

## MGUNGUNDLOVU EXCAVATIONS

### OCTOBER 1986 REPORT

Work continued on both aspects of the excavations, namely sampling midden deposits and laying test trenches in an attempt to locate the eastern sector hut floors.

#### A. The Middens

The inner midden excavations were extended to both obtain a larger sample of material but more importantly to locate possible ceramic pot bases. In the two trenches excavated in September the two bases found in situ suggested that particular midden may prove to be a "kitchen" area. Unfortunately the limited deposit exposed brought no more bases to light. Either the old road (now closed off) destroyed any that may have remained or, more likely, further work in the southern and western sides of the midden will need investigation and hopefully expose the suspected ceramic bases. It is possible that no more exist of course. However work on the inner midden was closed off at the end of the month and will need another field season to test whether the activity area is a reality or not.

Another outer midden was sampled during the month, this particular deposit lying on the eastern side of the main gate. A substantial assemblage was recovered. This midden was also closed off at the end of the month.

#### B. The Main Gate

Several new test trenches were excavated in the continuing search for the outer limits of the main gate. The Western section is now fairly clear so work moved in an easterly direction, crossing the old road. To date no floors have yet been discovered on this eastern boundary.

C. Conclusions

Four separate middens have been sampled and the respective assemblages primarily cleaned and marked and transported back to the University. The Botanical remains have been forwarded to the Botany department of the University of Natal for identification and the Transvaal Museum in Pretoria has agreed to undertake the analysis of the faunal material. Negotiations are still in progress regarding the details of when they will begin their analysis. The ceramic remains will be forwarded to LAAC for drawing and photographing when laboratory work is completed in November. Further work on the middens will have to wait for another field season and the strategy adopted will depend on the results of the present assemblage's analysis. Although the detailed results are not expected for several more months the indications are that the contents of these lower middens vary substantially from that of the upper middens excavated by the University of Cape Town in 1976. Not only are the remains more fragmentary, the hut floors more unsubstantial but the variety of the contents much wider. This is particularly clear with regard to the fauna where wild animals former a substantial component of the total remains whereas the upper middens are almost exclusively cattle bones (unpublished report by Ms E Voigh, Transvaal Museum).

The location of the main gate is proving much more problematical than at first expected. As yet no floors have been exposed on the Eastern flank. This could only mean that either the floors have been destroyed by the old road; disintegrated over time or, as I suspect, the gate was much larger than anyone imagines. This last alternative is supported by the proximity of the in situ pot bases of the inner midden if the gate was as narrow as

at first imagined, the volume of traffic would have made the "kitchen" area an impractical proposition. However if the gate was fairly wide then the danger of cattle destroying the cooking pots would have been far less.

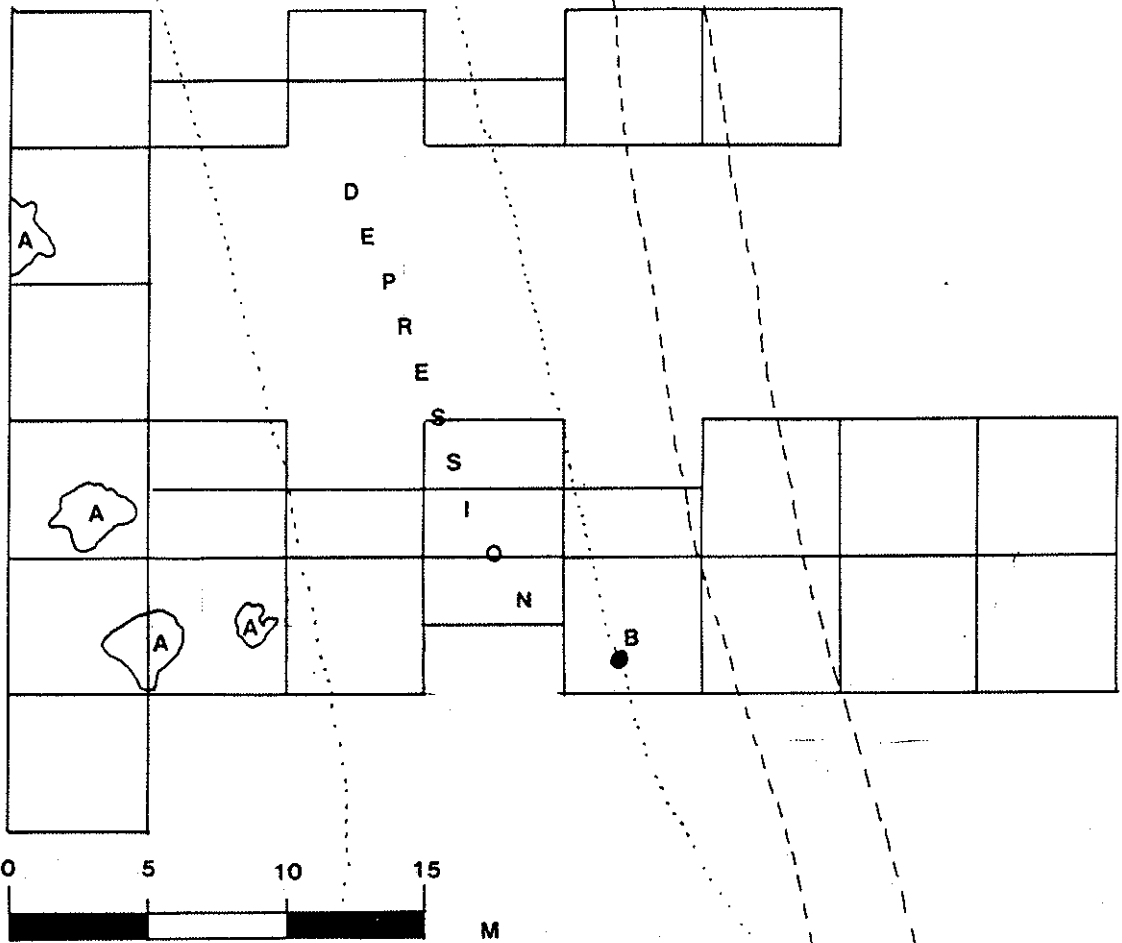
During November field work will concentrate on the main gate.



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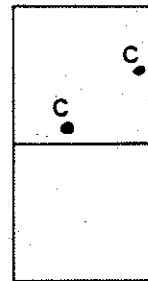
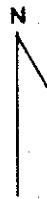
NOVEMBER 1986

EXCAVATION PLAN



LEGEND

- A - hut floor
- B - possible post
- C - ceramic base



OLD ROAD