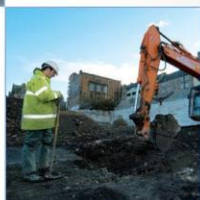
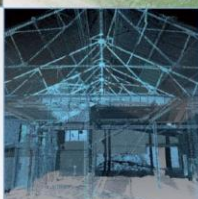


# Kraiknish Dun, Isle of Skye

## Archaeological Survey Report

22427

30th May 2013



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## Archaeological Survey Report

<b>On Behalf of:</b>	<b>Forestry Commission Scotland</b> 1 Highlander Way Inverness Business Park Inverness IV2 7GB
<b>National Grid Reference (NGR):</b>	<b>NG 3546 2340</b>
<b>AOC Project No:</b>	<b>22427</b>
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<b>Date of Report:</b>	<b>30th May 2013</b>

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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## **Abstract**

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An archaeological survey was undertaken at the dun at Kraiknish, Isle of Skye, for the purposes of conservation management on behalf of Forestry Commission Scotland. A laser scan survey was carried out in conjunction with an interpreted total station survey and a detailed photographic record.

## Introduction

1. AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned to undertake a detailed topographic survey of the promontory fortification at Kraiknish, Isle of Skye (NMRS: NG32SE 2; NGR: NG 3546 2340) for the purposes of providing a baseline record for conservation management. The survey was undertaken on 15th and 16th May 2013 by Graeme Cavers and Gemma Hudson (AOC Archaeology Group), accompanied by George Geddes (RCAHMS).
2. The site was recorded using laser scanning, with total station survey used to record interpreted features. A digital photographic record and written description with associated measured sketches were also made.

## Archaeological Context

3. Kraiknish dun is an example of the coastal promontory fortifications, predominantly of later prehistoric date, which are found across the western seaboard of the Inner and Outer Isles of Scotland. Many such fortifications display complex architectural features akin to those typically associated with brochs and related Atlantic roundhouses, and as such promontory duns like Kraiknish are often placed in a broad Iron Age chronological context (e.g. Burgess 1999). However, excavations at the promontory fort at Gob Eirer, Isle of Lewis, have demonstrated activity in the late Bronze/early Iron Age (Nesbitt et al 2011), while other promontory forts were in use throughout the first millennium AD, so that the Iron Age use of such sites cannot be assumed.
4. Previous records for archaeological sites on the Kraiknish peninsula between Loch Brittle and Loch Eynort are somewhat sparse, reflecting a lack of previous survey in the area, although a prehistoric hut circle is known at Cnoc an Teine (NG32SE 3), and numerous post-medieval townships are present (e.g. at Kraiknish, NG32SE 9 and the unrecorded example at Laimhrig na Moine, to the NE of Kraiknish dun). The landscape in this area is characterised by extensive rig and furrow field systems and enclosure dykes, while peat cutting of various periods is visible across much of the blanket peat. Several groups of shieling huts are recorded, representing summer grazings of historic date.
5. The Rubha an Dunain promontory, to the S, is the location of a promontory fortification similar to that at Kraiknish, though that example is complex-walled with many of the features typically associated with brochs and complex duns (MacKie 2007:816). Excavations in a nearby cave produced earlier Iron Age artefacts.
6. The lack of complex architecture at Kraiknish might raise question marks over the correct chronological context for Kraiknish, though Skye is well known for the unusually broad range of later prehistoric monuments found there (Armit 1996), with several examples of settlements with architectural features that could be considered unusual in an Iron Age context. The roughly triangular layout of Kraiknish might invite comparison with the early historic dun excavated by Fairhurst at Kildonan, Kintyre (Fairhurst 1939), though Dun Boredale on Raasay, with its sub-elliptical plan and broch-like architecture (Cavers 2012) would warn against any simplistic chronological classification based on form alone.

## Kraiknish Dun

### Site Description

7. Kraiknish dun occupies a rocky stack c.30m across, isolated from nearby cliffs and overlooking cultivated land to the NE (Plate 1). The dun fortification comprises two massive walls surviving to their greatest height on the shoreward side, the outer and lower wall (Wall 1) more ruinous than the higher, inner wall (Wall 2).
8. The outer wall face of Wall 1 survives to a maximum of 80cm above the rubble in 4-5 courses of quarried blocks averaging 50cm across on the better preserved N side (Plate 2). At point A the wall face is clear and exposed; the height of the rubble behind the surviving wall face suggests that Wall 1 originally stood to 2m or more in height. At point B, a lower length of wall face projects from the base of Wall 1, possibly representing a 'plinth', or more likely the original basal course- the continuity of the wall face of the entrance passage with this outer facing supports the view that this is the original outer face and not a secondary addition (Plate 3). A second outer wall face is set back from this lower course, possibly indicating the rebuilding of Wall 1 (Plate 4); this interpretation seems preferable to the alternative, that the outer wall stepped back with height. On the S side of the entrance, the outer wall face can be traced for over 15m in length although close to the cliff edge the wall becomes ruinous and few of the outer facing stones survive in situ (Plate 5). The entrance passage through Wall 1 is 1.2m in width and best preserved on the N side, where the walling stands to 1.0m in height in four visible courses (Plate 6). The interior wall face of Wall 1 is buried beneath rubble, but a depression in the rubble supports the interpretation that Wall 1 is indeed a rampart rather than revetment or platform.
9. Wall 2 is better preserved, and stands to 2.45m in eight visible courses at point E, to the S of the entrance, where the wall is clearest of rubble (Plate 7). The facing stones average 0.6m across, though the basal blocks are up to 1m across. Many of the pinning stones have been lost from the wall face at point E, though some survive (Plate 8). The entrance through Wall 2 is offset from that of Wall 1, and is choked with rubble, but is probably c.1.2m in width. Although slumped, the wall face on the S side of the entrance is visible and has a door check 0.12m deep located 1.2m in from the outer face (Plate 9). The inner face of Wall 2 is clear behind the rubble and stands to 1.2m at point G, where it is best preserved (Plate 10). The surviving wall faces of Wall 2 demonstrate that the wall is 3.2m thick. The wall is traceable around the circuit of the stack, although it becomes very ruinous and wall face is only visible in short lengths on the seaward side, reduced to a single stone in places (Plate 11). No internal wall face is visible and the remnants are reduced to a low rubble bank, though at point H on the seaward side of the stack, where there is a suggestion of the location of the internal face, it is probable that the rampart was c. 1.2m thick.
10. At point I, inside the S of Wall 2, a short length of wall face is visible, one stone high, on a different alignment to the inner face of the rampart (Plate 12). Although it is possible that this facing represents the slipped inner face of Wall 2, it is perhaps more likely that this walling represents the remains of a structure built within the dun, although no other traces are present to support this hypothesis. No other traces of internal structures are visible.

## Secondary and Post-Abandonment Activity

11. At point J, a small cell has been constructed in the rubble of Wall 2; the cell measures c.1.1m in internal diameter and is of recent date (Plate 13). On the grassy cultivated land to the E of the dun several circular shieling-type huts have been constructed. Those at points K and L (Plate 14) comprise circular stone footings, presumably for turf superstructures of circular buildings ranging in diameter from 2.5m to 4.5m. The largest example, at L, is 4.5m in diameter (Plate 15) and overlies a ruinous field boundary running E/W. A further shieling hut, at M, is dug into one of the broad lazy beds that run NW/SE in the area to the N of the dun (Plate 16)- indicating that the huts post-date the cultivation remains.

## Condition

12. Although ruinous, the dun is apparently in a stable condition and RCAHMS archive photos from the time of Callander's visit suggest that little has changed within the past century, though no detailed record survives to allow an assessment of the extent of erosion on the coastal side. Several rabbit burrows are present in the interior of the dun, but no other active cause of threat to archaeological deposits was recorded. The geographical remoteness of the site suggests that erosion caused by visitor access is unlikely to be a significant threat to the survival of the monument.

## Survey Methodology

13. The topographic survey of the site was carried out using a Faro Focus 3D laser scanner, using 139mm registration spheres and flat targets. The scanning survey was controlled using a Trimble S6 total station, recording the positions of spherical and flat targets. The data was registered using Faro Scene 5.1.6, with orthographic images produced using Pointools 1.8 and CAD plans produced using Rhino and Autocad 2009. The 1:1250 landscape plan was produced using Landmark aerial photography. Final layouts were produced in Adobe Illustrator CS. The photographic survey was carried out using a Canon 1100 digital SLR.

Quality 3x
Resolution: 6mm at 10m
Colour capture: On
Registration sphere diameter: 139mm

*Table 1: Laser scan parameters used during the survey.*



## Acknowledgement

14. We are grateful for the assistance and discussions with George Geddes of RCAHMS, who accompanied us to the site. The views expressed here, however, remain solely the responsibility of AOC Archaeology Group.

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Cavers, M.G. 2012 *Dun Boredale, Raasay: Archaeological Survey Report*, AOC Archaeology Group 22014, Unpublished Report for Forestry Commission Scotland

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Mackie, E W 2007 *The Roundhouses, Brochs and Wheelhouses of Atlantic Scotland c.700 BC-AD 500: architecture and material culture, the Northern and Southern Mainland and the Western Islands*, BAR British series 444(II), 444(1), 2 V Oxford

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# **Kraiknish Dun, Isle of Skye**

## **Archaeological Survey Report**

### **Section 2: Figures and Plates**

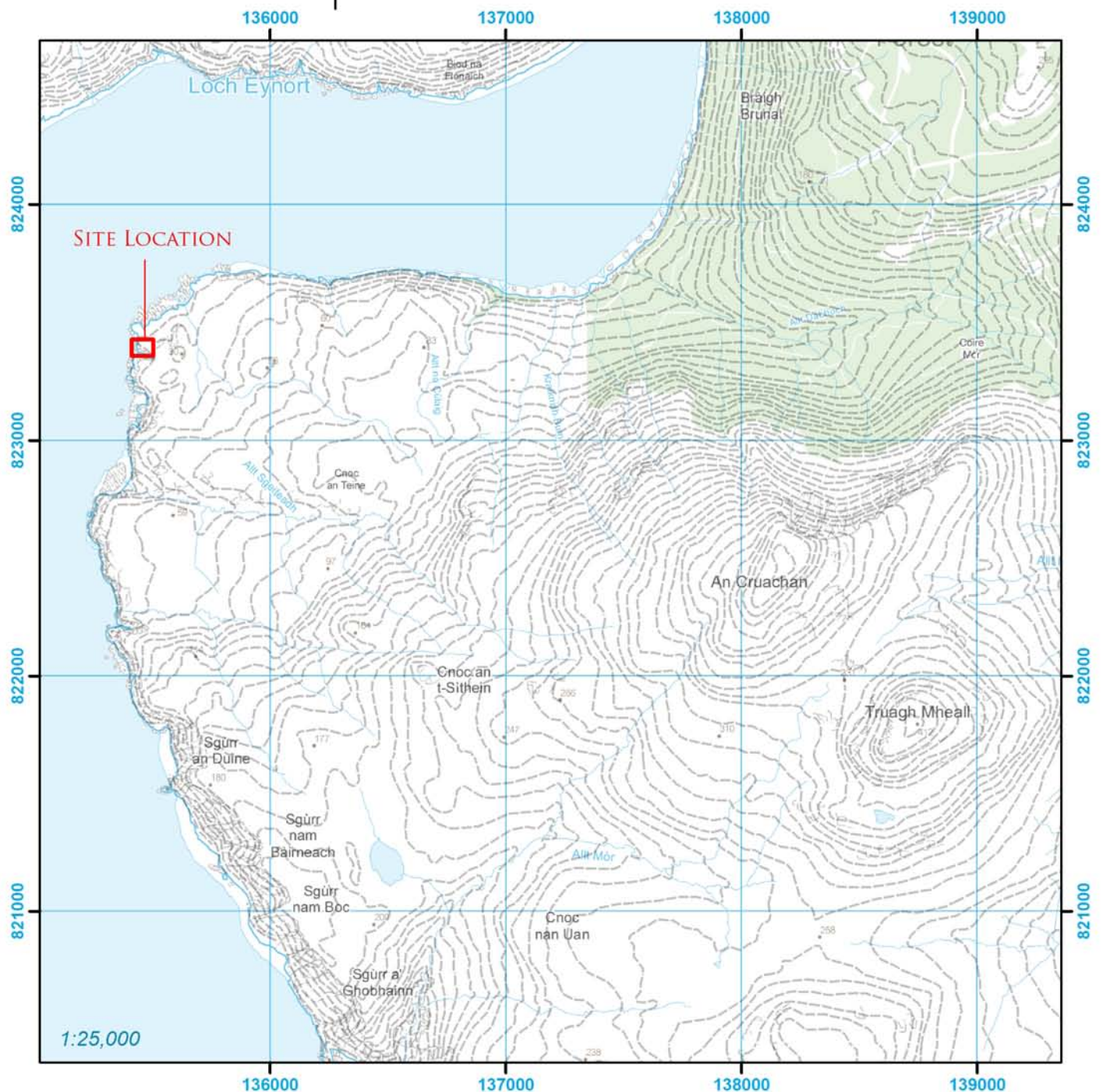
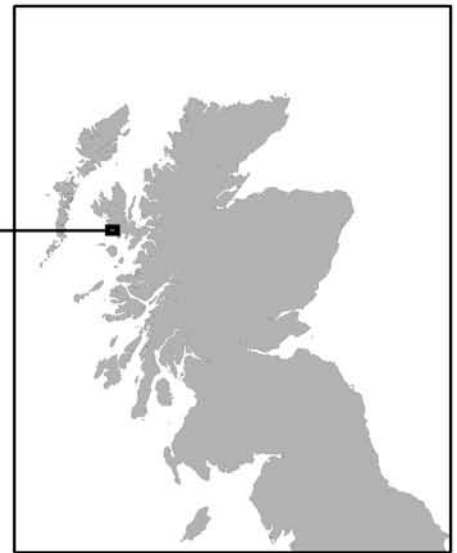
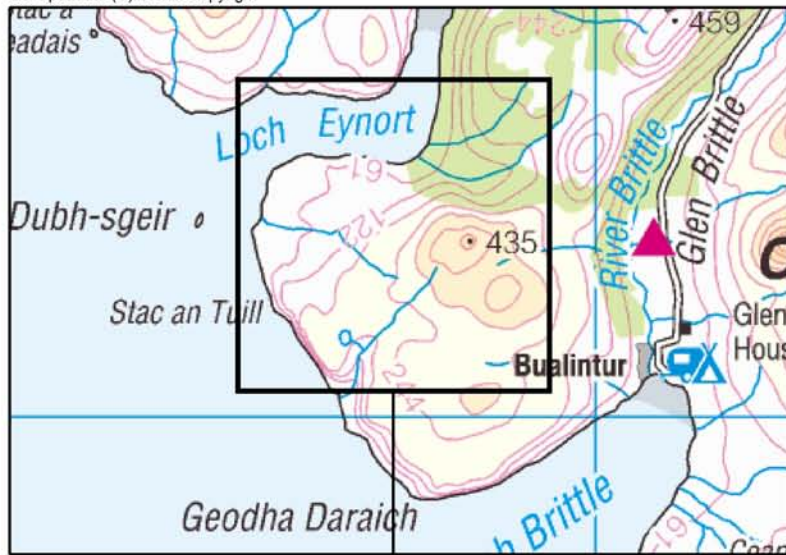


FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION

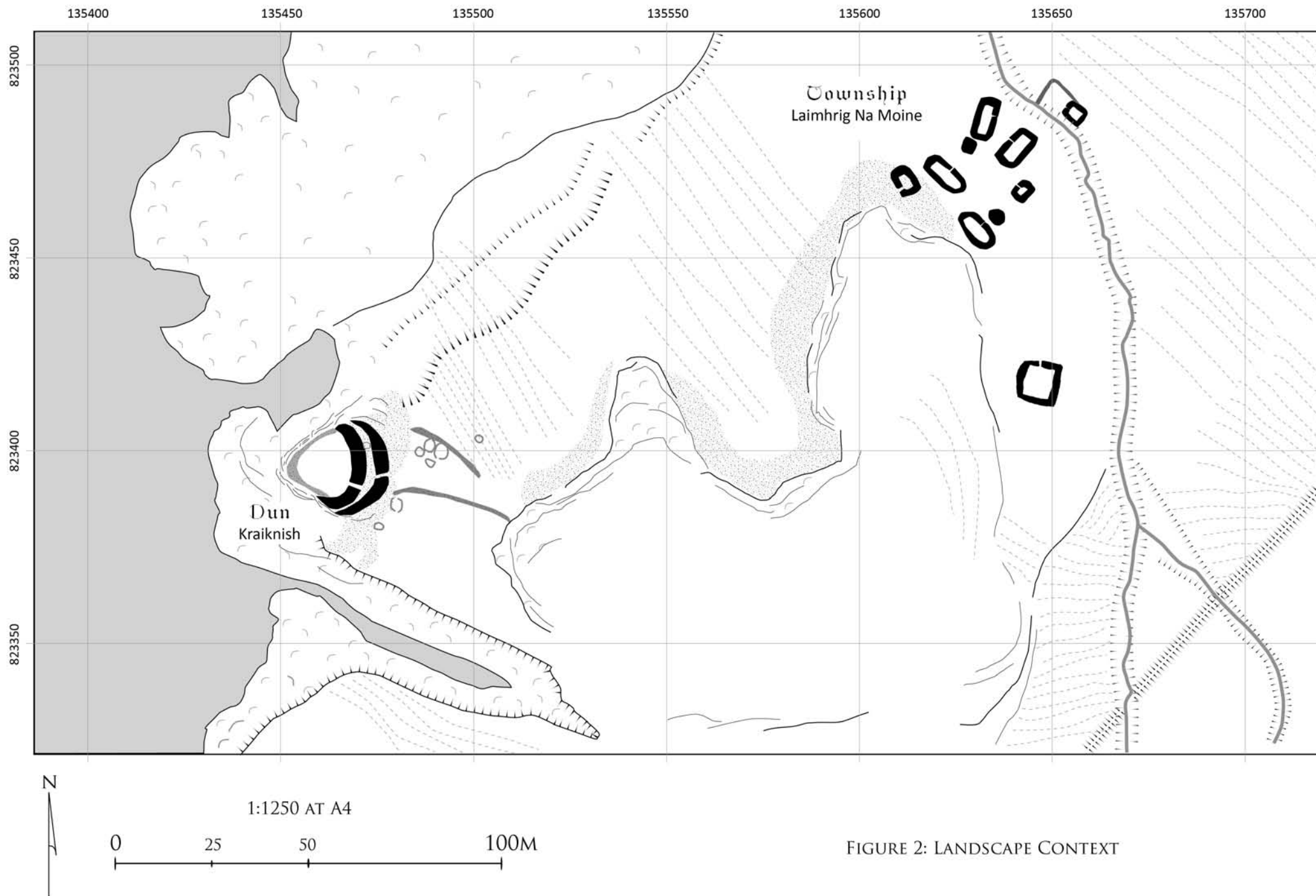


FIGURE 2: LANDSCAPE CONTEXT



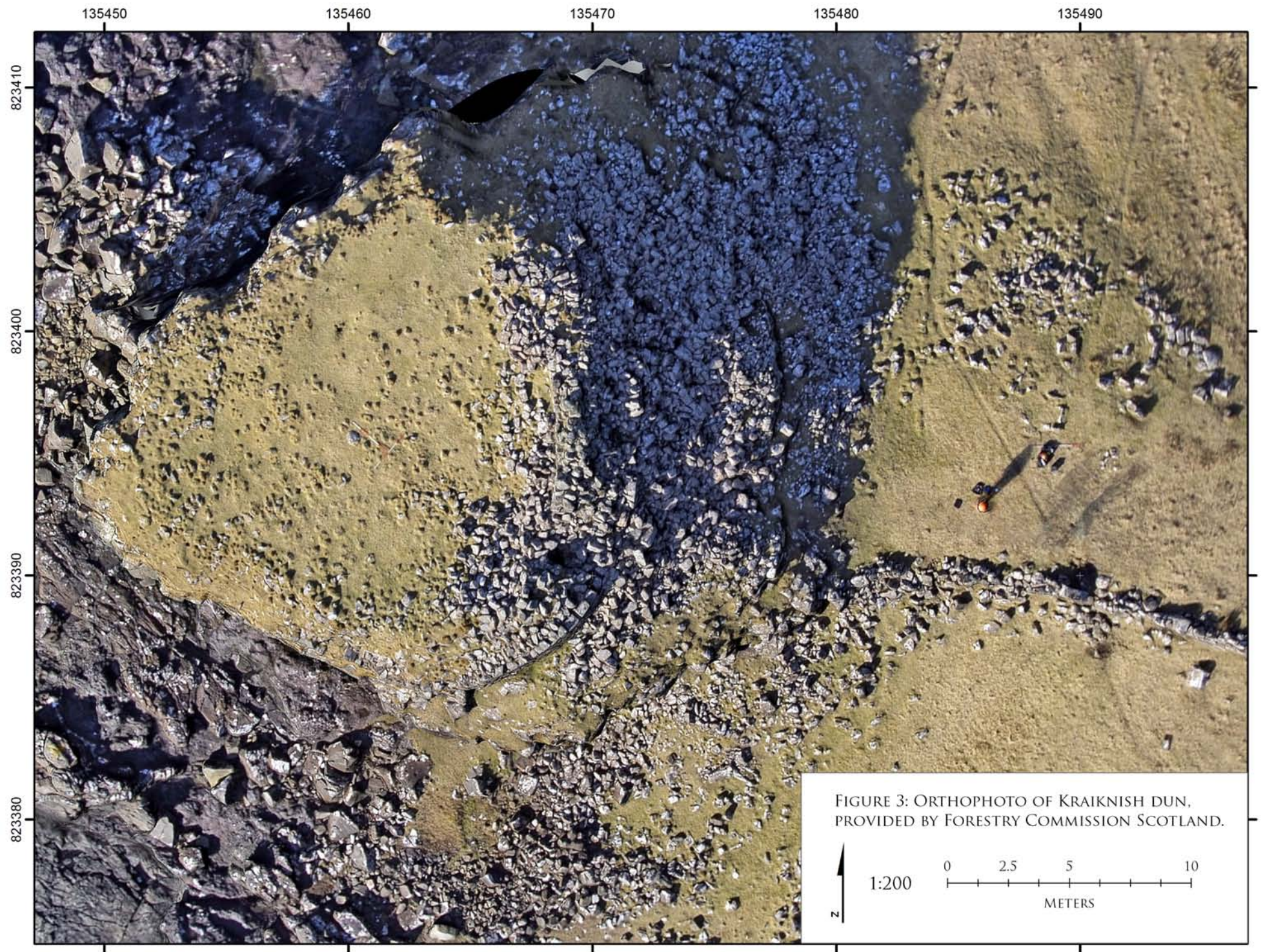






FIGURE 3B: OBLIQUE AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH  
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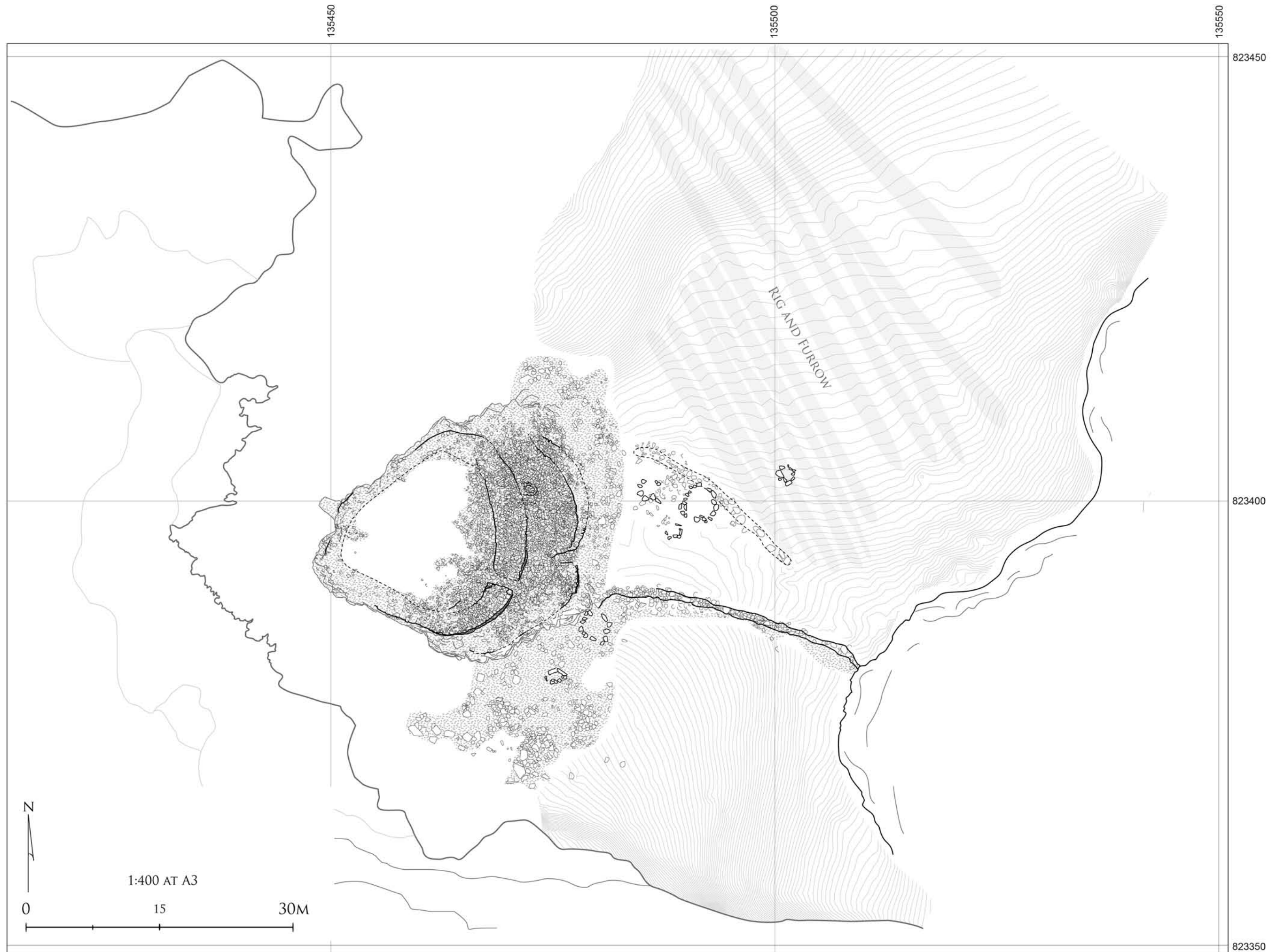


FIGURE 4: SITE PLAN

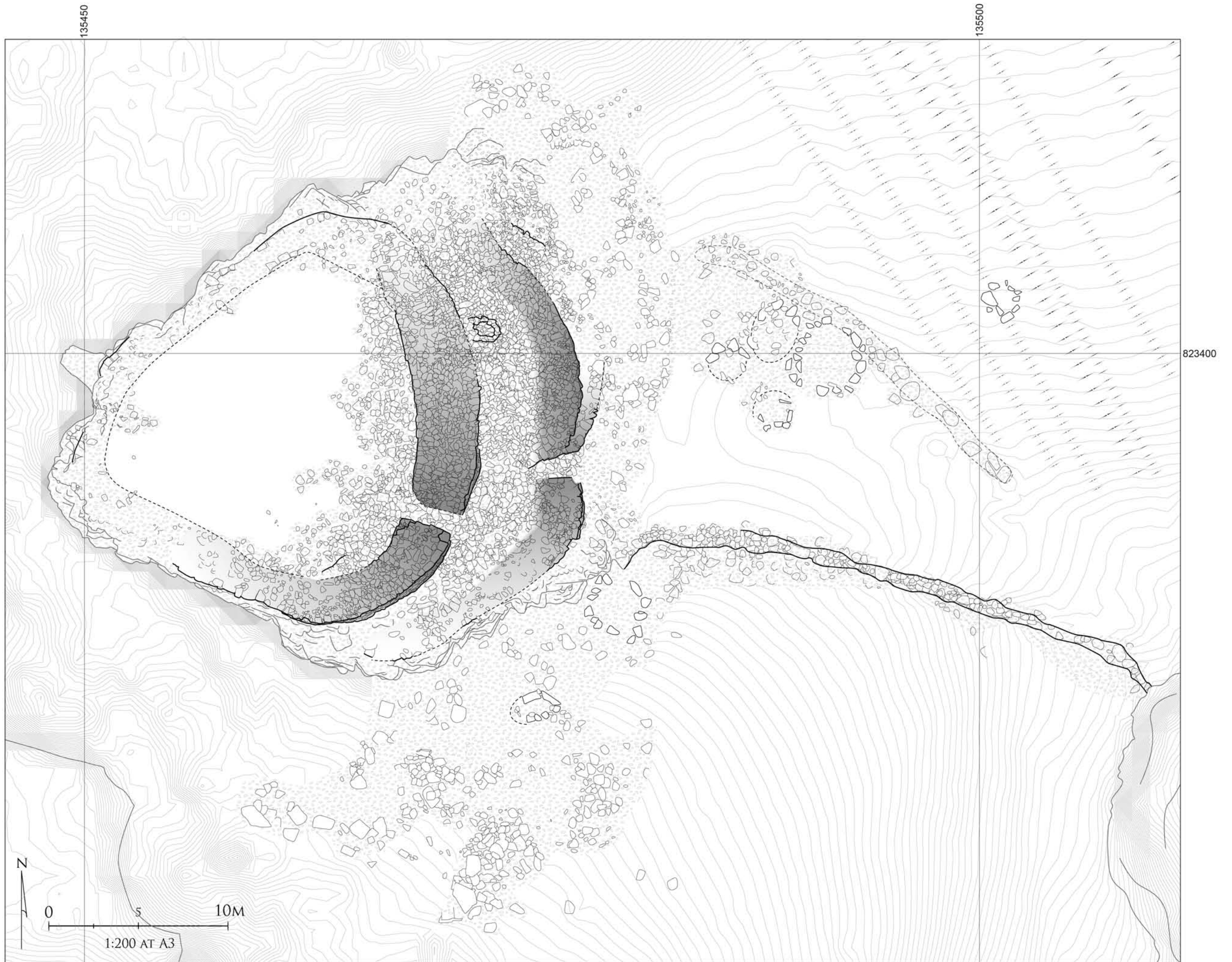


FIGURE 5: SITE PLAN, 1:200



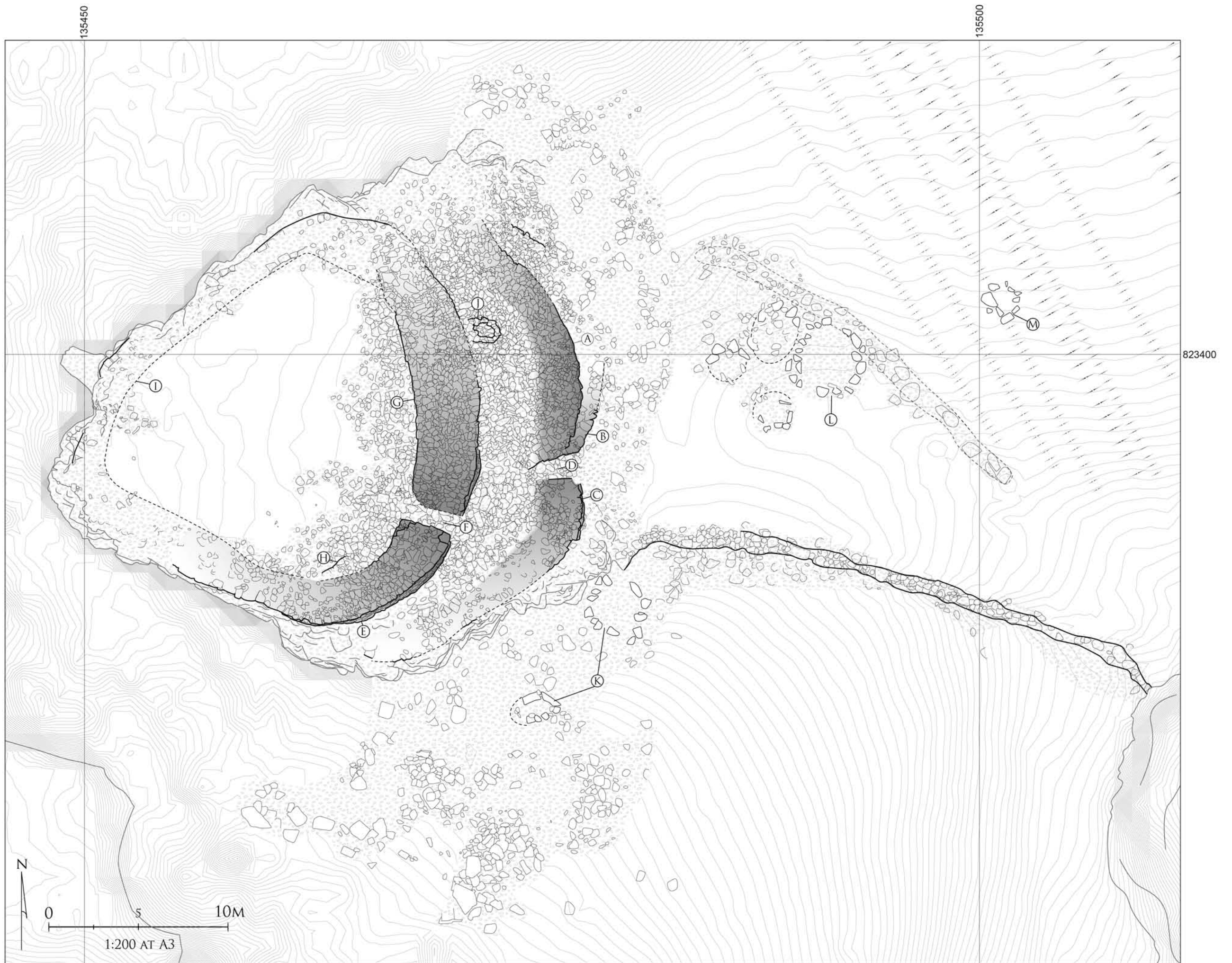
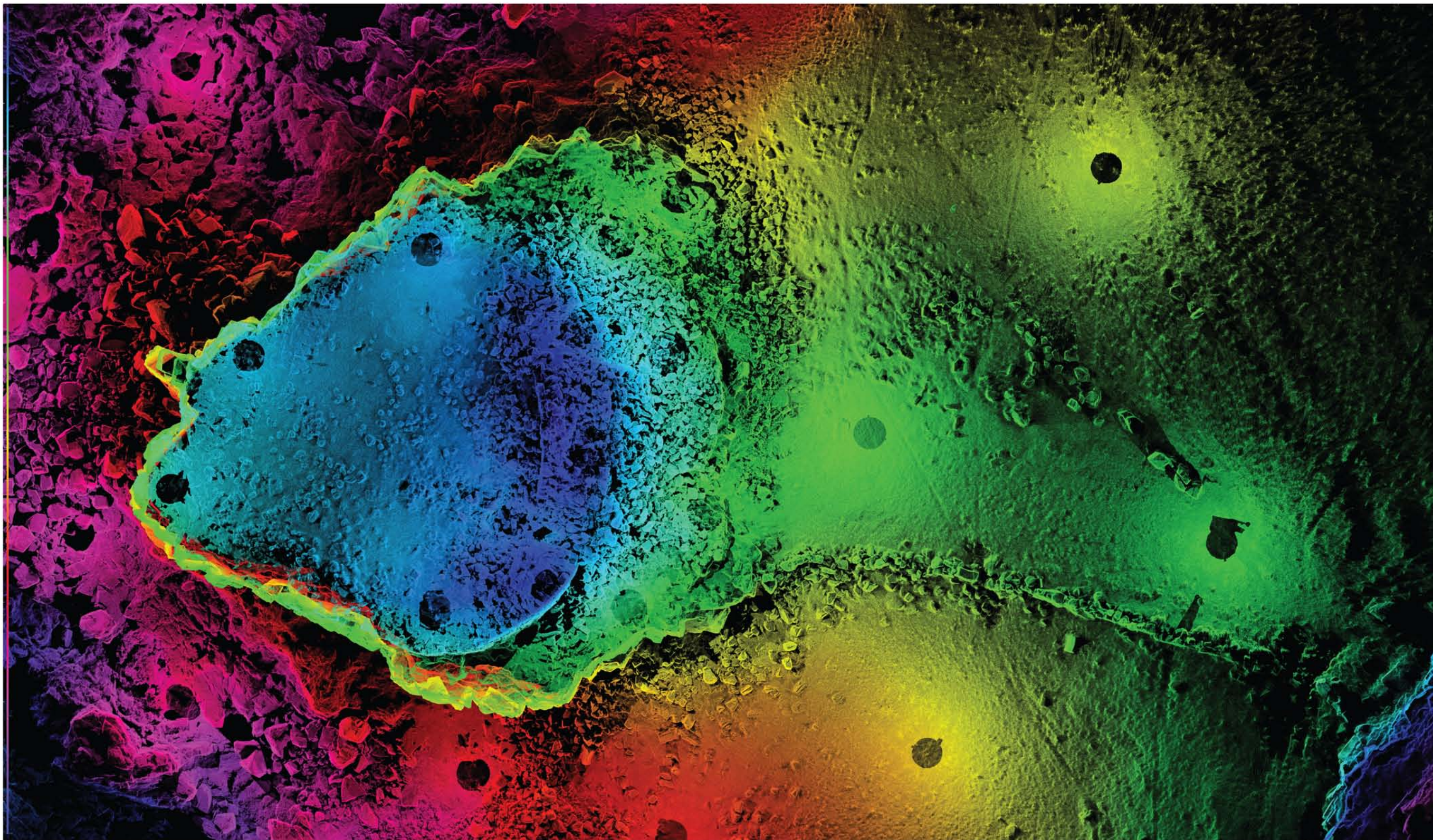


FIGURE 6: SITE PLAN, 1:200 (LABELLED)



5 m 0 5 m

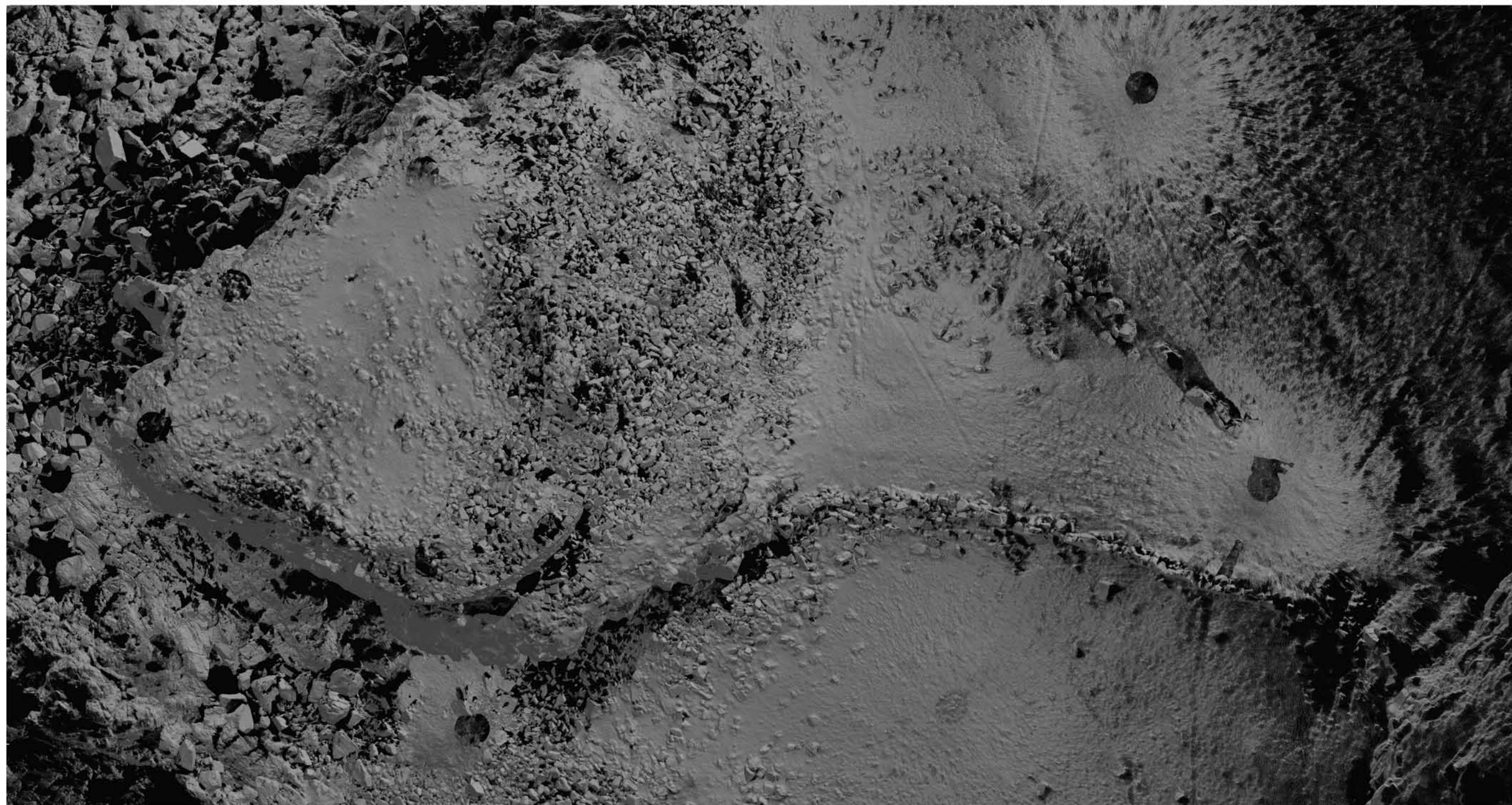


SCALE 1:200 AT A3

FIGURE 7: ORTHOGRAPHIC PLAN, FILTERED BY ELEVATION



5 m 0 5 m



N

SCALE 1:200 AT A3

FIGURE 7B: ORTHOGRAPHIC PLAN

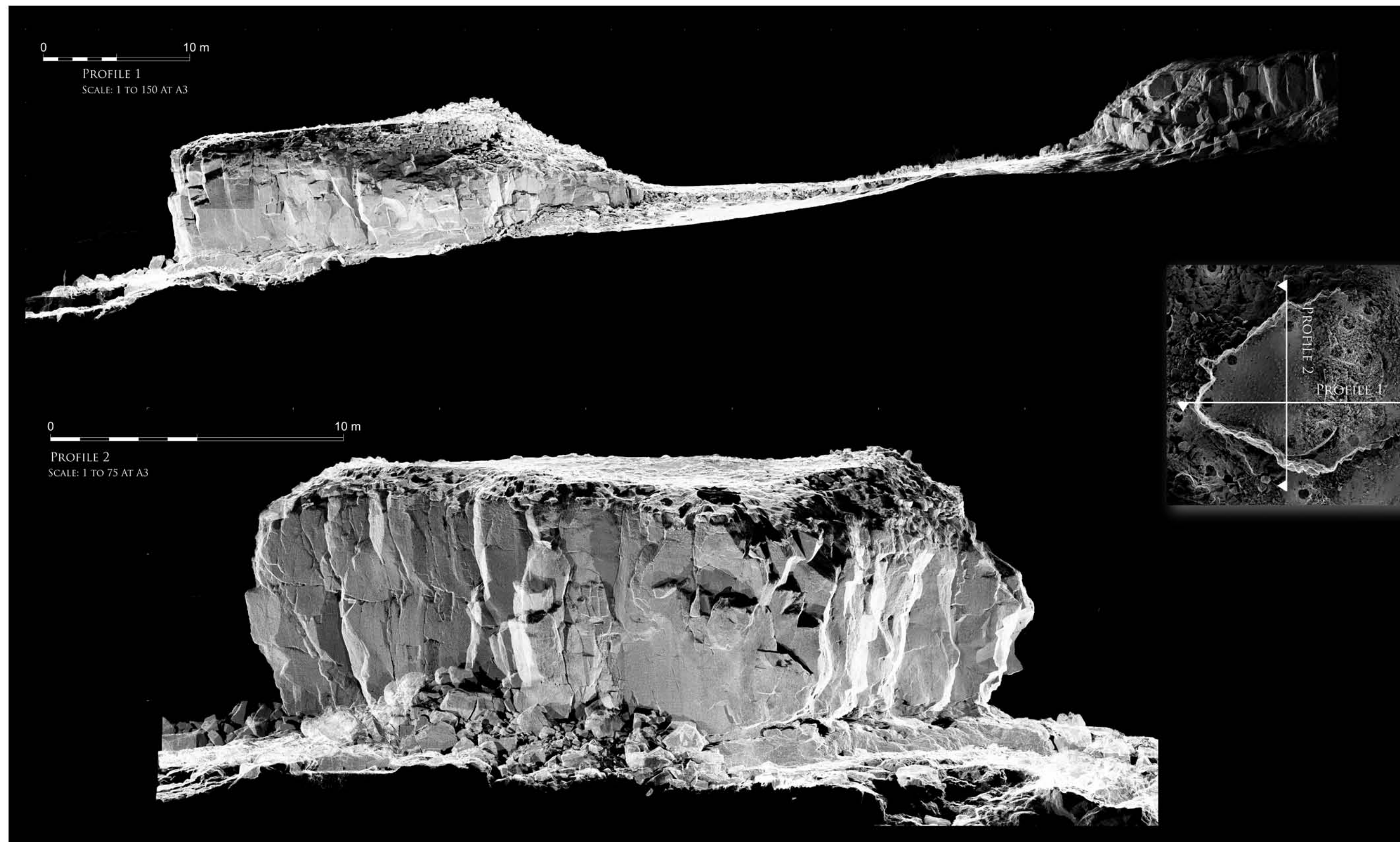


FIGURE 8: ORTHOGRAPHIC PROFILES



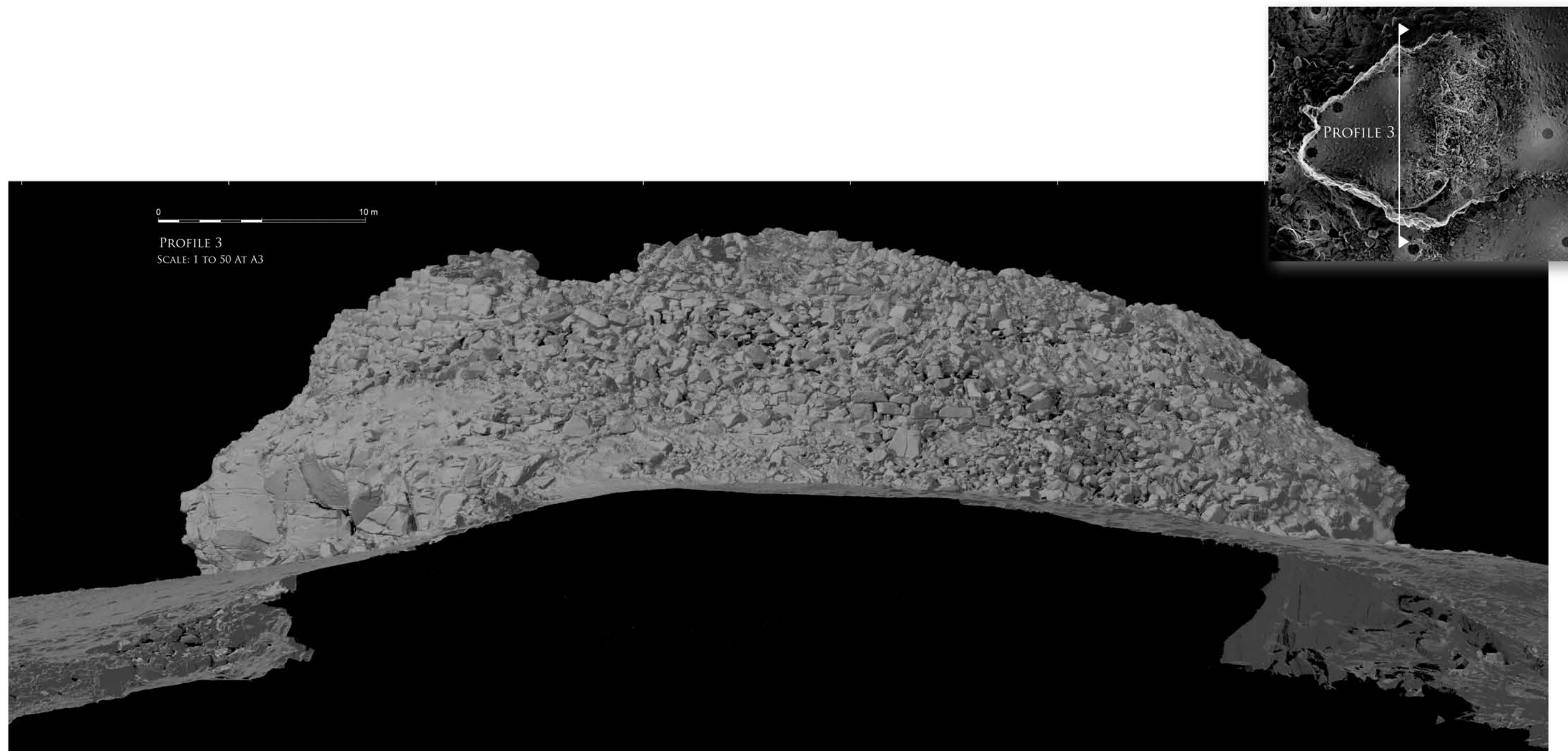


FIGURE 8B: ORTHOGRAPHIC PROFILE

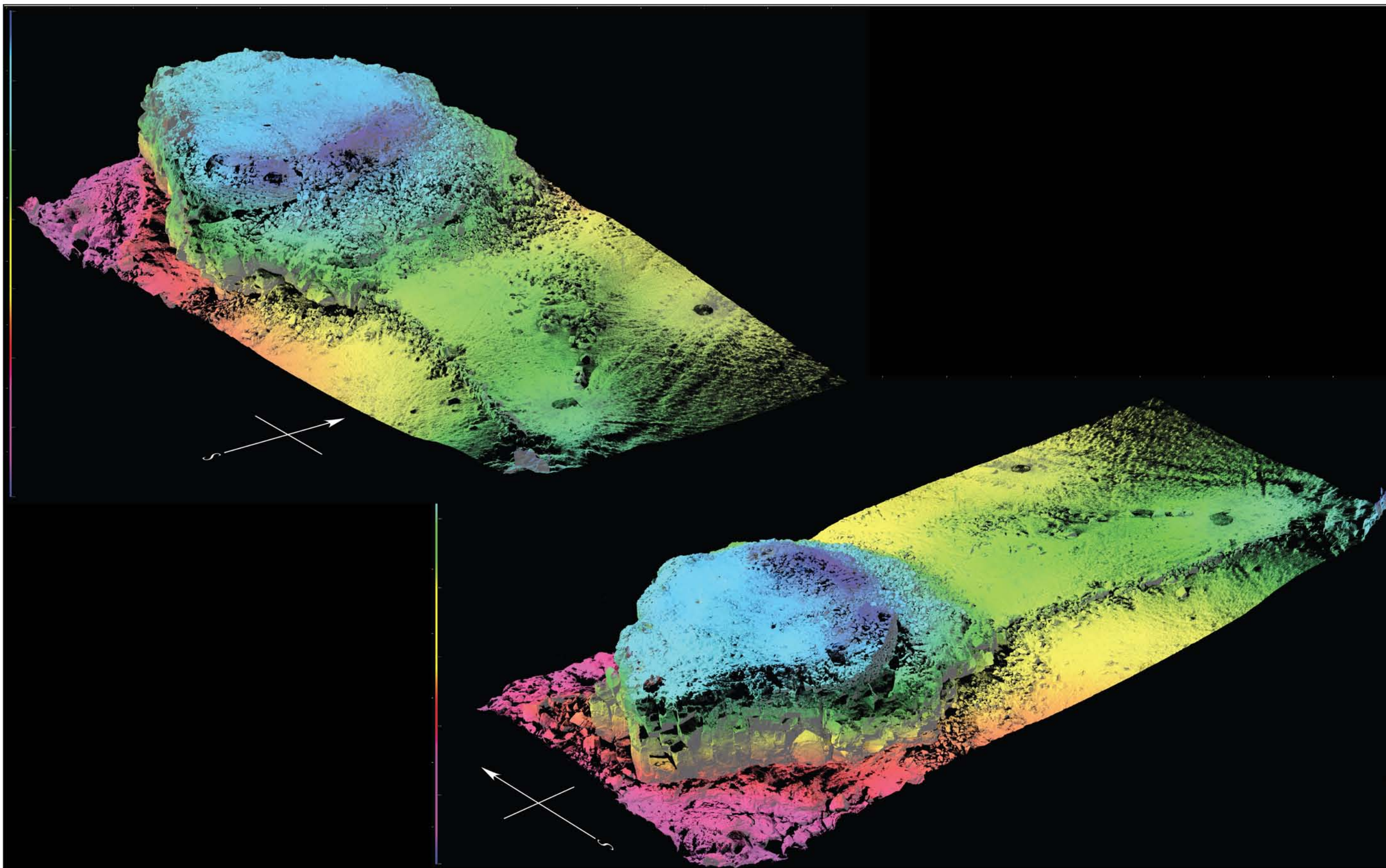
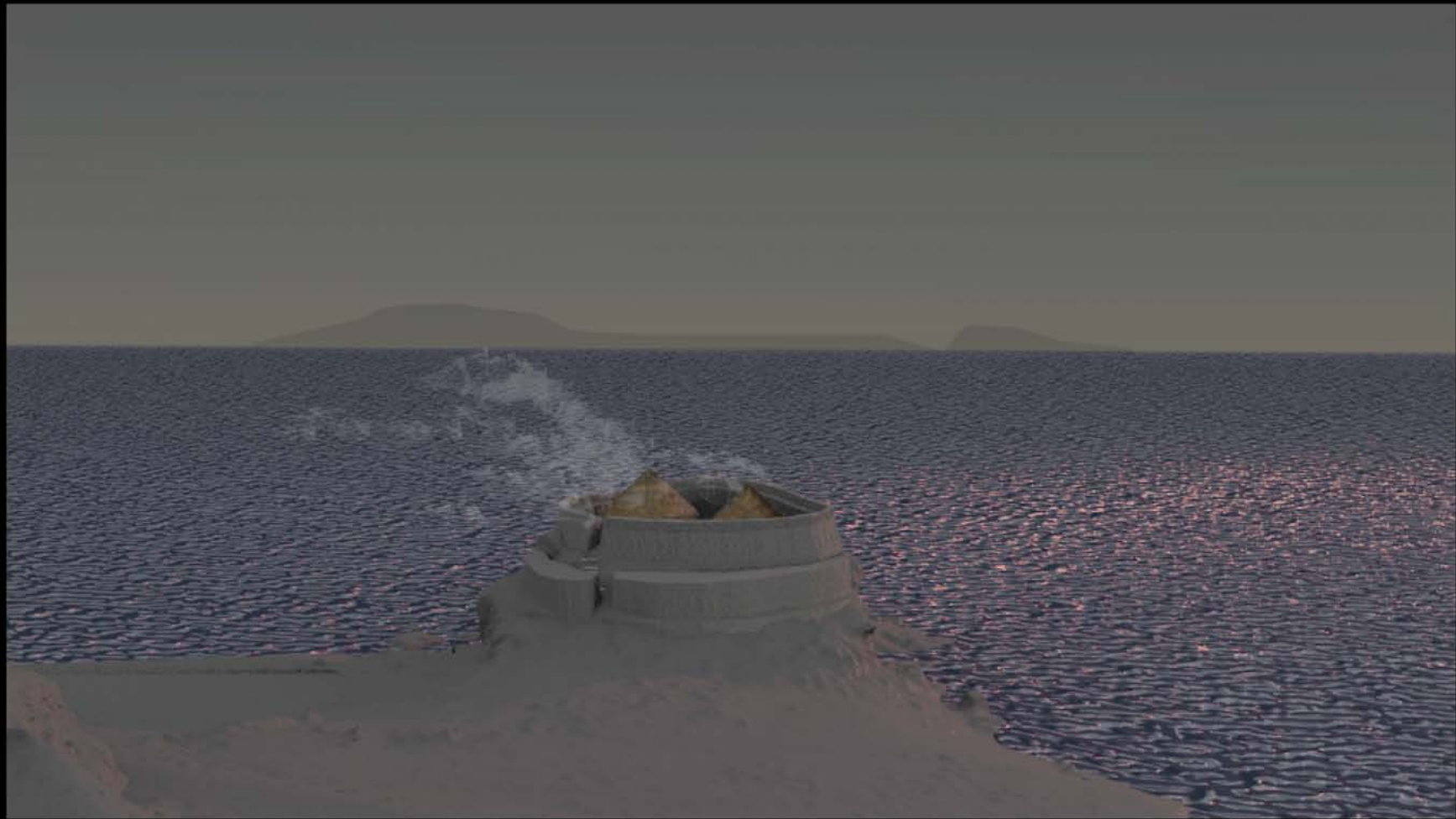


FIGURE 8: 3D VIEWS FROM SE AND SW





### KRAIKNISH DUN, RECONSTRUCTION

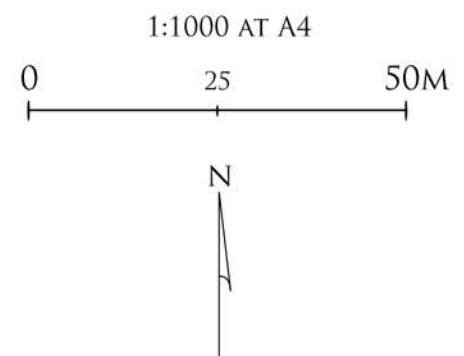
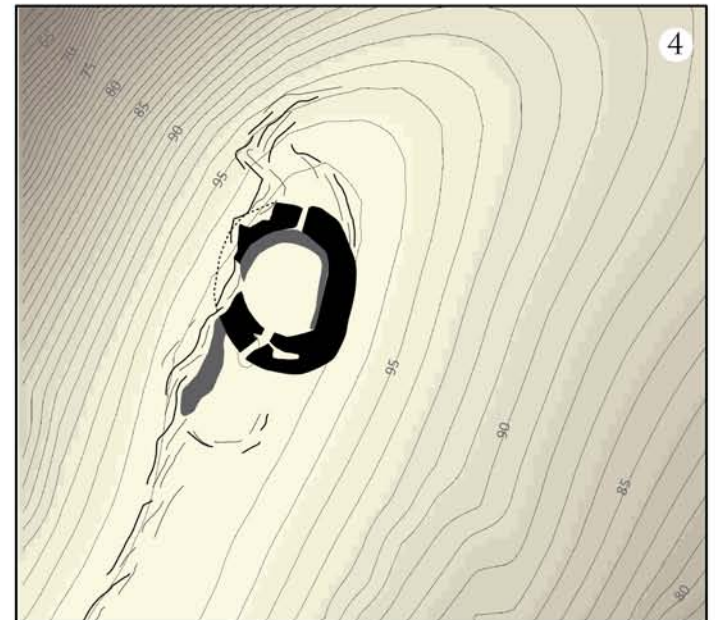
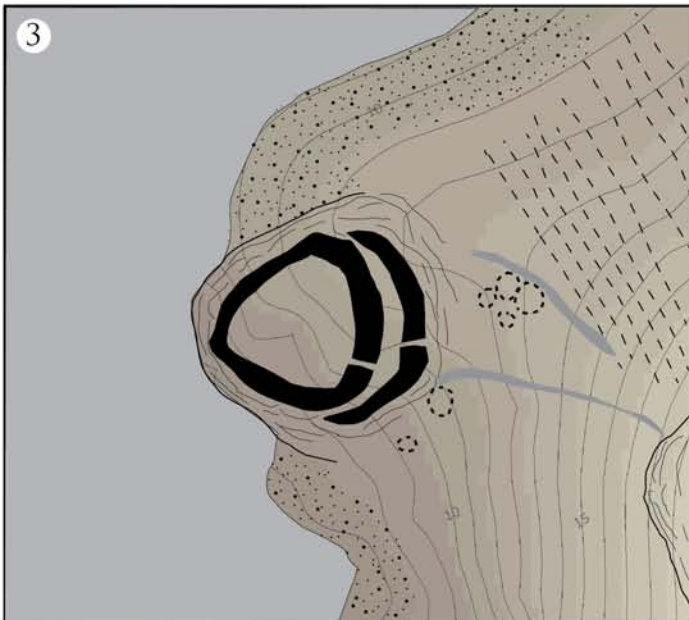
A view of the dun as it may have looked during its use. This reconstruction is speculative in several aspects, not least in the form of the internal buildings, for which no evidence survives on site. The upper portions of the encircling rampart are similarly conjectural, though comparison with other coastal fortifications of Iron Age and Early Historic date in Scotland might support this reconstruction.



### KRAIKNISH DUN, RECONSTRUCTION

A view of the dun as it may have looked during its use. This reconstruction is speculative in several aspects, not least in the form of the internal buildings, for which no evidence survives on site. The upper portions of the encircling rampart are similarly conjectural, though comparison with other coastal fortifications of Iron Age and Early Historic date in Scotland might support this reconstruction.





- 1: Dun A' Choin Duibh
- 2: Dun Boredale
- 3: Kraiknish
- 4: Druim an Duin
- 5: Caisteal Grugaig





Plate 1: General view of the dun from the E.



Plate 2: Outer wall face of Wall 1, at Point A.





Plate 3: The lower wall face of Wall 1, showing the facing stones in the entrance passage.



Plate 4: The upper outer wall face of Wall 1, set back from the lower course, at point B.





Plate 5: Outer facing stones of Wall 1, south of the entrance.



Plate 6: The entrance through Wall 1, at point D.





Plate 7: The outer wall face of Wall 2, at point E.



Plate 8: Surviving pinning stones in the outer wall face of Wall 2, at point E.





Plate 9: The door check on the S side of the entrance through Wall 2.



Plate 10: Inner wall face of wall 2, at point G.





Plate 11: Short lengths of wall face representing the remains of the dun wall on the seaward side.



Plate 12: Short length of wall face within wall 2, at point H, visible on the left of the image.





Plate 13: Small, ruinous cell of recent date constructed in the rampart rubble at point J.



Plate 14: Circular sheiling-type structures at point K.





Plate 15: The largest shieling hut, at point L.

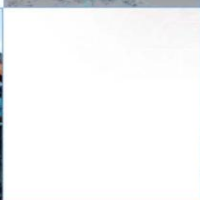
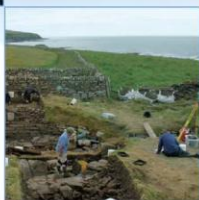
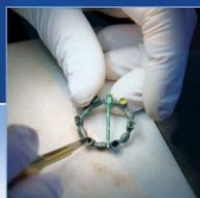


Plate 16: Shieling hut at point M, overlying earlier lazy bed.





Plate 17: View of the dun from the S.



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