much greater antiquity and include small cairns, several possible small standing stones, as well as exposed linear and sub-circular stone settings. Most of these settings appear to be in the vicinity of group one (Figure 4). In the absence of a systematic general survey, no attempt to record these was made. Instead, a series of informal visits were made by the author over the spring and early summer of 2020, effectively covering the entire hilltop, during which almost every panel where rock-art was observed was recorded. This included only those motifs that were clearly visible. No attempt to remove even decayed vegetation or soil from panels was made, in accordance with the protocols governing public use of Open Access land. It is therefore highly likely that more motifs await recording. The record made in the present study included, as a minimum, recording the location using a hand held GPS and taking photographs. Written details were prepared on pro-forma recording sheets, in accordance with the suggested recording criteria of Robert Bednarik (2008), with additional guidance derived from Scotland’s Rock Art Project (ScRAP). Nineteen of the twenty two panels were also drawn at an appropriate scale. The sequence carries on from that began at Wilkin Wood (Cockrell 2017 (2020)) and thus begins with panel two.

Drawing conventions

Dot density was used to indicate depth on the drawings, with greater densities indicating greater depth. Distinct lines of dots also indicate breaks of slope. A continuous dashed line indicates the edge of vegetation. A dash-dot line indicates where a panel dips beneath soil, rendering its maximum extent indeterminate.

6. The motifs of the panels

Introduction

The entire plateau at Spout House Hill is strewn with hundreds of boulders and sheets of outcropping bedrock (Figure 3). The densest areas are along its edges, and along a spur that protrudes from the base of the summit at the west end of the plateau, north-east towards Ewden Valley. However, the distribution of rock-art panels is not random. Almost all of them are located where the outcropping is densest and in four clearly visible concentrations. There is one apparently outlying panel (panel eight) that does not appear, *prima facie,* to be part of any of the concentrations. The concentrations, which have different characteristics, are designated Group one, Group two, Group three and Group four (Figure 4). A summarised description of the motifs is presented below, with detailed information presented in Appendix 1.

Figure 3: unmodified outcropping and boulders on the east facing slope of Spout House Hill. Scale: 0-1m. Source: Tim Cockrell.

A total of eighty six individual motifs were recorded on twenty two panels (Figures 4-6; Table 1). Additionally, four of the circular/sub-circular motifs include linear "tails". These are either eroded radial grooves, or natural grooves which the cup-marks were located to take advantage of, perhaps as pseudo-radial grooves. In additional cases, cup-marks were deliberately sited to fall along the lines of

unambiguously natural erosion gullies or eroded bedding planes, such as in panels seven or twenty (Figure 5; Figure 6).

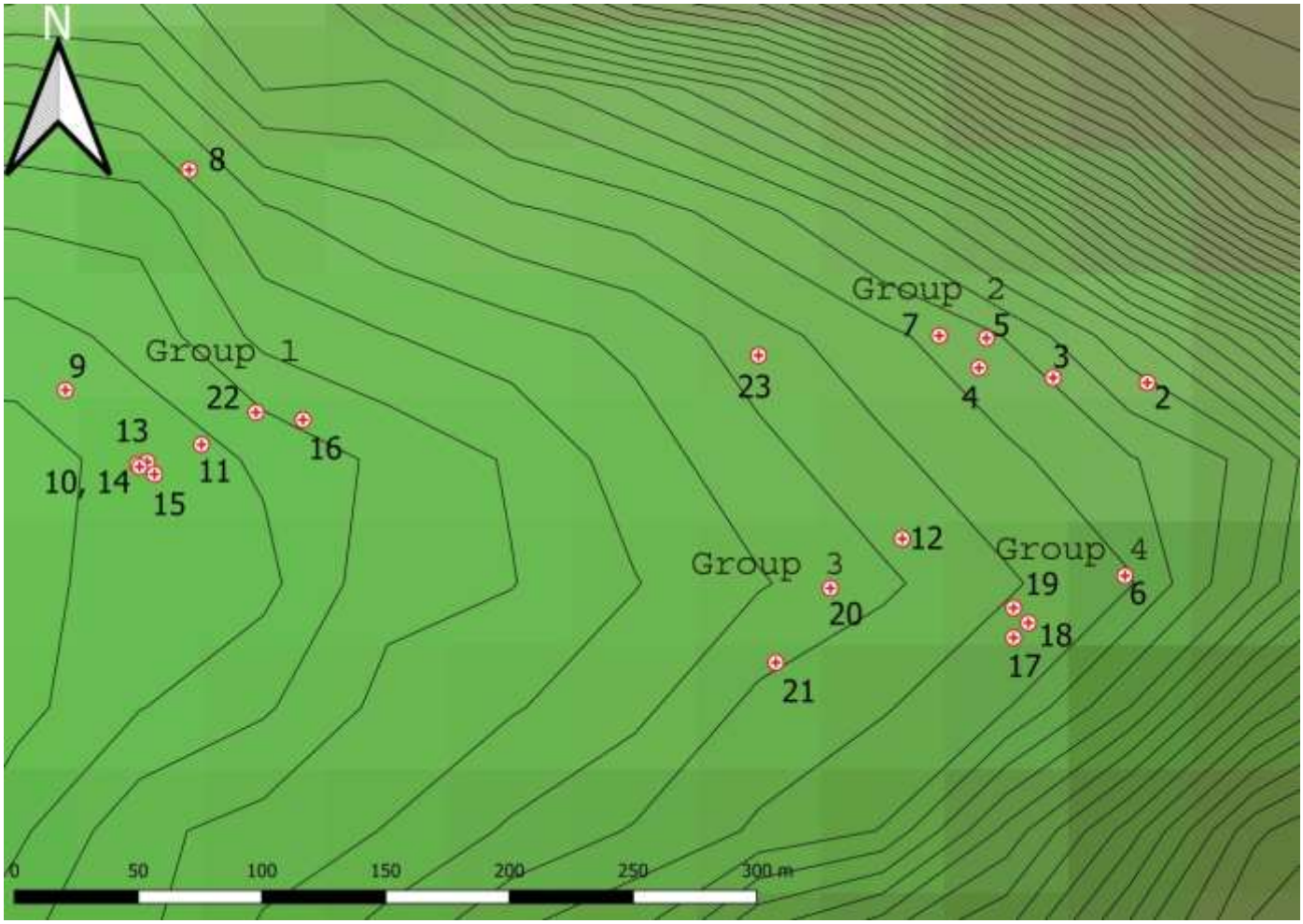

Figure 4: distribution of panels at Spout House Hill by group. © Crown Copyright/database right 2020 An Ordnance Survey supplied service.

Group	Circular/sub circular	Elongated oval (ovoid)	Conjoined	Pear shaped	Dumbbell	Cup-and-ring
1	29					1
2	14	1	1			
3	8	1				
4	23	4		3	1	
Total	74	6	1	3	1	1

Table 1: distribution of motifs by group. “Pear” shaped and “dumbbell” shaped motifs are described in appendix 1 in terms of their component (sub-circular) parts.

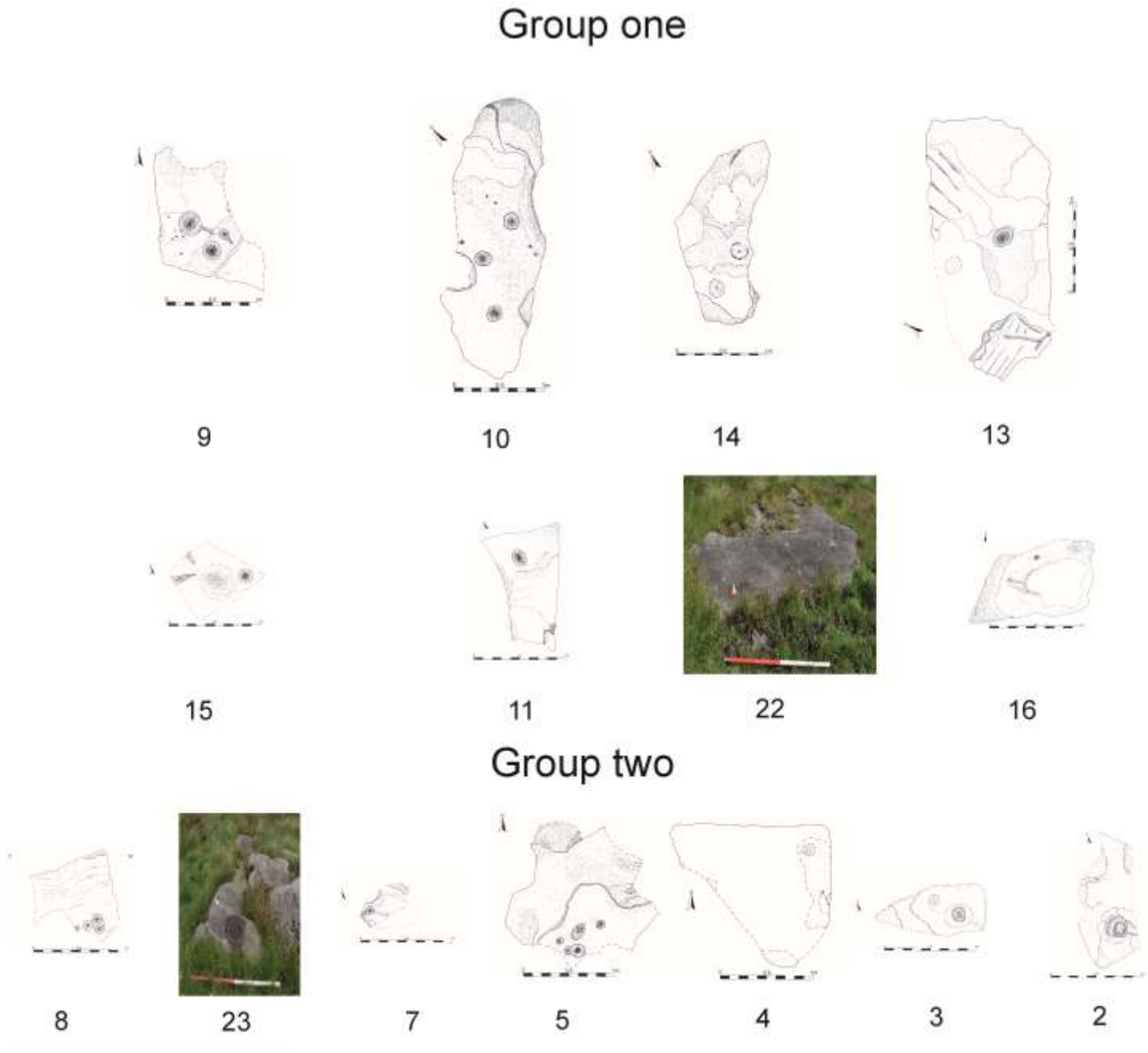

Figure 5: Rock-art panel groups one and two at Spout House Hill. Photographs are in lieu of scale drawings where those are absent. Scale bar: 0-1 metre. Source: Tim Cockrell.

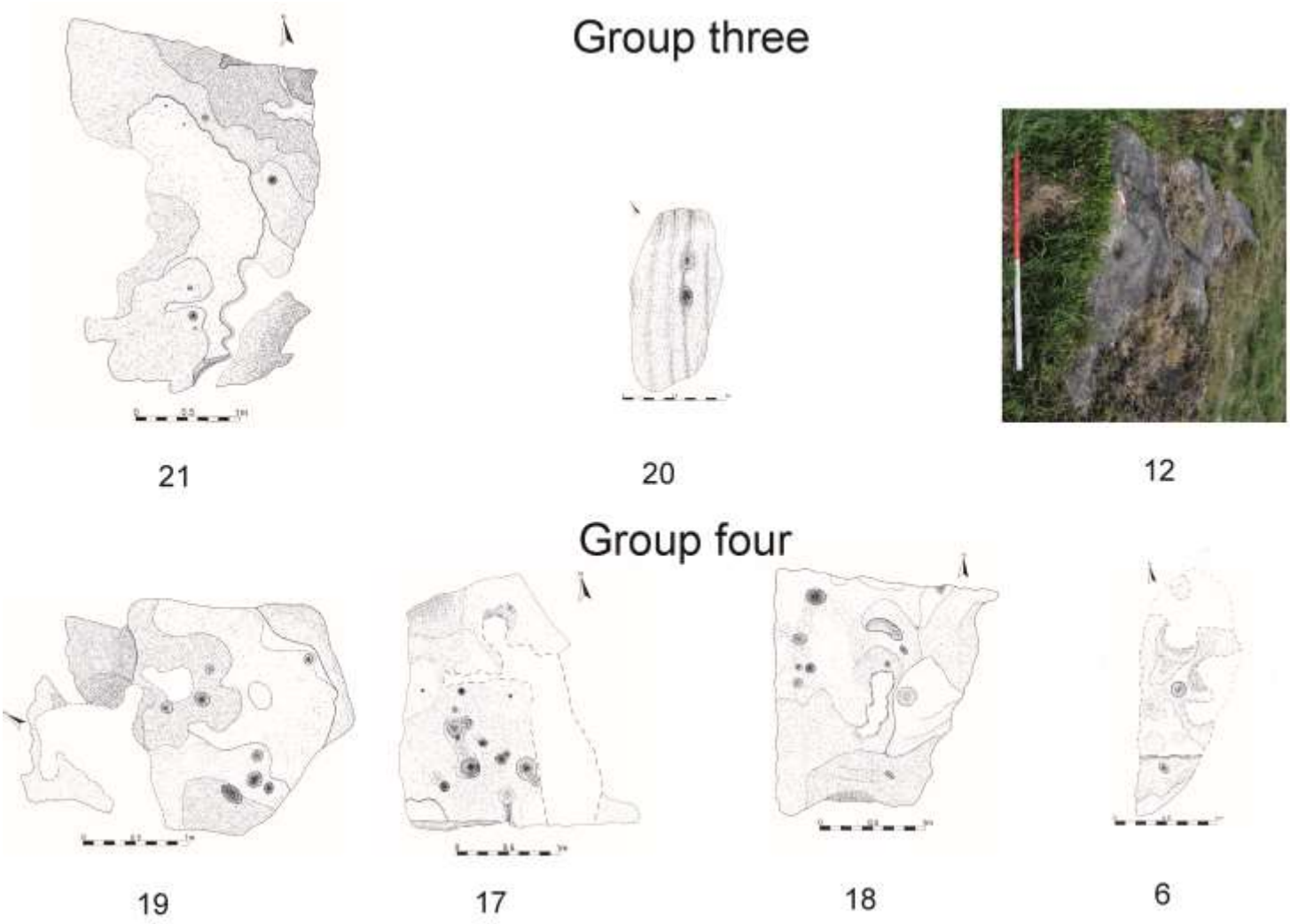

Figure 6: Rock-art panel groups three and four at Spout House Hill. Photographs are in lieu of scale drawings where those are absent. Scale bar: 0-1 metre. Source: Tim Cockrell

The most salient observation to make about the motifs is their limited variety, with sixty five percent of the total consisting purely of circular or sub-circular cup-marks. Only one complete cup-and-ring motif is present, and that with only a single gapped ring (Figure 7). Panel five has a possible truncated five ringed cup-and-ring motif.

Figure 7: gapped concentric cup-and-ring on panel 14. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Panel eight has a conjoined cup-mark pair aligned with a single cup-mark of the same size, and a smaller one beyond, to form a triangular composition (Figure 8).

Figure 8: triangular arrangement of cup-marks on panel eight. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Panel seventeen has a “pear” shaped and “dumbbell” shaped combination, together forming an “L” shaped arrangement. The same panel has two other “pear” shaped motifs (Figure 9; cover photo).

Figure 9: cup-marks on panel seventeen. Source: Tim Cockrell.

These have been created by conjoining a larger and much smaller circular cup-mark, similar to more common conjoined or “dumbbell” motifs. The only other motif of note is the elongated oval on panel eighteen, comparable with the class known as a “courgette” type in the Scotland’s Rock Art Project (ScRAP) recording methodology. The Spout House Hill example closely resembles a panel with very similar motifs at Tregiffian in Cornwall (Nash 2007: 176-9).

The recorded cup marks vary in depth and especially so in their diameters, from as small as 10mm to as large as 230mm. Large cup-marks are sometimes referred to as “basins” in rock-art research (Beckensall 1999: 38; Bradley 2020: 20; Figure 10). Sometimes the aforementioned variation occurs on the same panel, as is also evident elsewhere in Britain (Figure 10). Significant differences between the diameters and depths of cup-marks, often apparently arbitrarily distributed across panels are, it has been claimed, a particular characteristic of the cup-marks of the British Isles (Van Hoek 2001: 136). Moreover, large diameter cup-marks are recognized as a particular trait in the neighbouring Peak District (Barnatt and Robinson 2003: 14). They have also been noted in North Northumberland (Beckensall 1999: 38). The markings summarised above are therefore broadly consistent with the variation to be found elsewhere, but especially in the southern Pennines.

Figure 10: A large outcrop of sandstone at Lordenshaw West, Northumberland. This panel has numerous examples of larger cup-marks, many of which are shallow and badly eroded, particularly to the left of the panel. Source: A. Bolton.

The second most important attribute of the whole assemblage is its state of preservation, which in almost all cases is poor or very poor. Many possible cup-marks were not recorded due to their preservation being so poor that the attribution itself could not be made with complete confidence. This is not surprising in such an exposed location, almost entirely on horizontal panels. Panels on Millstone Grit geology are well known for being particularly susceptible to erosion (Barnatt and Reeder 1982: 36; Deacon 2018: 150), but the problem is a general one (Nash 2007: 176). The one example present on a vertical panel, the north facing side of panel eighteen, serves to illustrate what a difference less exposure to the vicissitudes of wind and (acid) rain can make (Figure 11).

Figure 11: the single cup mark on the north face of panel eighteen. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Discussion

Fifty percent of the rock art of Britain consists of nothing more than cup-marks (Freedman *et al* 2011, quoted by Deacon 2018: 145), and though some regions of the island have significant numbers of more complex motifs, in other regions they are almost entirely absent (Nash 2007; Deacon 2018; 49; Bradley 2020: 20). The neighbouring Peak District is typical in this respect, largely consisting of cup-marked stones, the majority of which are on small boulders that are not *in situ* (Barnatt and Robinson 2003: 19; 17). At Rombalds Moor in West Yorkshire, which has the greatest concentration of rock-art in the Southern Pennines, at one hundred and fifty two recorded panels, sixty five percent of rock-art consists only of cup-marks. A further twenty five percent have only a single concentric ring (Deacon 2018: 140). The majority of prehistoric rock-art in Britain was produced on horizontal panels, and mostly at locations that were wholly or largely flat in character (Waddington 2007: 50).

The character of the present assemblage of motifs is consistent with the aforementioned regional and national patterns. However, locally, the quantity of panels at the locale is remarkable. Prior to the recording of the present assemblage, only a handful of isolated simple cup-marked stones were known in South Yorkshire (Cockrell 2017: 121; Garton 2015; Cockrell *et al* 2017 (2020)), and only one example of a panel of complex motifs (Barnatt and Frith 1983). A far larger total of rock-art panels have been recorded in the Derbyshire Peak District, especially in the nearby Upper Derwent Valley (Barnatt and Robinson 2003). This includes the well known panel from Gardom's Edge now on display at Weston Park Museum (Barnatt *et al* 2017: 26-28). Nevertheless, even when the Peak District is taken into consideration, the assemblage at Spout House Hill represents the densest concentration of rock-art in the North Midlands and South Yorkshire, and by far the densest concentration on natural outcropping and earth-fast panels.

7. The topographical context of the panels

Having observed that there is only modest variation between the motifs on the majority of panels, in accordance with patterning demonstrable at greater scales of analysis, I will now consider patterning relating to the settings of the panels. After making some general points, I will relate an anecdote about one panel, panel 13 from group one. This will be illustrative of what is a pattern relating to groups one, three and four.

Views, either *from* rock-art or *to* rock-art have often preoccupied the debates of researchers in recent scholarship, particularly those taking a landscape approach to archaeology (Bradley 1997: 70; 89-90; Van Hoek 1999: 17-20; 2001: 228; Beckensall 1999: 37; Deacon 2018: 105). Three observations about the rock-art at Spout House Hill are relevant to these debates. Firstly, with one exception (panel eight), all the rock-art recorded is only visible if standing directly above the panels, or within a few metres (Figure 12). Even panel eight is only visible from a few metres more distant.

Figure 12: A close up view of the three larger cup-marks on panel nine, facing north-west. Source: Tim Cockrell.

The hill itself is visible from the higher ground to the immediate west and south-west (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Spout House Hill, facing north-east from Swan height. Source: Tim Cockrell.

It is also visible from various places on the west facing valley sides of this part of the Don Valley. It dominates Tinker Brook Valley (Figure 14) and much of Ewden Valley, from which the hill appears very prominent and distinctive, with its steep escarpments and flat top (Figure 15).

Figure 14: Tinker Brook Valley, the end of Ewden Valley and the Don Valley behind and to the right. Spout House Hill is to the left of centre. From Bent Hills, facing north-east. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 15: The middle and lower Ewden Valley, facing east from Broomhead Moor, featuring the small plateau of Spout House Hill (right of centre), and the Don valley at Wharncliffe forest (centre, background). Source: Tim Cockrell.

Evidently, views of the motifs themselves, at least from a distance, were probably never considered important. Views of the locale however, or from it, might have been. Perhaps one of the reasons for siting the rock-art at this place was because the place itself was the important thing.

With the potential significance of different kinds of visibility in mind, the extent to which places are visible *from* the locale was something of a preoccupation whilst recording the panels. I noted while recording those of group two that, tree cover notwithstanding, views of the confluence of Ewden Beck with the nearby River Don were obtainable from them (Figure 16), and views along Ewden Valley from most panels. The Don Valley below the confluence was not visible, and little could be seen beyond the south facing ridge of Ewden Valley (Waldershelf) when looking north, because of the height of the ridge relative to the location of the rock-art.

One of the two panels not belonging to any group (panel eight) is also located along the escarpment edge overlooking Ewden Valley, to the west of Group two. The gap between is filled with a field of improved pasture, indicating that the clearance of the field for this purpose might be responsible for the break in the line of panels. It is arguable that more panels once existed in the gap. Panel eight, like the majority of the panels in group two, does not have an orientation.

Figure 16: The bottom of Ewden Valley where it meets the Don Valley at More Hall, facing east from panel five. Source: Tim Cockrell.

The situation at group one was very different. In short, much more was visible from them, looking to the north and north-east. In fact on a clear day the Wolds of East Yorkshire form a prominent linear band looming on the horizon. While recording panel thirteen, it was evident that the long axis of the sub-rectangular panel was aligned north-north-east to south-south-west, directly in line with the apex of "The Height", overlooking Wharncliffe Crags in the Upper Don Valley (Figure 17).

Figure 17: panel thirteen, with “The Height” (background, centre). Source: Tim Cockrell.

Of the twenty two panels at Spout House Hill, twelve are aligned on the same point (cover photo; Figure 17; Figure 81). Six out of the eight of group one, one out of the seven of group two, two out of the three of group three and three out of the four of group four. Group two is therefore different, in its setting, and in having a lower proportion of sub-rectangular panels to ones without orientation. Groups three and four, additionally, are characterised by having dominating views of Tinker Brook Valley, and the Don Valley as far as its confluence with the Sheaf at the present city centre of Sheffield (Figure 18; Figure 19).

Figure 18: a view of the lower Tinker Brook Valley, and behind, the centre of modern Sheffield where the Don has its confluence with the Sheaf, from panel seventeen. Source: Tim Cockrell.

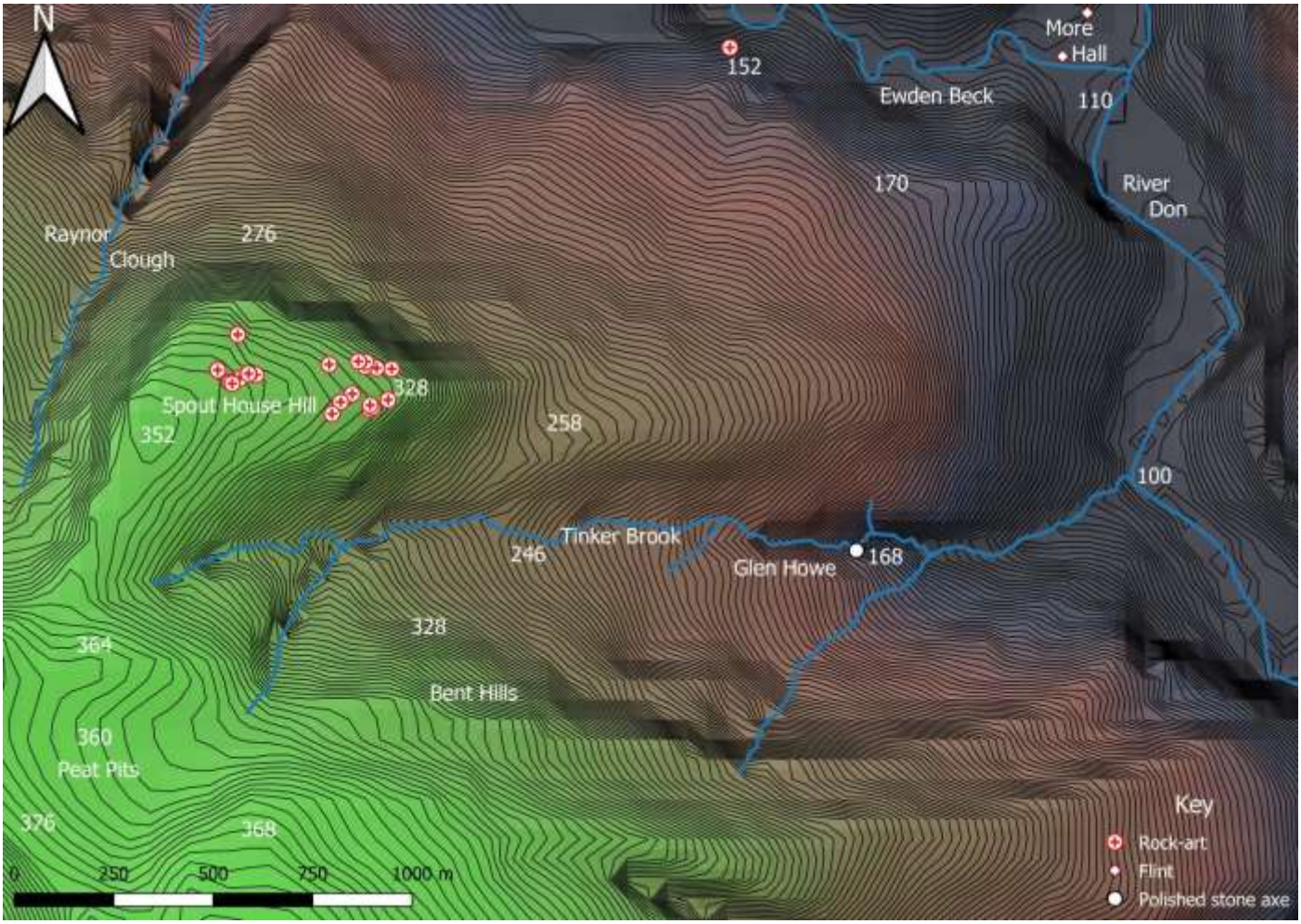

Figure 19: The rock-art of Spout House Hill in relation to Tinker Brook Valley.
Heights are indicated in metres AOD. © Crown Copyright/database right 2020.
An Ordnance Survey supplied service.

This leaves us with the anomalous group two panels. The majority do not have a specific orientation, although as a group they form a crude line along the edge of the escarpment overlooking the lower Ewden valley. They do not have good views of the Don Valley beyond the confluence of the Don with Ewden Beck. That confluence is the location of an unpublished assemblage of flintwork that was recovered in fieldwork by Jeff Radley and Fred Hepworth during the second half of the 1960s. The assemblage was disturbed by ploughing and was not *in situ.* Radley and Hepworth reported that it included early and later Mesolithic flintwork, as well as some probable later Neolithic and early Bronze Age implements (Radley and Hepworth n.d.). A Roman period fibula was also recovered from close by in 1968. Between the More Hall scatters and Spout House Hill is the location of the cup-marked stone at Wilkin Wood (Cockrell 2017 (2020)). More scatters of flintwork have been recorded at two locations higher up Ewden Valley at Broomhead reservoir (Cockrell 2020b), and upslope at Wigtwizzle (Cockrell 2020c). These also span the Mesolithic to the Early Bronze Age. Close to one of the Broomhead Reservoir scatters, on the edge of its north bank, a vertical panel with a pair of cup-marks is located (Cockrell 2020b). Still further upstream is the well known ringcairn and associated cairnfield overlooking Ewden Beck (Barnatt 1990: 42), immediately beyond which is another panel (horizontal) with cup marks marked on it (personal observation).

The characteristics already described clearly differentiate group two from the other rock-art groups at Spout House Hill. The impression given does indicate that the confluence of Ewden Beck and the River Don,

with its multi-period activity, was important, and it is possible that the line of the valley in general was being marked in some way. The upper reaches of Ewden Beck are overlooked by both Broomhead Moor, and Pike Low, where locally important scatters of Mesolithic and later flintwork have been recorded (Cockrell *in press;* 2020d). There is thus a demonstrable progression of flint scatters along the valley from its confluence with the Don to its headwaters, seemingly punctuated by rock-art at various locations. These scatters of flint culminate in the numerous and large scatters to either side of Ewden Beck at Broomhead Moor and Pike Low.

The chronology

With the foregoing in mind, chronological sequencing must now be explicitly addressed. The main reason why rock-art research has, until quite recently, existed on the fringes of mainstream archaeological research is because dating is so problematic. Across the world, cup-marks in particular have a date range from the Palaeolithic right through to the twentieth century AD (Bednarik 2016: 899). On the Atlantic littoral, we are fortunate in that this can be reduced to the period between the Mesolithic (c.9500BC-3800BC in Britain) and the start of the Middle Bronze Age (c.1700BC in Britain). Until recently it was assumed that the phenomenon could be further narrowed down to the period from the Late Neolithic to the end of the Early Bronze Age (c.3000BC-c.1700; Mazel *et al* 2007: 2). The reason for this lack of precision is that, *prima facie*, it is impossible to directly date markings on natural rock in the open air.

The chronology that does exist relies on associations with material that is able to be dated. Richard Bradley (1997: 62-66), citing the results of a number of excavated sites, some with good radio carbon dates, showed that rock-art was being crafted at least as early as c.3300BC. More recently, Van Hoek (2001) has suggested that the tradition might have begun during the Late Mesolithic. Support to the idea was given by the recent discovery of abstract motifs dated to the Mesolithic at the cave site of Aveline's Hole in the Mendip Hills (Mazel *et al* 2007: 4-5). Further support was given recently by Vivian Deacon (2018: 69), who has pointed out that a wooden post recovered in Wales and dated to the Mesolithic was marked with chevrons, and at one end with concentric rings. That "rock-art" was not only confined to rocks, but perishable media as well, raises the possibility that not only is it probably older than once thought, but was very possibly more widely distributed originally and on a variety of media.

George Nash suggested (2007) that cup marks, potentially, were made individually, each person leaving their mark, thus, at a special location of pilgrimage. If true this would be indicative of considerable time depth at places where many such marks exist. This is difficult to prove, but the presence of multiple panels at a particular location offers some support for the general idea. However, one of the panels of group two at Spout House Hill, panel five, has one cup mark overlying the edge of another, which is evidence for just such a sequence, although we have no idea of how much time separated the events that produced the cup-marks. The differences between the groups are another matter, and although it cannot be proved that they relate to different points in time, their respective attributes indicate different reasons for their creation, which certainly implies a chronological sequence.

Clive Waddington (1998; 2007) has also suggested a national sequence for the phases of rock-art crafting which includes an early phase in the Late Mesolithic or Early Neolithic. Waddington claimed that the potential significance of the earlier rock-art is in marking or commemorating important hunting grounds, or routeways to them, which accrued concomitant symbolic importance over time. The crafting of cup-marks at such locales might have formalized such relationships. The distribution of rock-art, as well as

material culture along Ewden Valley, offers *prima facie* support for that interpretation. The later siting of the cairnfield and ringcairn at the upper reaches of Ewden Beck might attest to the continuing symbolic importance of the locale.

8. Conclusion

Group two has a probable link with the use of Ewden Valley that has a sequence of use going back to the Early Mesolithic, it might well be that this group, with its unique attributes, has a history that is potentially as early as the Late Mesolithic. The remaining groups, with their different setting and attributes are possibly later in date.

Acknowledgements

The research undertaken at Spout House Hill would not have happened without the keen enthusiasm of Bolsterstone Archaeology and Heritage Group, the members of which have offered encouragement and interest throughout. It was Chris Prescott whose entreaties to visit the place led to the initial discovery of its rock-art. Jayne Wright, Ruth Morgan and Andrew Tissington all accompanied me on early visits, before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic curtailed our activities. Andy Bolton was kind enough to permit the use of his photograph of the panel at Lordenshaw West. Chris Cumberpatch is warmly thanked for first alerting me to the existence of the inscribed log of Mesolithic date from Wales. Panel seven was only detected due to the sharp eye of Rosie Cockrell. George Nash is thanked for providing me with a copy of his 2007 paper. Ruth Morgan and Chris Cumberpatch also were kind enough to read and comment upon an earlier draft of this paper, to its considerable improvement. However, its content is the sole responsibility of its author, including any errors.

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Appendix 1: Illustrations and tabulated data

Tabulated dimensions are given in millimetres. “Morph.” is for “Morphology”.

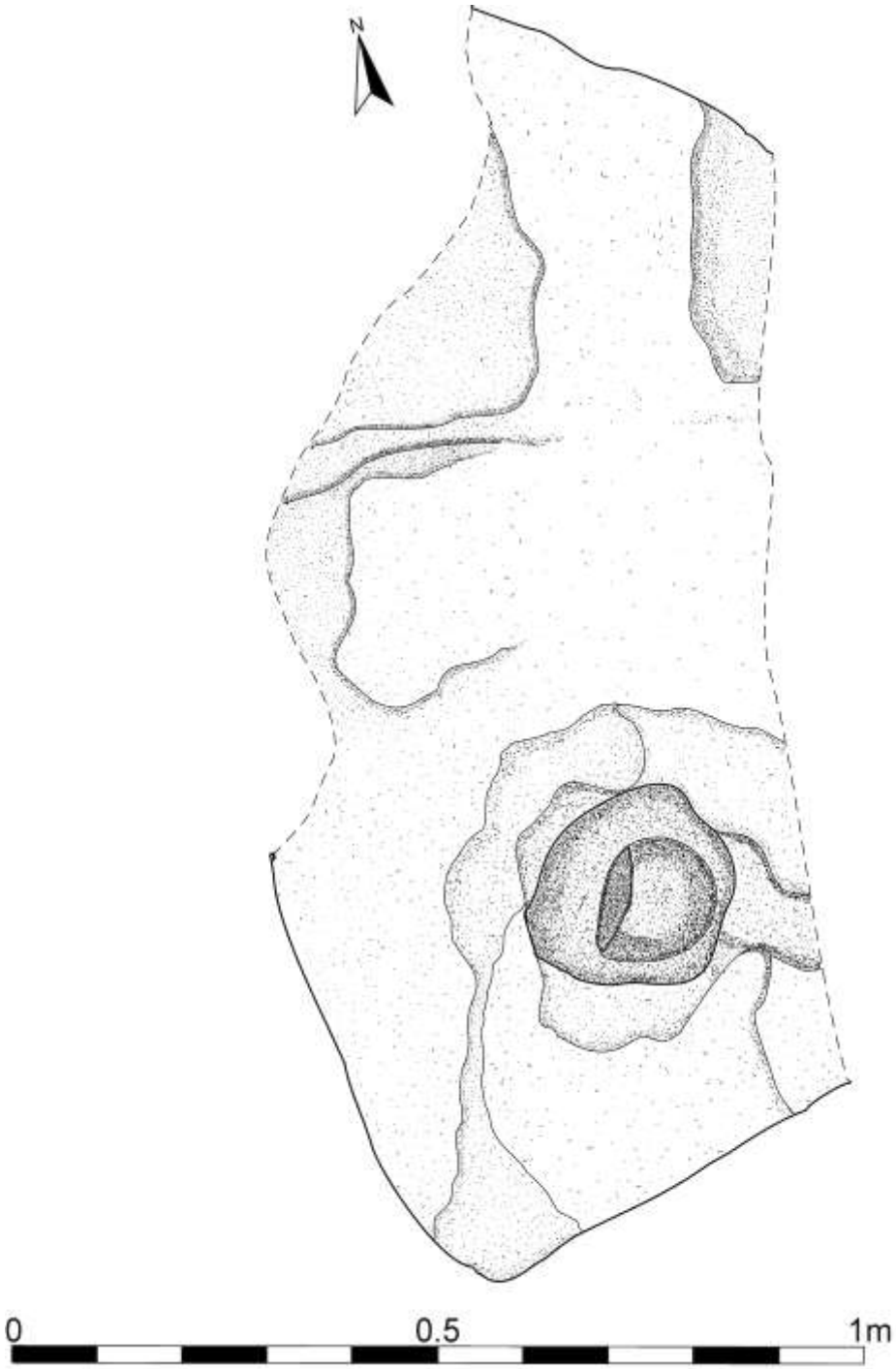

Figure 20: Plan of panel two.

Figure 21: Panel two. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 22: Detail of Figure 21. Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 428032, 394756							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
N/A	Sub-circular	concave		200	160	56	Partly angular morph.

Table 2: Data from panel two.

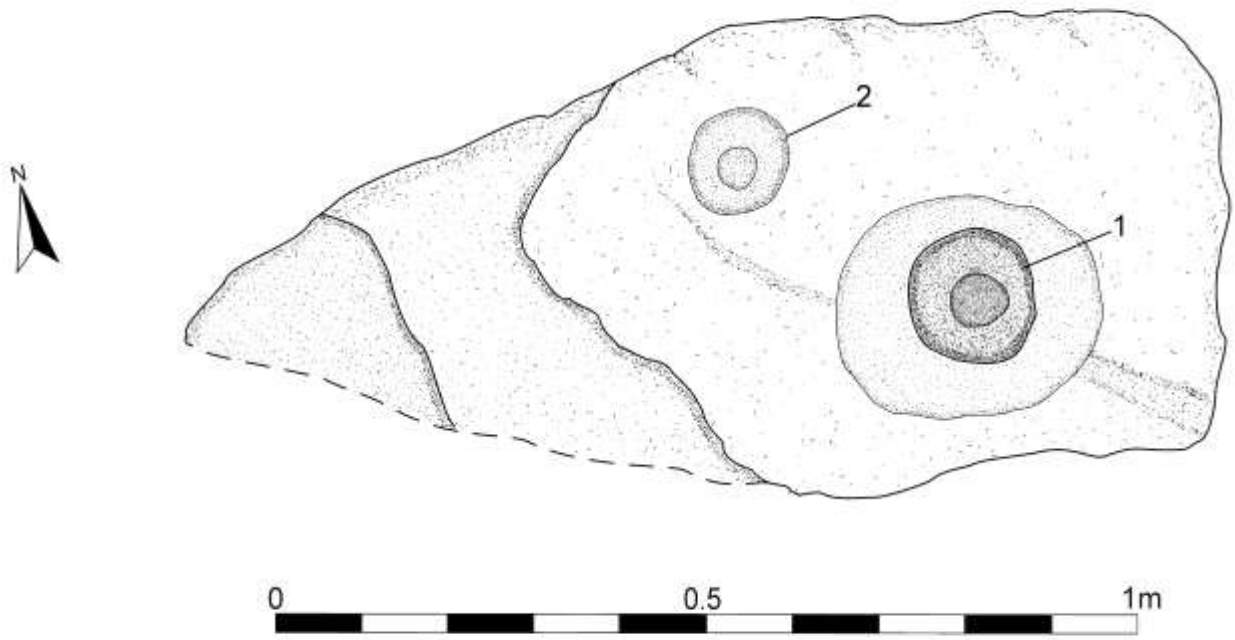

Figure 23: Plan of panel three.

Figure 24: Panel three, facing west. Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 427994, 394758							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
1	Sub-circular	Acute concave		150	120	56	Rounded base.
2	Sub-circular	concave	70			5	Very shallow.

Table 3: Data from panel three.

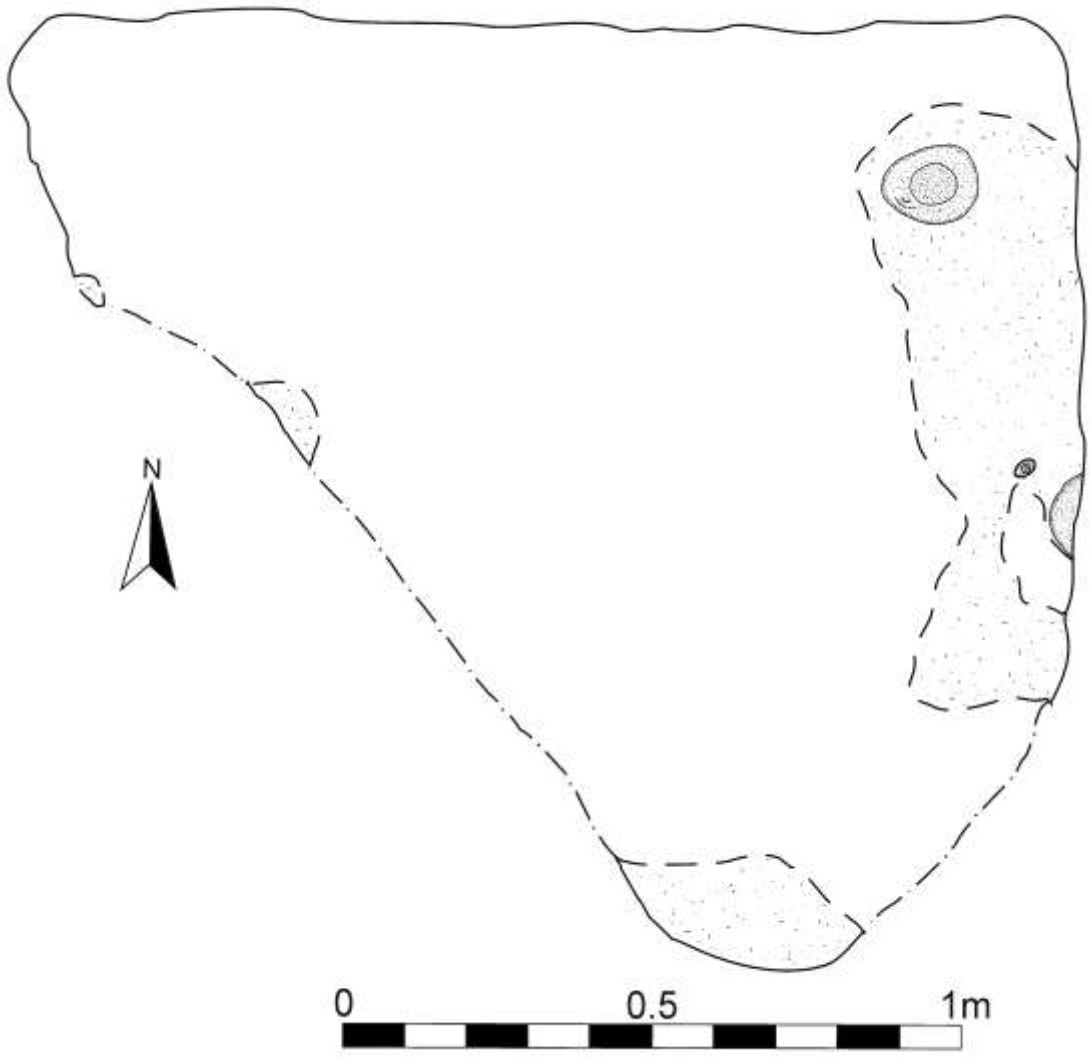

Figure 25: Plan of Panel four.

Figure 26: Panel four. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 27: Detail of Figure 26 (motif two). Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 28: Detail of Figure 26 (motif one). Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 427964, 394762							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
1	Sub-circular	concave		150	120	25	
2	Sub-circular	concave		40	45	10	Well defined.

Table 4: Data from panel four.

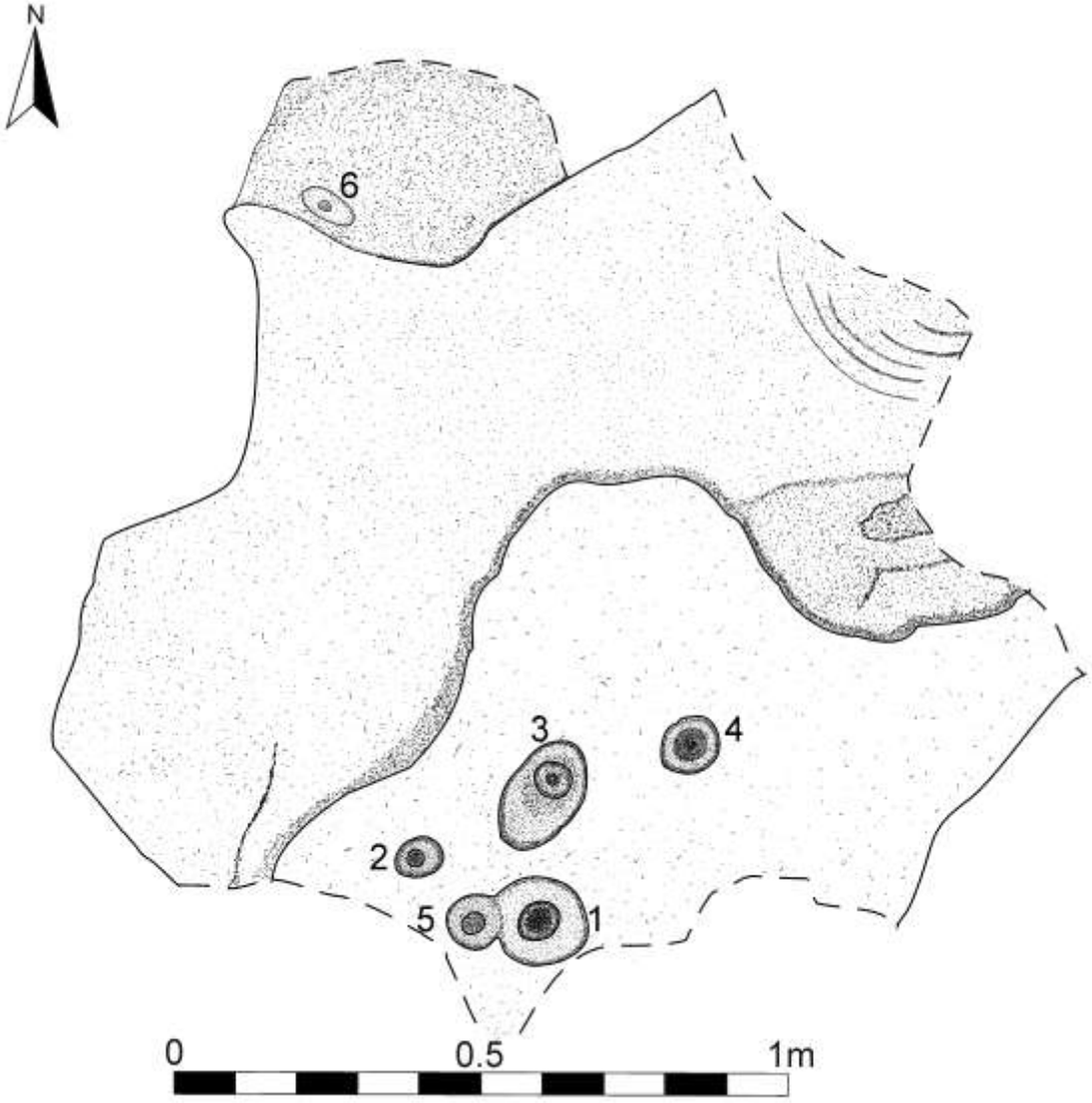

Figure 29: Plan of panel five.

Figure 30: Panel five. Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 427967, 394774							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
1	Sub-circular	concave		180	150	55	
2	Sub-circular	concave		80	75	25	
3	ovoid	concave		190	130	35	
4	Circular	concave	150			43	
5	Circular	concave	80			28	
6	Sub-circular	concave		100	80	15	

Table 5: Data from panel five.

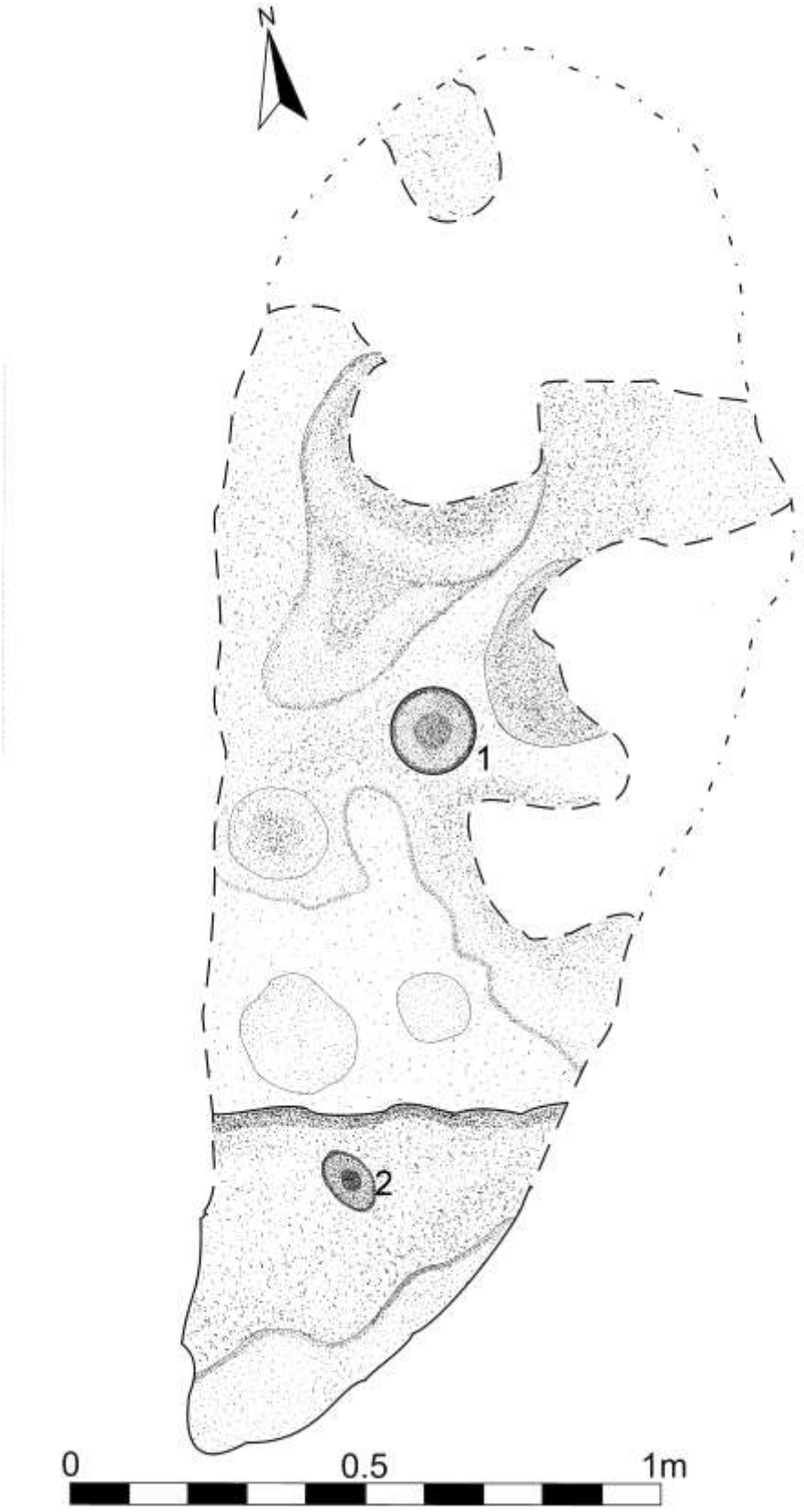

Figure 31: Plan of panel six.

Figure 32: Panel six. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 33: Detail of Figure 30 (motif one). Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 34: Detail of Figure 30 (motif two). Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 428023, 395678							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
1	circular	concave	150			50	
2	Sub-circular	concave		90	80	25	

Table 6: Data from panel six.

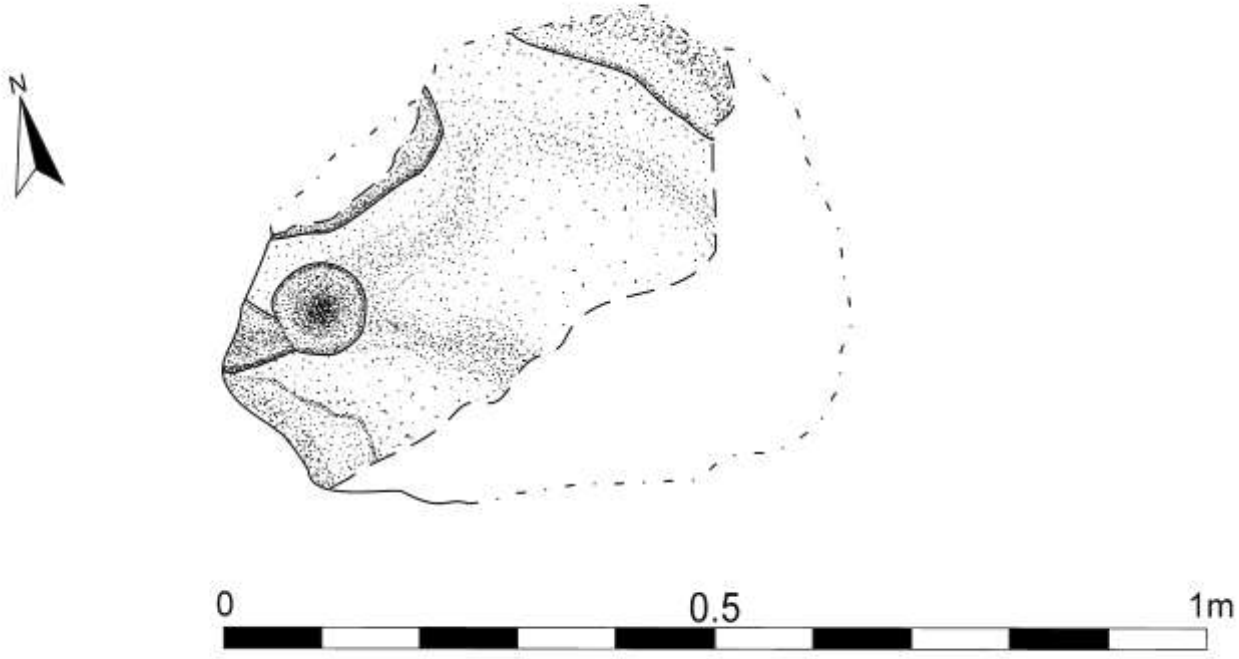

Figure 35: Plan of panel seven.

Figure 36: Panel seven. Source: Tim Cockrell

NGR 427948, 394775							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
N/A	circular	concave	80			28	Rounded base. Well defined.

Table 7: Data from panel seven.

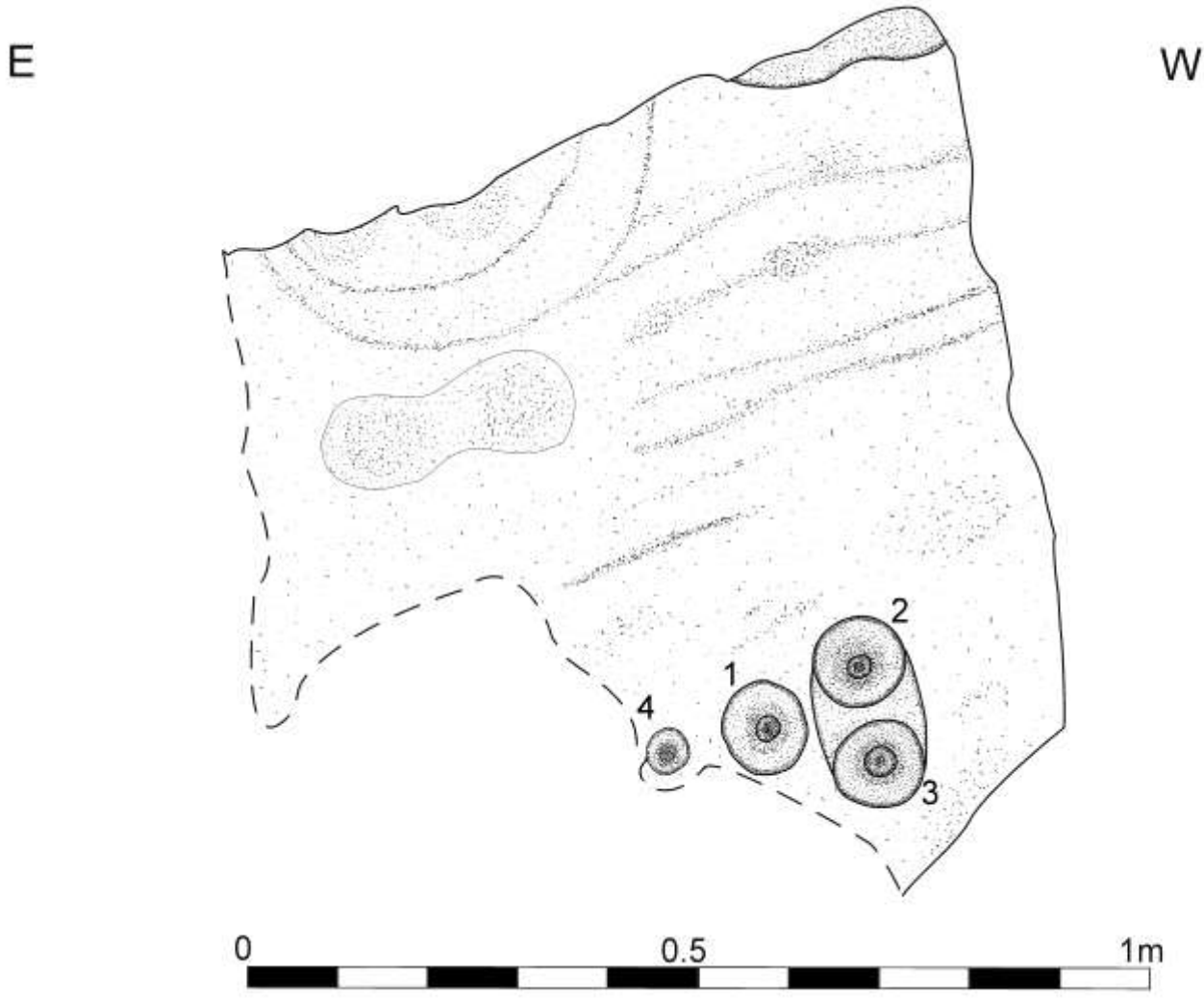

Figure 37: Side elevation of panel eight.

Figure 38: Panel eight. Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 427645, 394842							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
1	Sub-circular	concave		110	90	35	
2	Sub-circular	concave		110	90	31	
3	Sub-circular	concave		110	90	36	
4	Circular	concave	50				

Table 8: Data from panel eight.

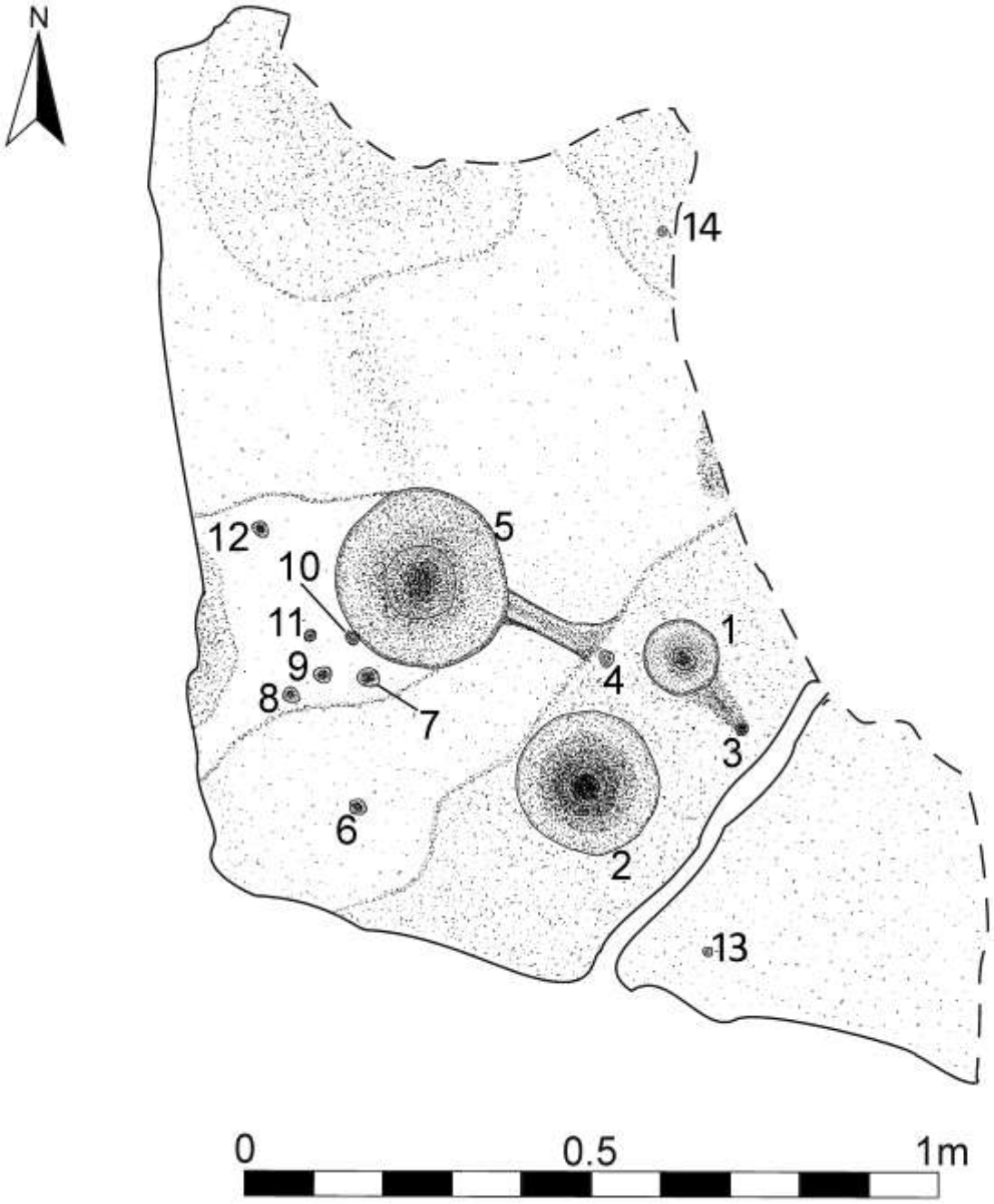

Figure 39: Plan of panel nine.

Figure 40: Panel nine. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 41: Panel nine, facing south-west. Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 427595, 394753							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
1	circular	concave	120			33	
2	circular	Acute concave	200			90	
3	circular	Acute concave	30			11	
4	circular	Acute concave	30			14	
5	Sub circular	concave		230	200	50	
6	circular	funnel	25			11	
7	circular	concave	30			6	
8	circular	concave	20			9	
9	circular	concave	25			4	
10	circular	concave	15			6	
11	circular	concave	30			8	
12	circular	concave	30			9	
13	circular	concave	20			11	
14	circular	concave	20			9	

Table 9: Data from panel nine.

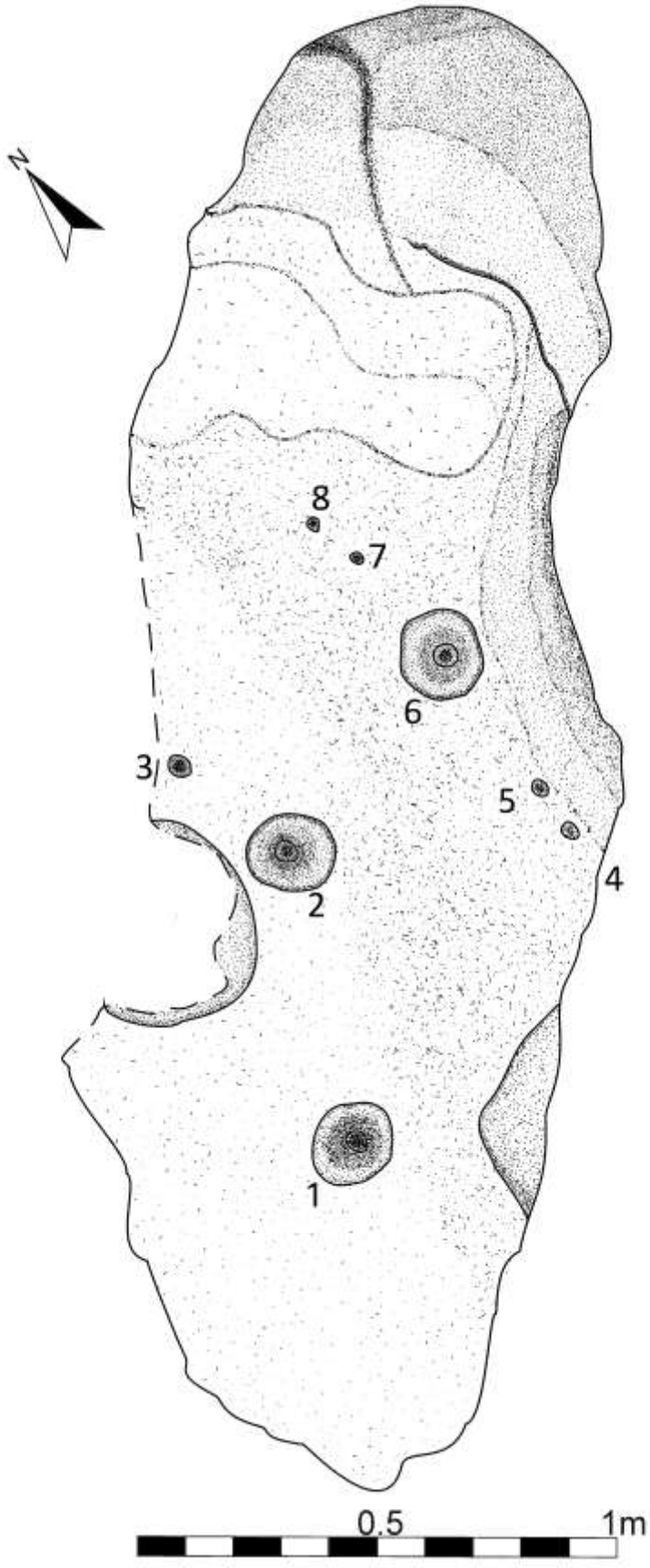

Figure 42: Plan of panel ten.

Figure 43: Panel ten. Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 427624, 394723							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
1	Sub circular	concave		220	200	35	
2	Sub circular	concave		200	150	28	
3	circular	concave	40			10	
4	circular	Acute concave	15			9	
5	circular	Acute concave	20			11	
6	circular	Acute concave	140			34	
7	circular	Acute concave	15			11	
8	circular	Acute concave	20			12	

Table 10: Data from panel ten.

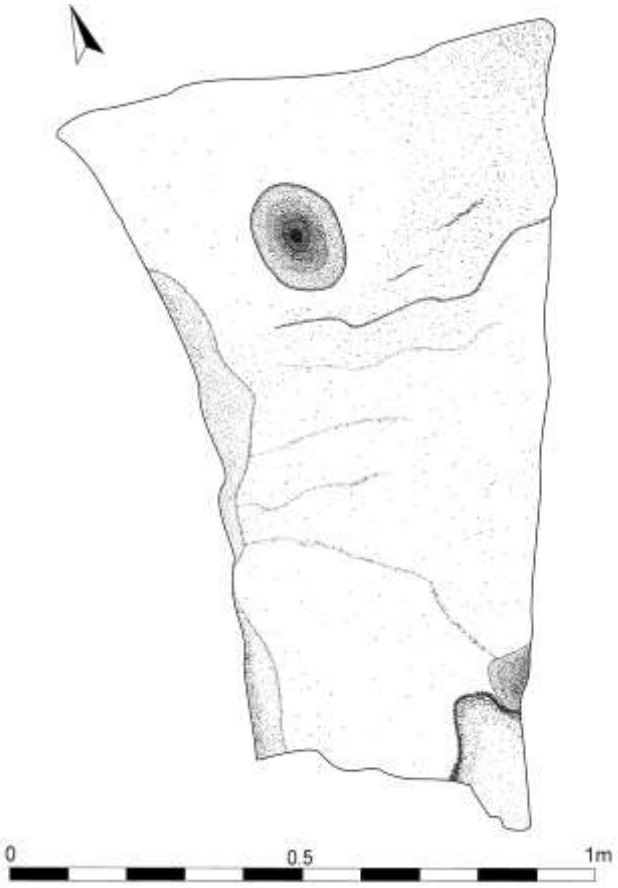

Figure 44: Plan of panel 11.

Figure 45: Panel eleven. Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 427650, 394731							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
N/A	Sub-circular	concave		200	140	40	

Table 11: Data from panel eleven.

Figure 46: Panel twelve. Source: Tim Cockrell

Figure 47: Detail of panel 12. Source: Tim Cockrell

NGR 427933, 394693							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
N/A	circular	concave	150			50	4m x 2.4m panel.

Table 12: Data from panel twelve.

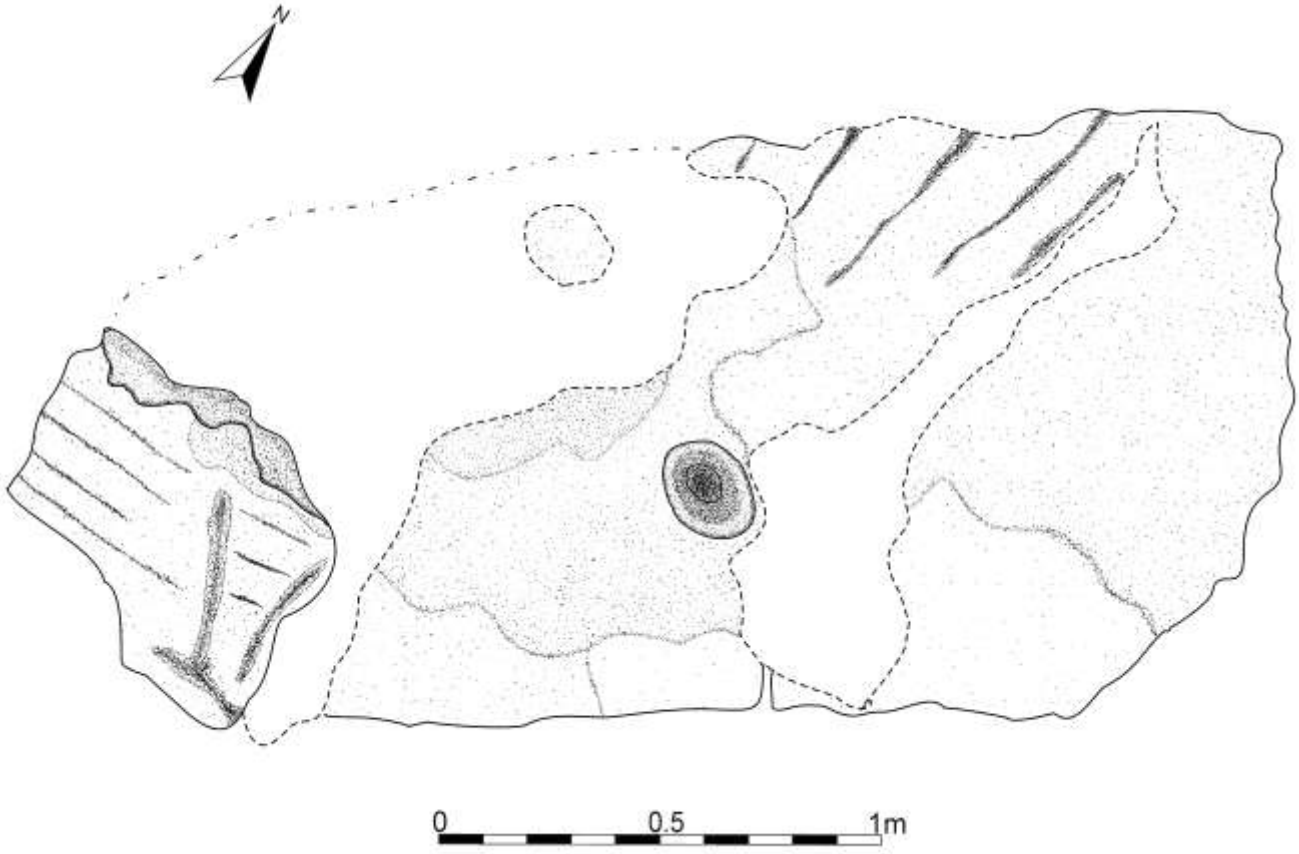

Figure 48: Plan of panel thirteen.

Figure 49: Panel thirteen. Source: Tim Cockrell

NGR 427628, 394724							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
N/A	Sub circular	concave		230	200	40	

Table 13: Data from panel thirteen.

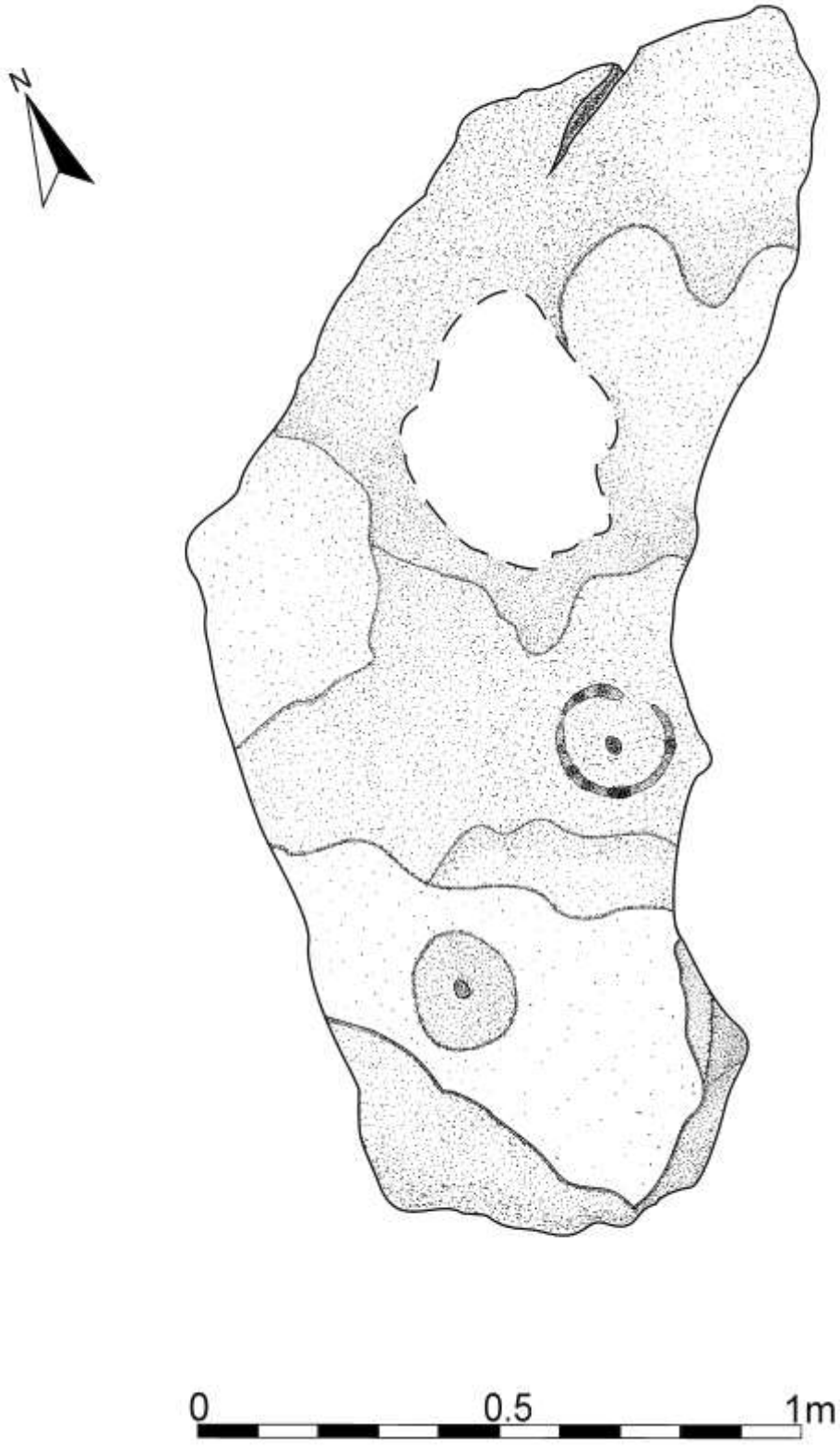

Figure 50: Plan of panel fourteen.

Figure 51: Panel fourteen. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 52: Detail of Figure 51. Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 427625, 394722							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
N/A	circular	concave	180 (ring)			6 (“cup”)	Cup-and-ring.

Table 14: Data from panel fourteen.

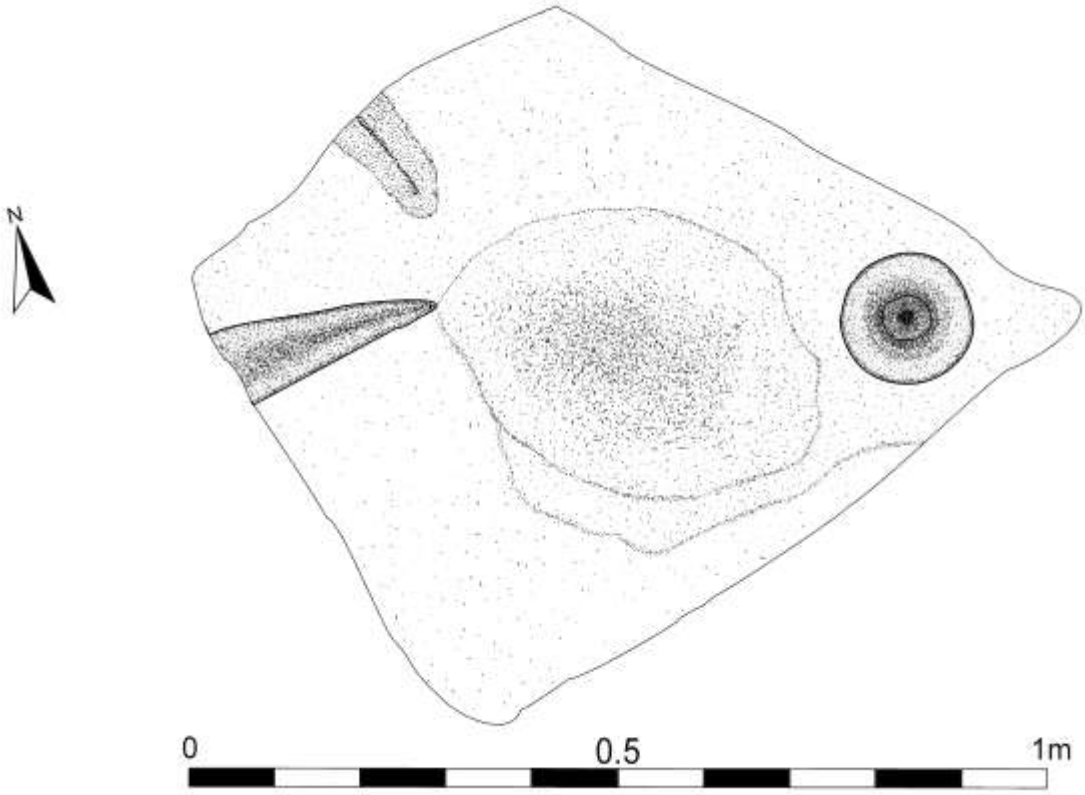

Figure 53: Plan of panel fifteen.

Figure 54: Panel fifteen. Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 427631, 394719							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
N/A	circular	concave	110			21	Poss. Pollisoir in addition.

Table 15: Data from panel fifteen.

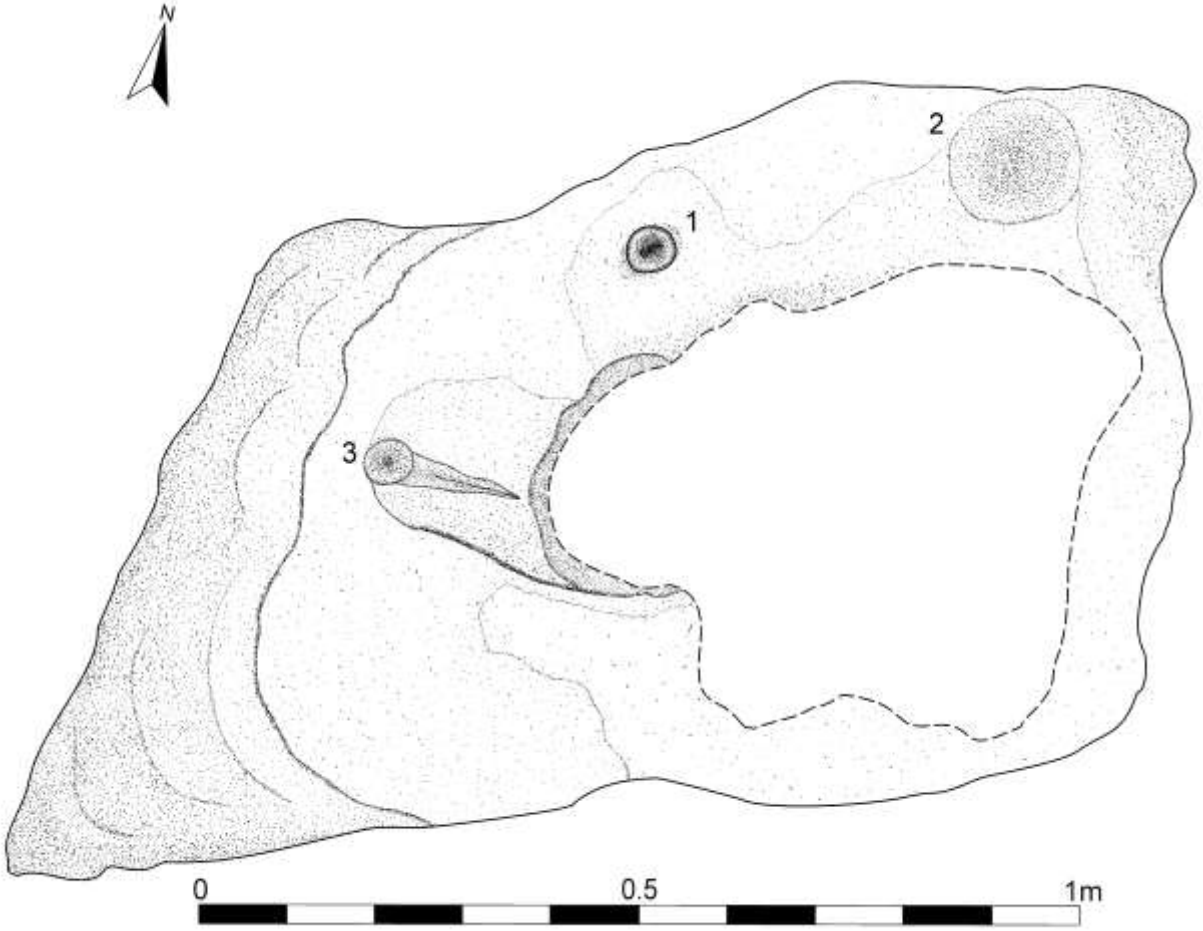

Figure 55: Plan of panel sixteen.

Figure 56: Panel sixteen. Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 427691, 394741							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
1	Sub circular	concave		80	60	14	
2	circular	concave	150			21	
3	Sub circular	concave					Very shallow. Poss. radial groove.

Table 16: Data from panel sixteen.

Figure 57: Plan of panel seventeen.

Figure 58: Panel seventeen. Source Tim Cockrell.

Figure 59: Detail of panel seventeen, facing north east. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 60: Detail of panel seventeen, facing east, showing motif 1. Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 427978, 394653							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
1	circular	Acute concave	80			29	
2	circular	concave	20			8	
3	circular	concave	15			11	
4	Sub circular	concave		80	50	19	
5	Sub circular	concave		80	60	11	
6	circular	concave	180			17	
7	Sub circular	concave		120	100	25	
8	circular	concave	180			30	
9	circular	Acute concave	100			40	
10	circular	concave	100			26	
11	circular	concave	40			15	
12	circular	concave	90			20	
13	Sub circular	concave		250	200	38	
14	Sub circular	concave		100	50	20	

Table 17: Data from panel seventeen.

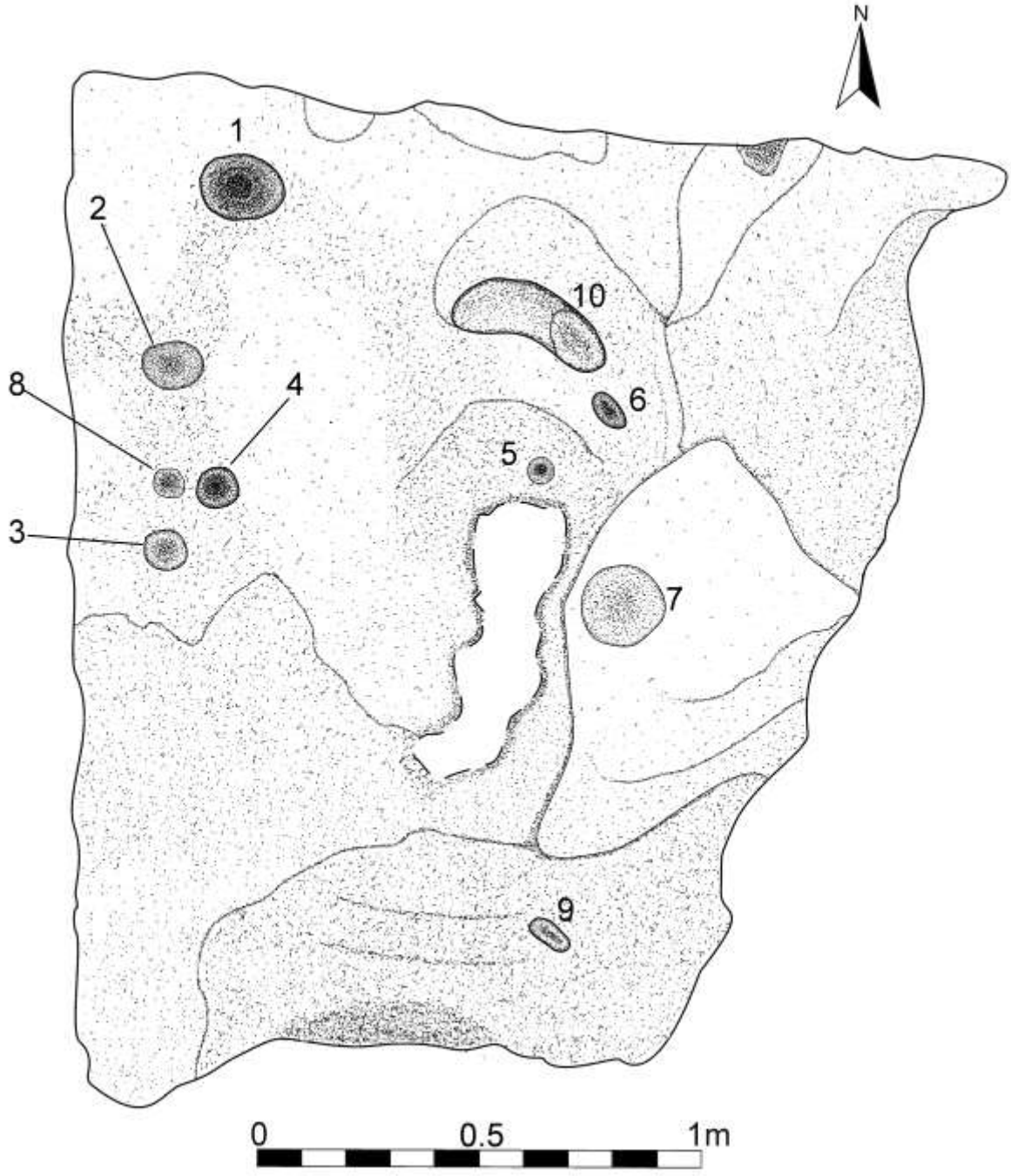

Figure 61: Plan of panel eighteen.

Figure 62: Panel eighteen. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 63: Panel eighteen. Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 427984, 394659							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
1	Sub circular	Acute concave		190	160	43	
2	Sub circular	concave		150	120	22	
3	circular	concave	100			19	
4	circular	Acute concave	80			19	
5	circular	Acute concave	50			15	
6	ovoid	Acute concave		70	40	19	
7	circular	concave	200			25	
8	circular	concave	40			9	
9	ovoid	Acute concave		80	45	20	

Table 18: data from panel eighteen.

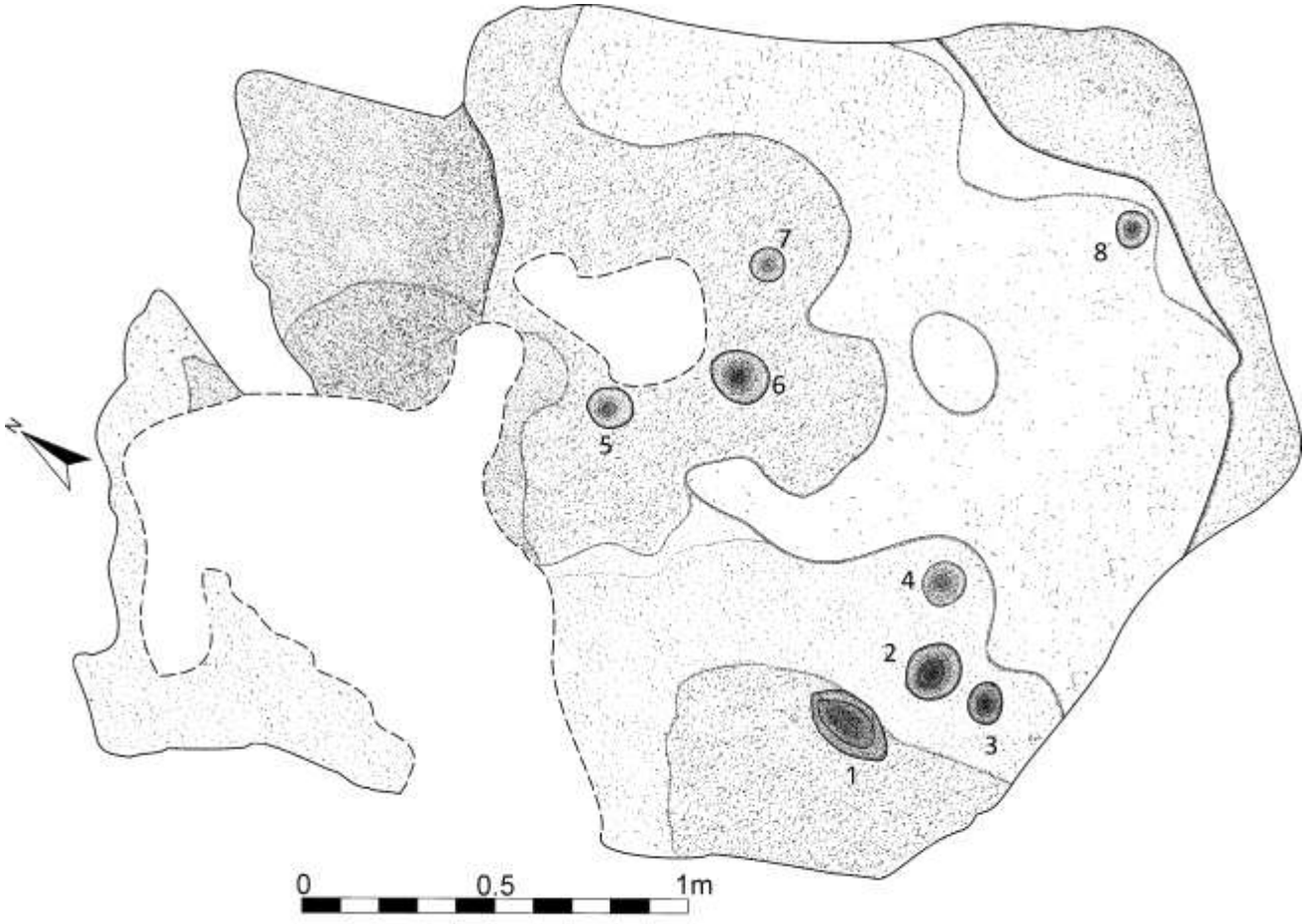

Figure 64: Plan of panel nineteen.

Figure 65: Panel nineteen. Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 427978, 394665							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
1	ovoid	Acute concave		200	150	35	
2	Sub circular	Acute concave		160	140	39	
3	Sub circular	Acute concave		100	80	31	
4	circular	concave	100			20	
5	circular	concave	100			22	
6	circular	Acute concave	120			30	
7	circular	concave	50			15	
8	circular	concave	80			15	

Table 19: Data from panel nineteen.

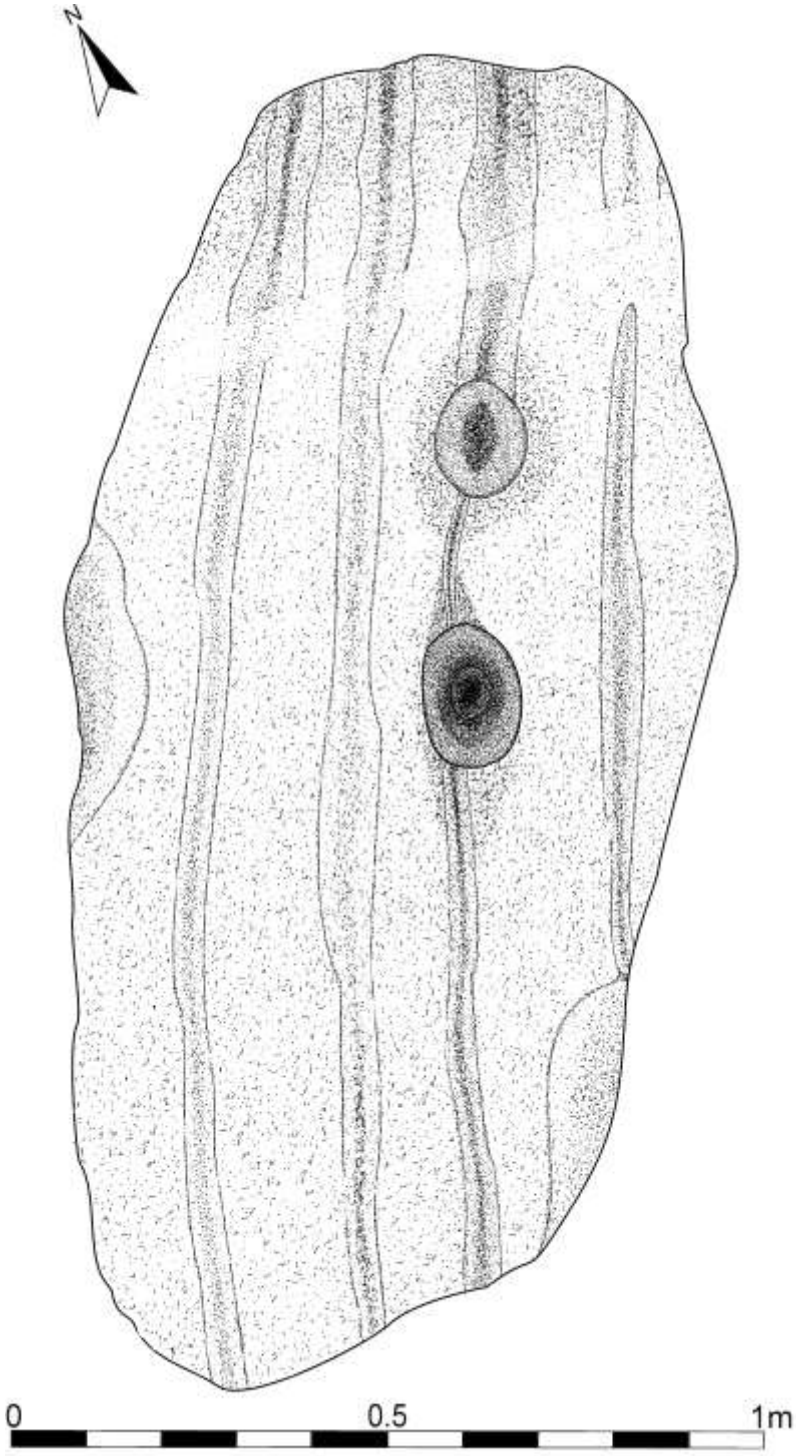

Figure 66: Plan of panel twenty.

Figure 67: Panel twenty. Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 427904, 394673							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
N/A	ovoid	concave		150	100	30	

Table 20: Data from panel twenty.

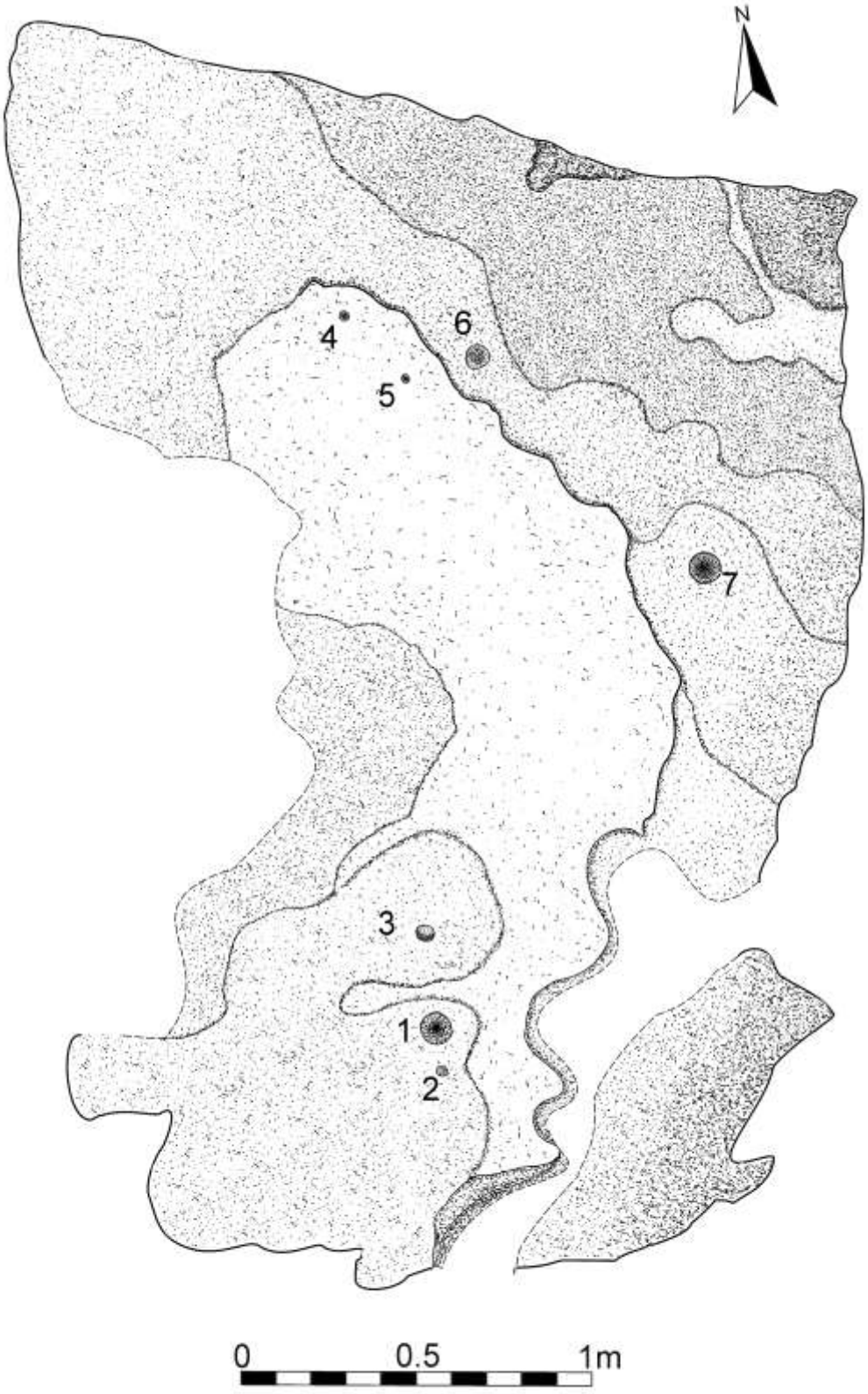

Figure 68: Plan of panel twenty one.

Figure 69: Panel twenty one. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 70: Detail of panel twenty one. Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 427882, 394643							
Motif No.	**Shape: plan**	**Shape: profile**	**Diameter**	**Length**	**Width**	**Depth**	**Comments**
1	circular	Acute concave	80			23	
2	circular	Acute concave	20			5	
3	ovoid	square		40	20	19	
4	circular	Acute concave	15			19	
5	Sub circular	Acute concave		20	10	11	
6	circular	concave	60			6	
7	circular	concave	80			15	

Table 21: Data from panel twenty one.

Figure 71: Panel twenty two. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 72: Detail of Figure 71. Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 427672, 394744

Figure 73: Panel twenty three. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 74: Detail of panel twenty three. Source: Tim Cockrell.

NGR 427875, 394767

Appendix 2: Additional Photographs

Figure 75: Spout House Hill, facing south from More Hall Reservoir in Ewden Valley. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 76: Spout House Hill (left centre) facing south-west from Wharncliffe Moor, in the Don Valley. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 77: Facing north-east from panel eight towards the junction of Ewden Valley with the Don Valley at More Hall. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 78. The view north-west along Ewden Valley from panel nine. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 79: Facing south-east overlooking the lower Tinker Brook Valley, Don Valley, and Sheffield City Centre from panel six. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 80: Panel ten after rain. Source: Tim Cockrell.

Figure 81: The view of the east end of Ewden Valley, Don Valley, and “The Height” above Wharncliffe Crags from panel eleven. Source: Tim Cockrell.