

Rocks and Relationships

Animism and relational ontologies



The Nature of Things and Animism

Thinking Through Things

THEORISING ARTEFACTS ETHNOGRAPHICALLY

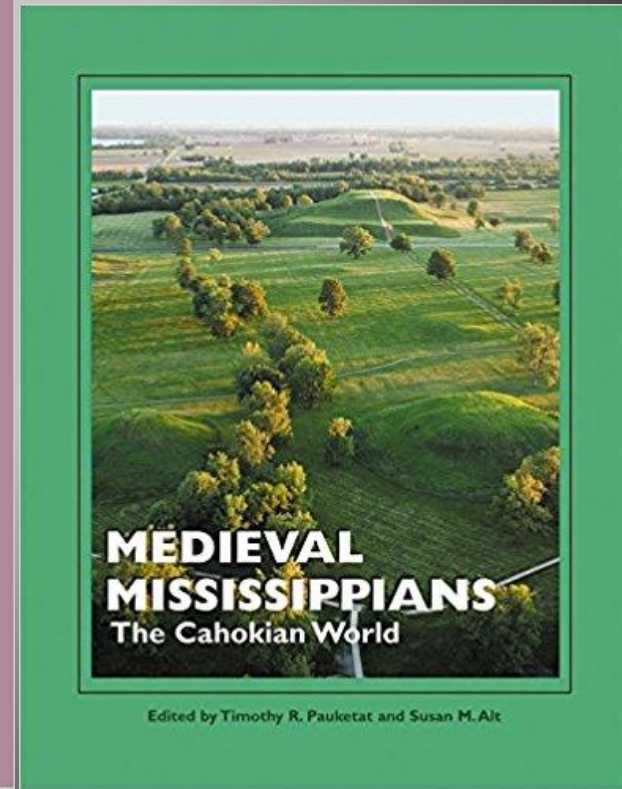
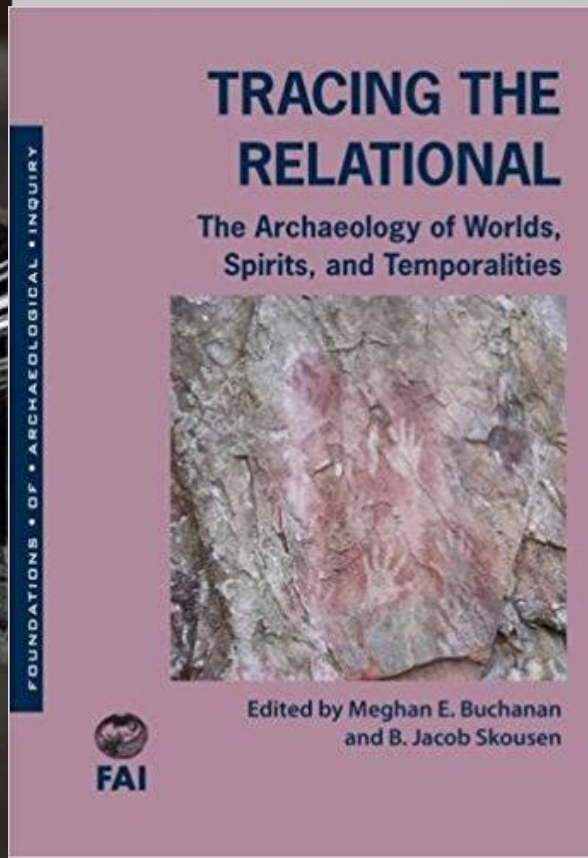
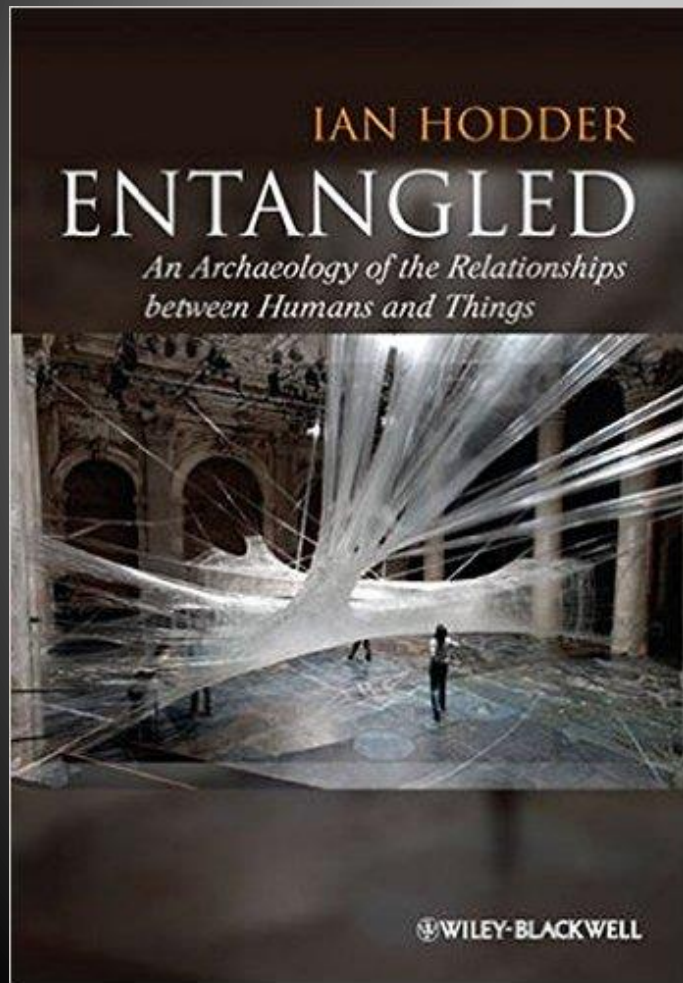
Edited by Amiria Henare, Martin Holbraad and Sari Wastell

— BEYOND — NATURE AND CULTURE

PHILIPPE DESCOLA

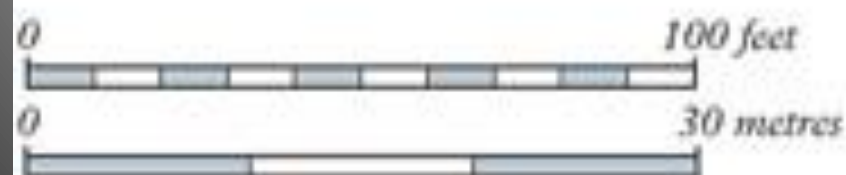
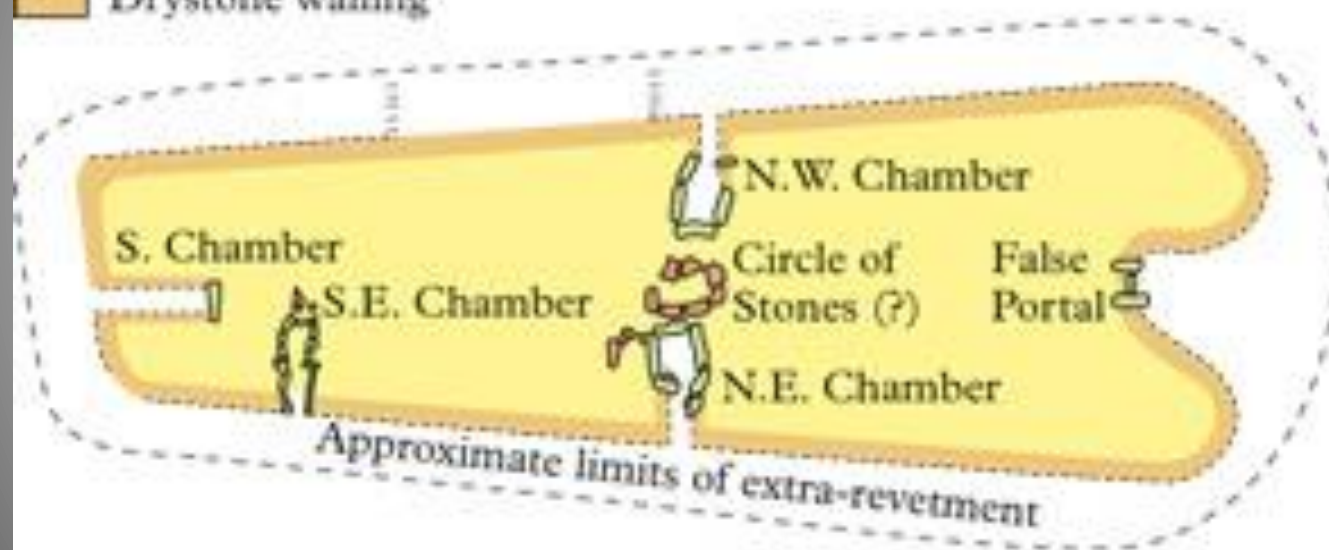
Translated by Janet Lloyd
Foreword by Marshall Sahlins

Relational Ontologies





- Standing stones
- Flat stones
- Drystone walling









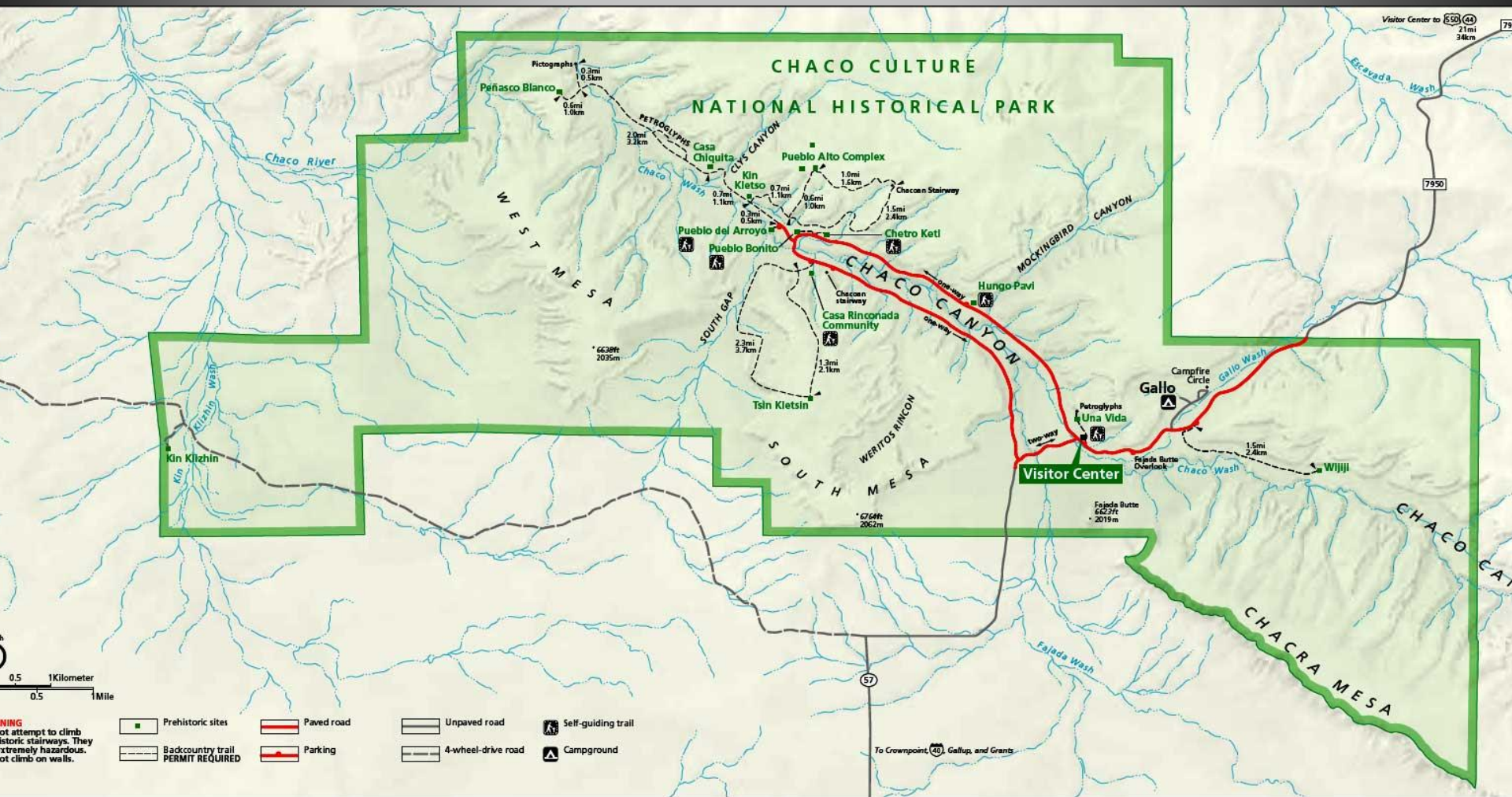
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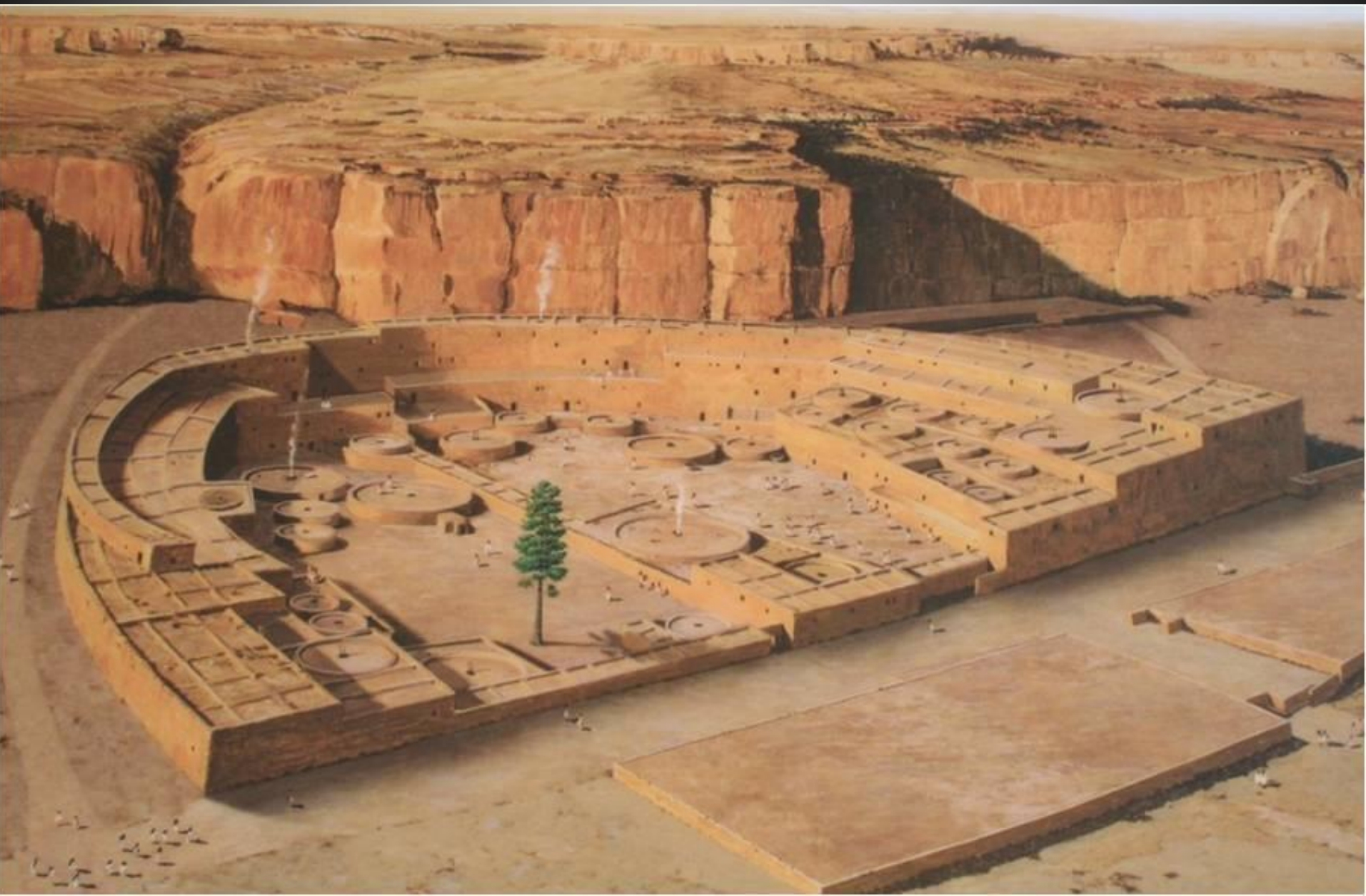


Astronomy in Chaco Canyon, Chimney Rock, and Mesa Verde



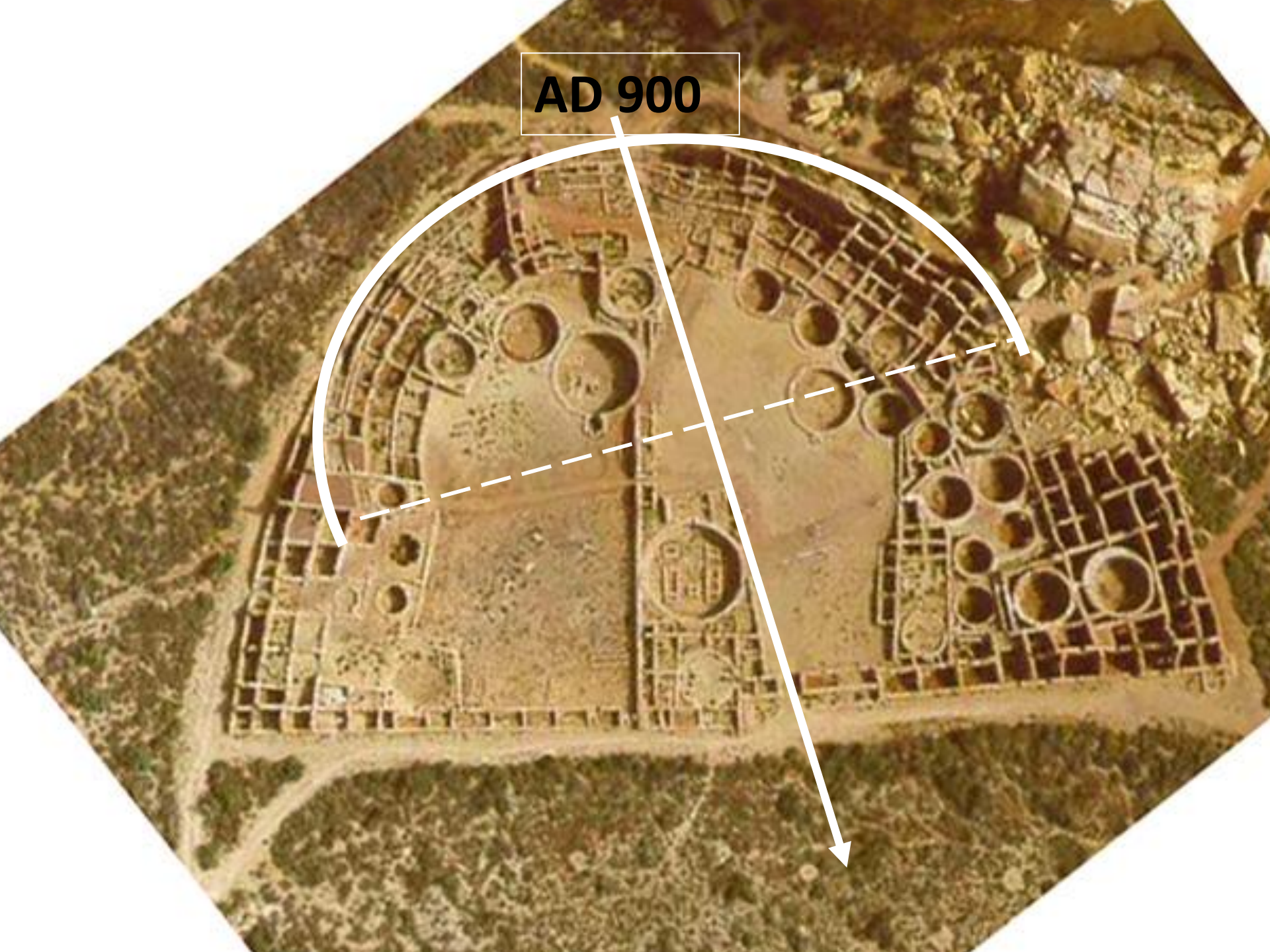




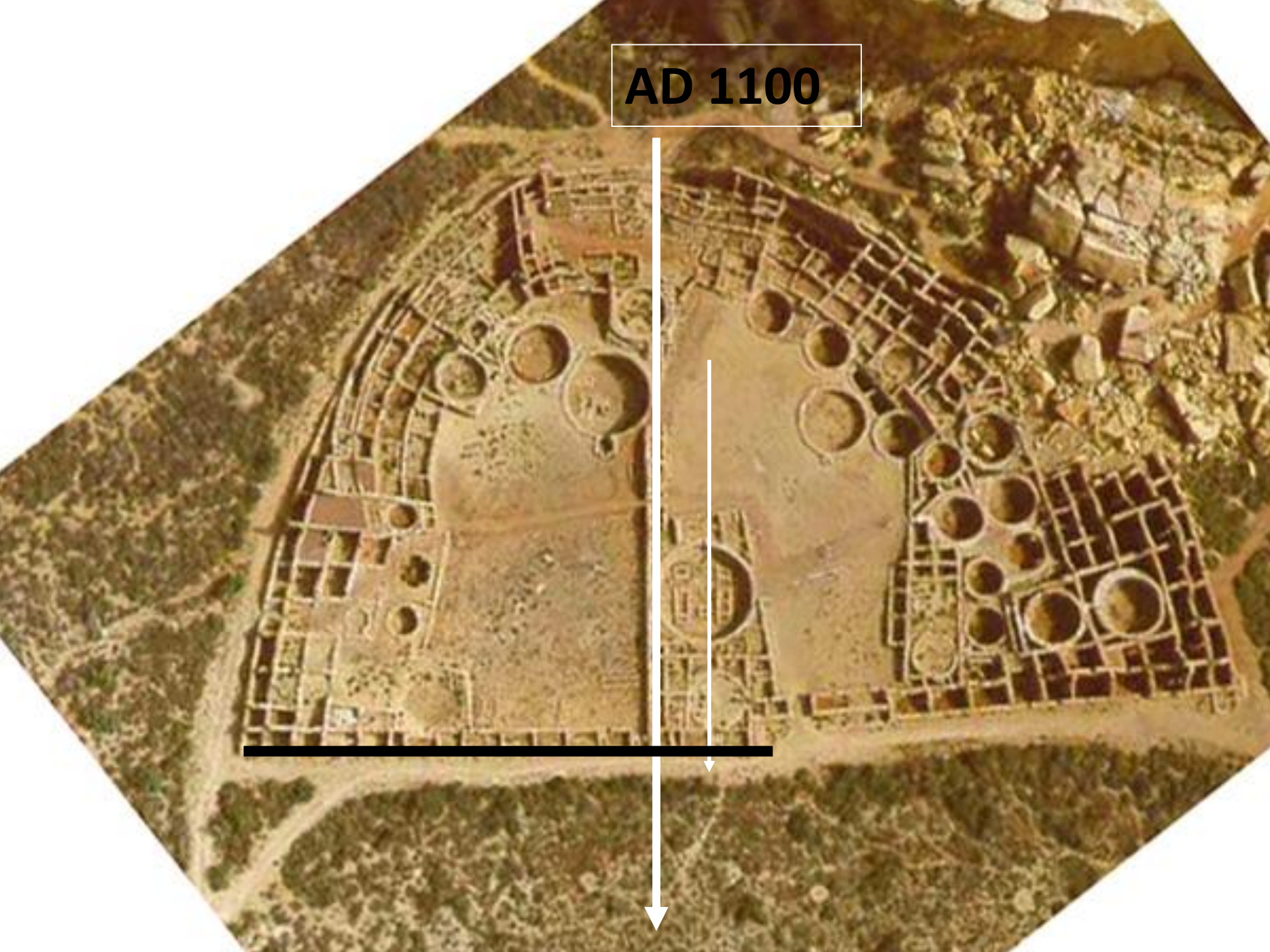




AD 900



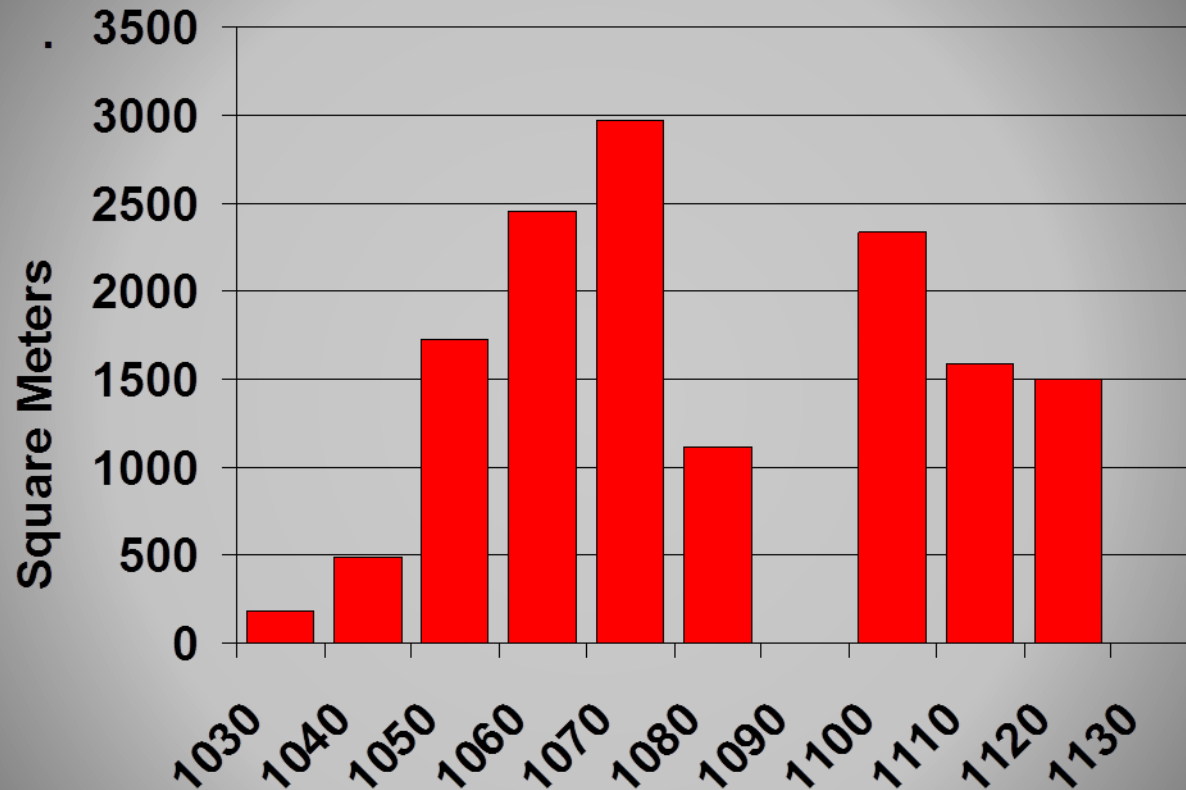
AD 1100







Great House Construction



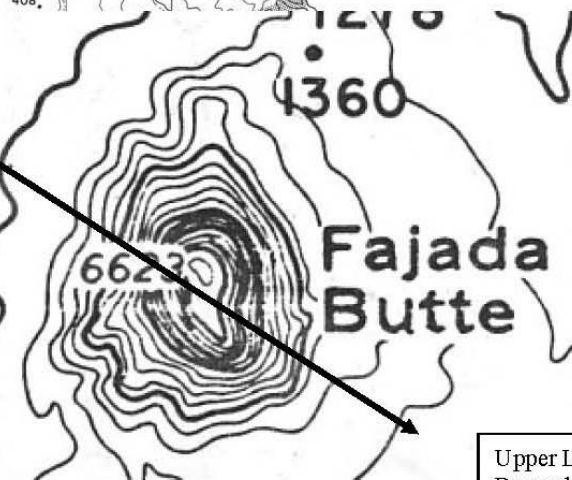
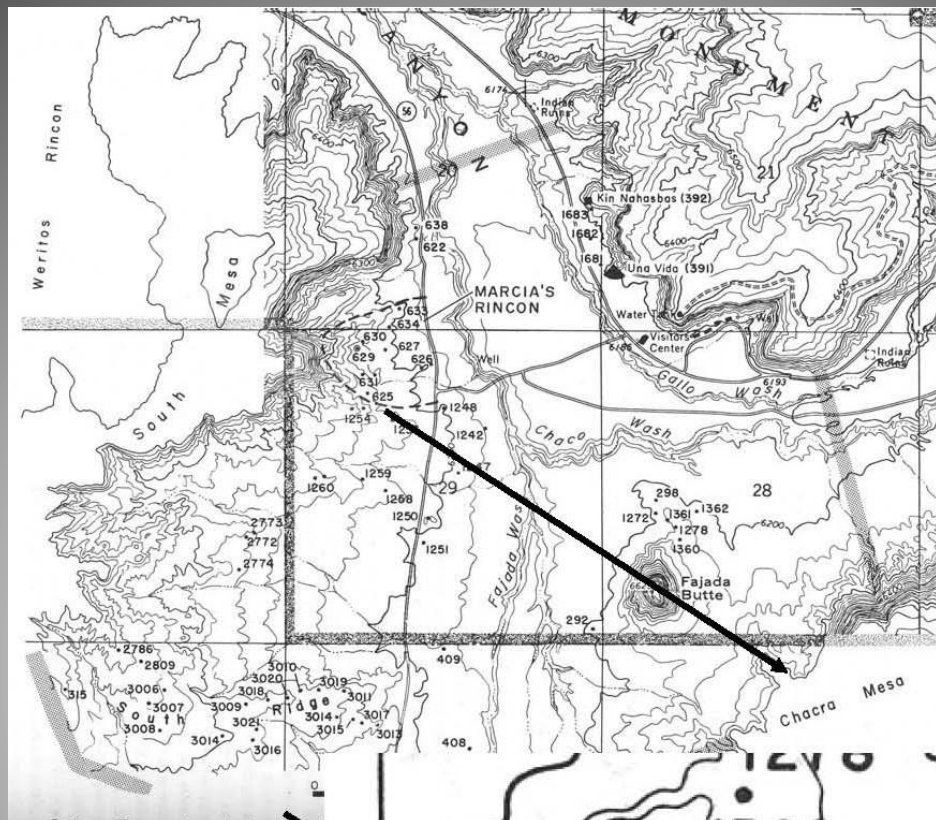
Fajada Gap Community

Fajada Gap

Community 800-1020

- December solstice sun rises over Fajada Butte from great kiva in Fajada Gap Community.
- Earliest evidence of observational astronomy in Chaco ---~950
- Ramp connected with Fajada Gap Community provides access to summit of Fajada.
- Fire pits at the bottom and top of the ramp may have been lighted at December solstice



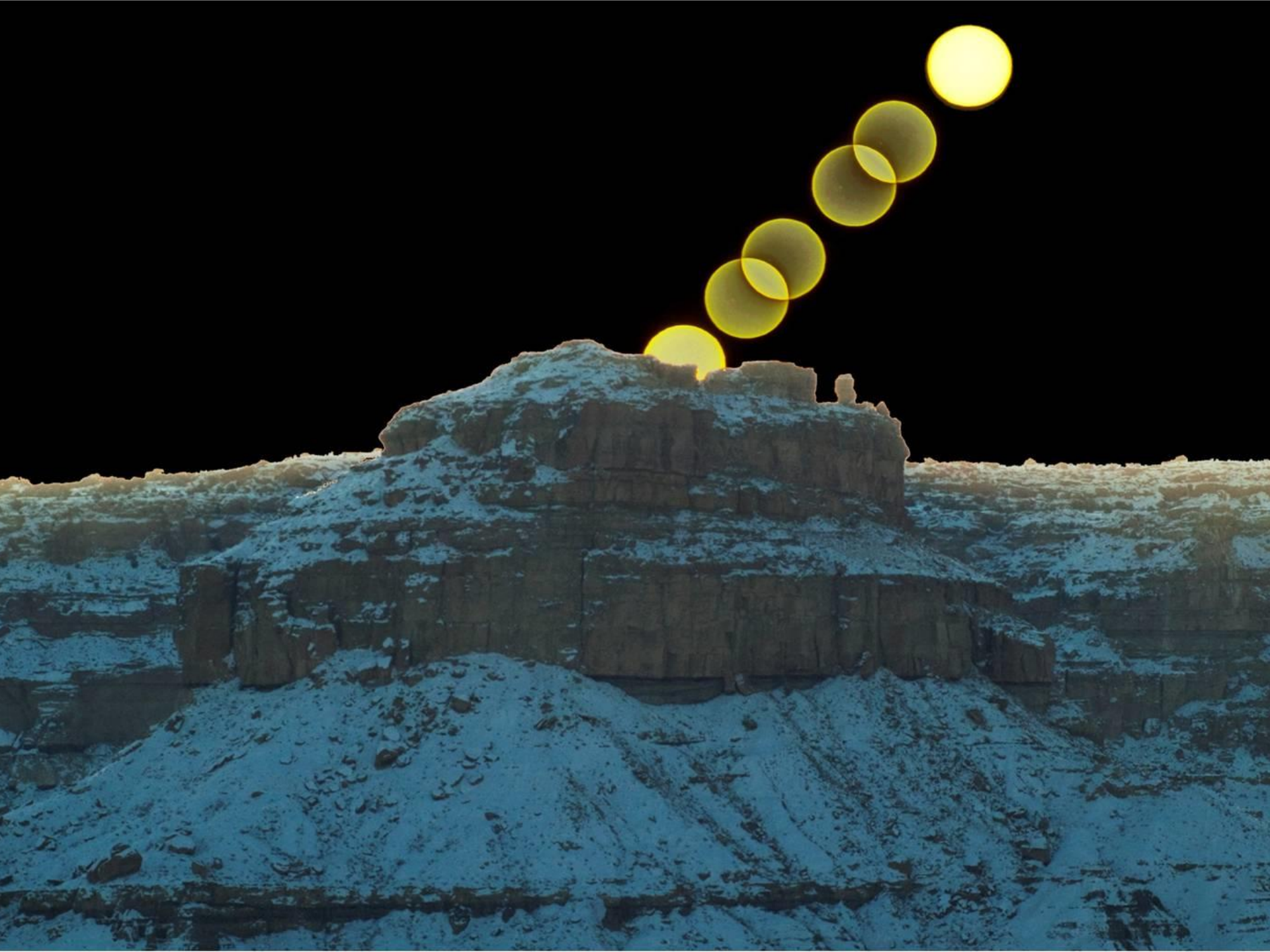


Upper Limb of sun:
December solstice
AD 1000





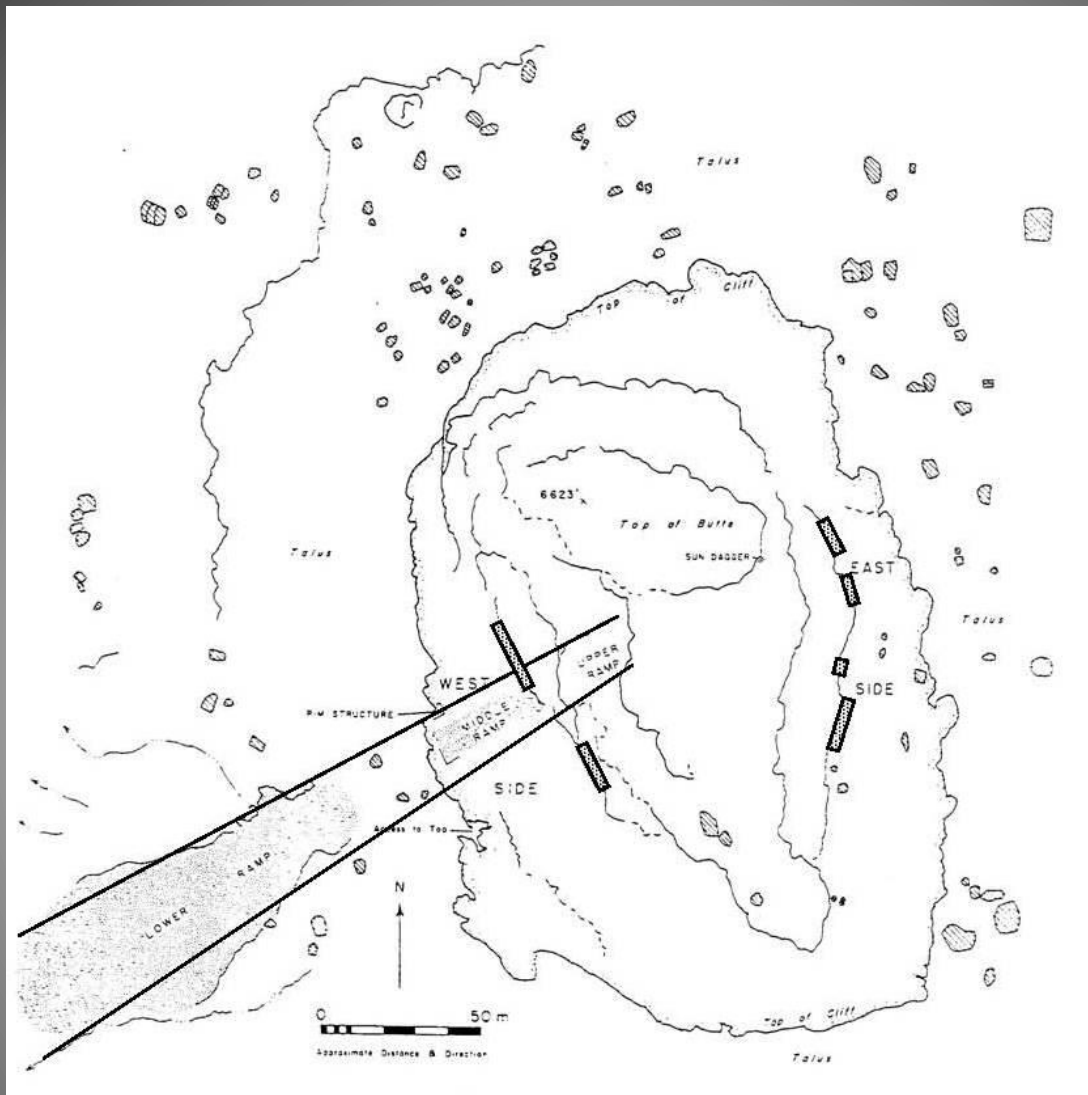












Winter solstice celebration

- Sun rise over Fajada Butte
- Celebrants emerge from the underworld of the Great Kiva
- Procession upward to the summit
- Fires at the base and top of the ascending ramp

Piedra del Sol: June Solstice & Total Eclipse of AD 1097









Piedra del Sol

June 4-5

summer solstice



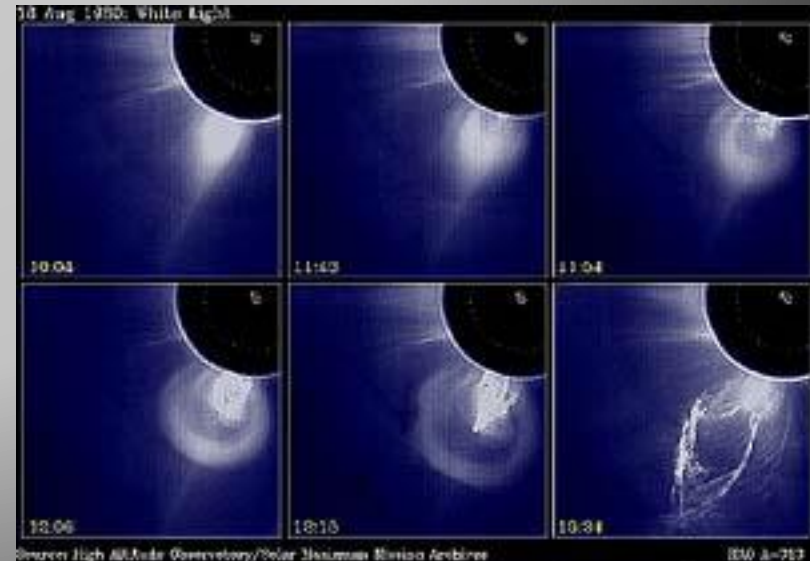
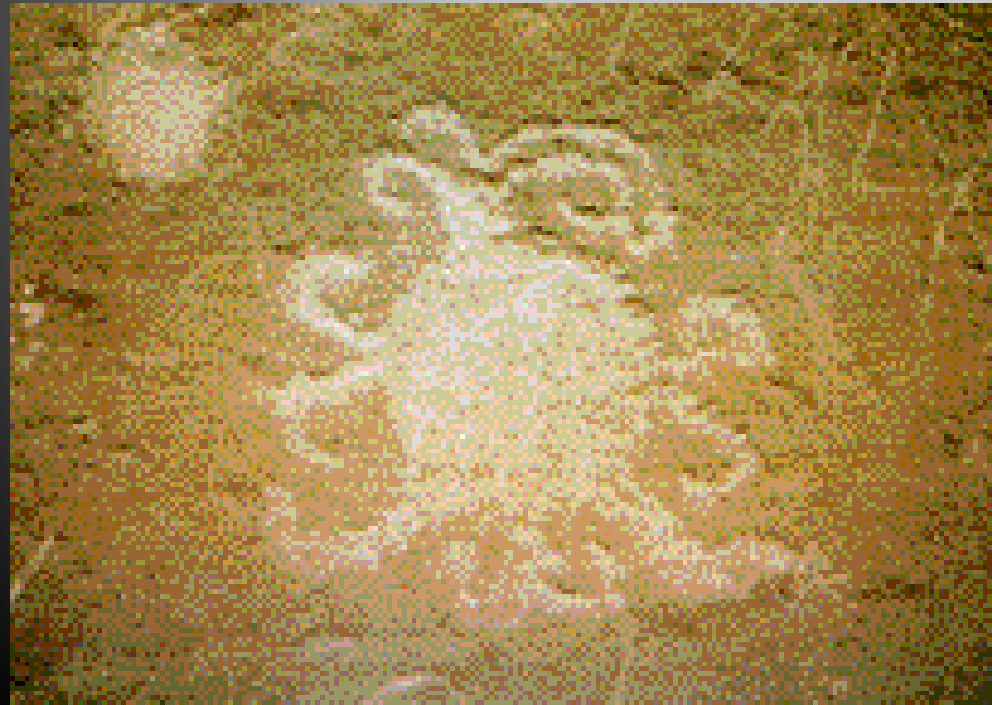
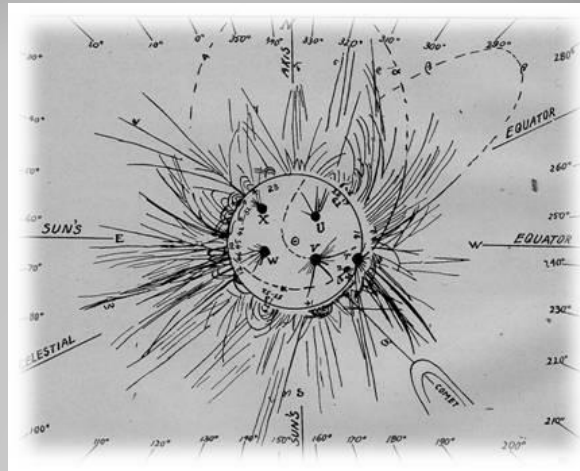
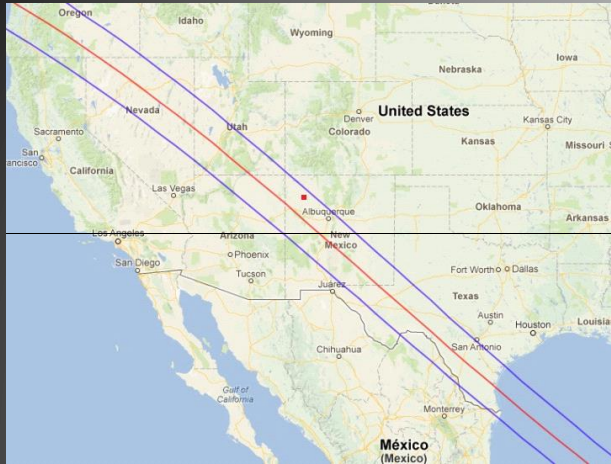


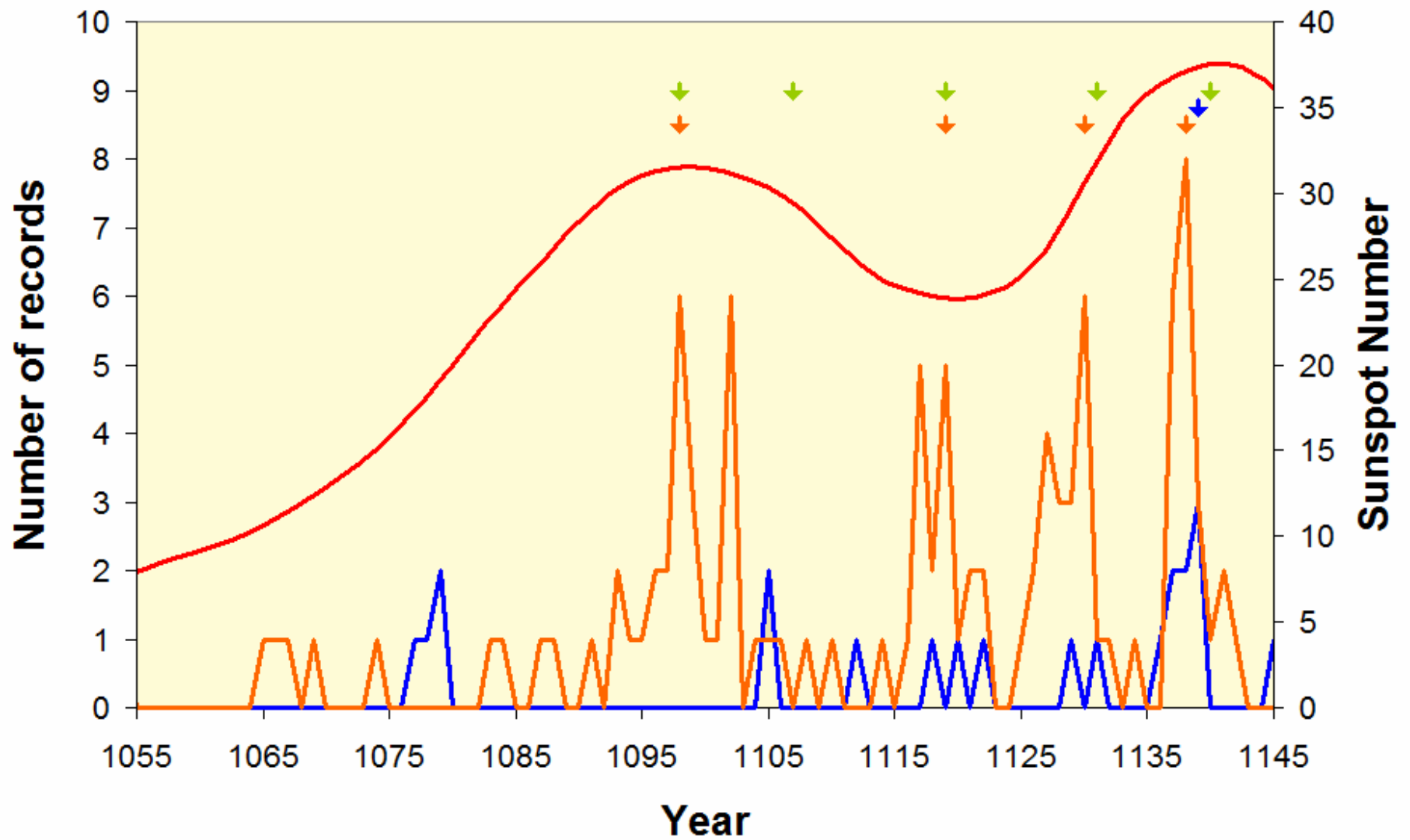




Total solar Eclipse: July 11 1097

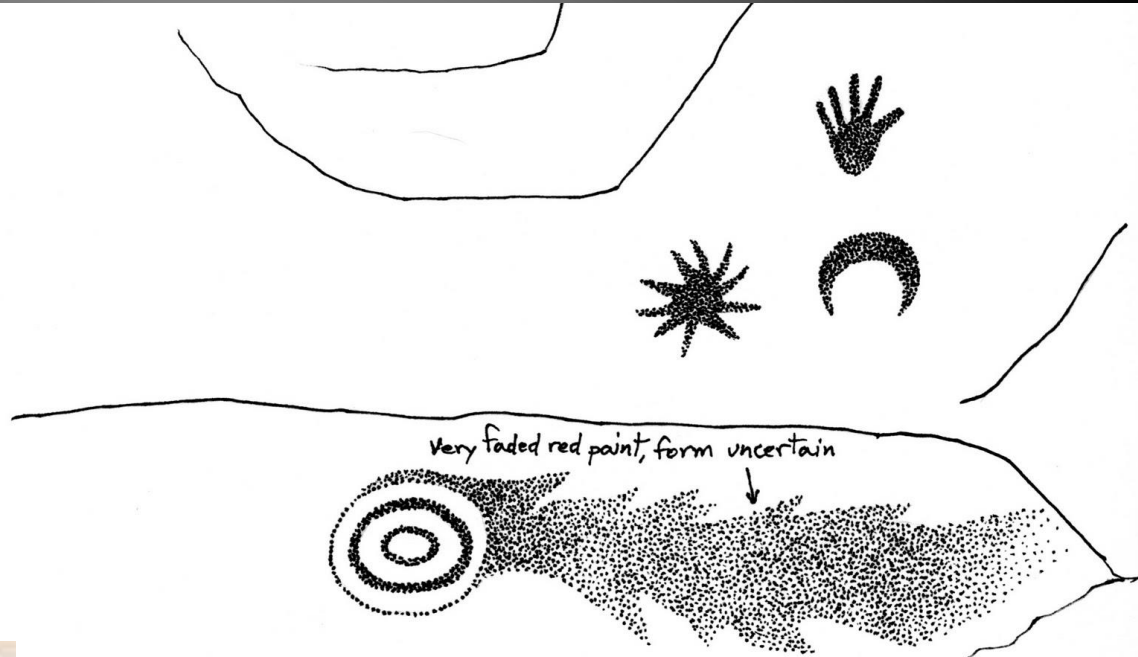
Total eclipse A.D. 1097









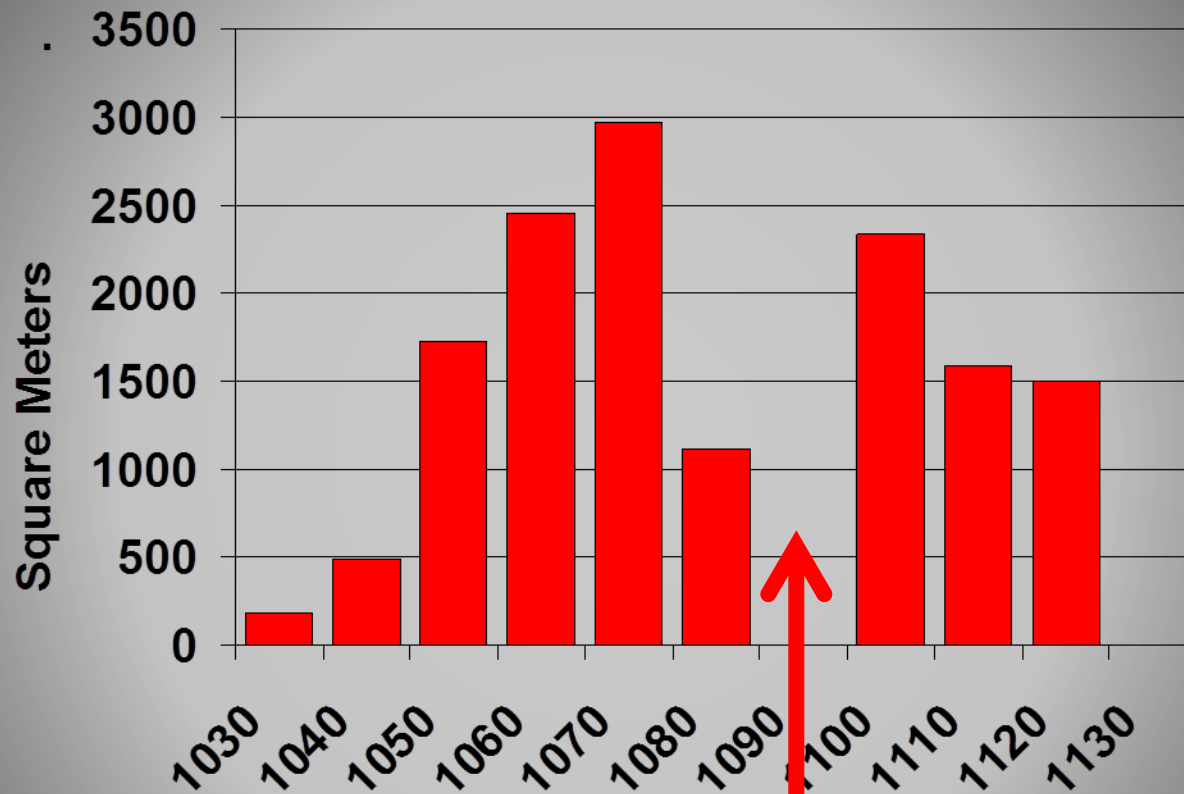


Jaco Canyon, Peñasco Blanco Trail, San Juan County, New Mexico

Peter Faris, 9/97



Great House Construction



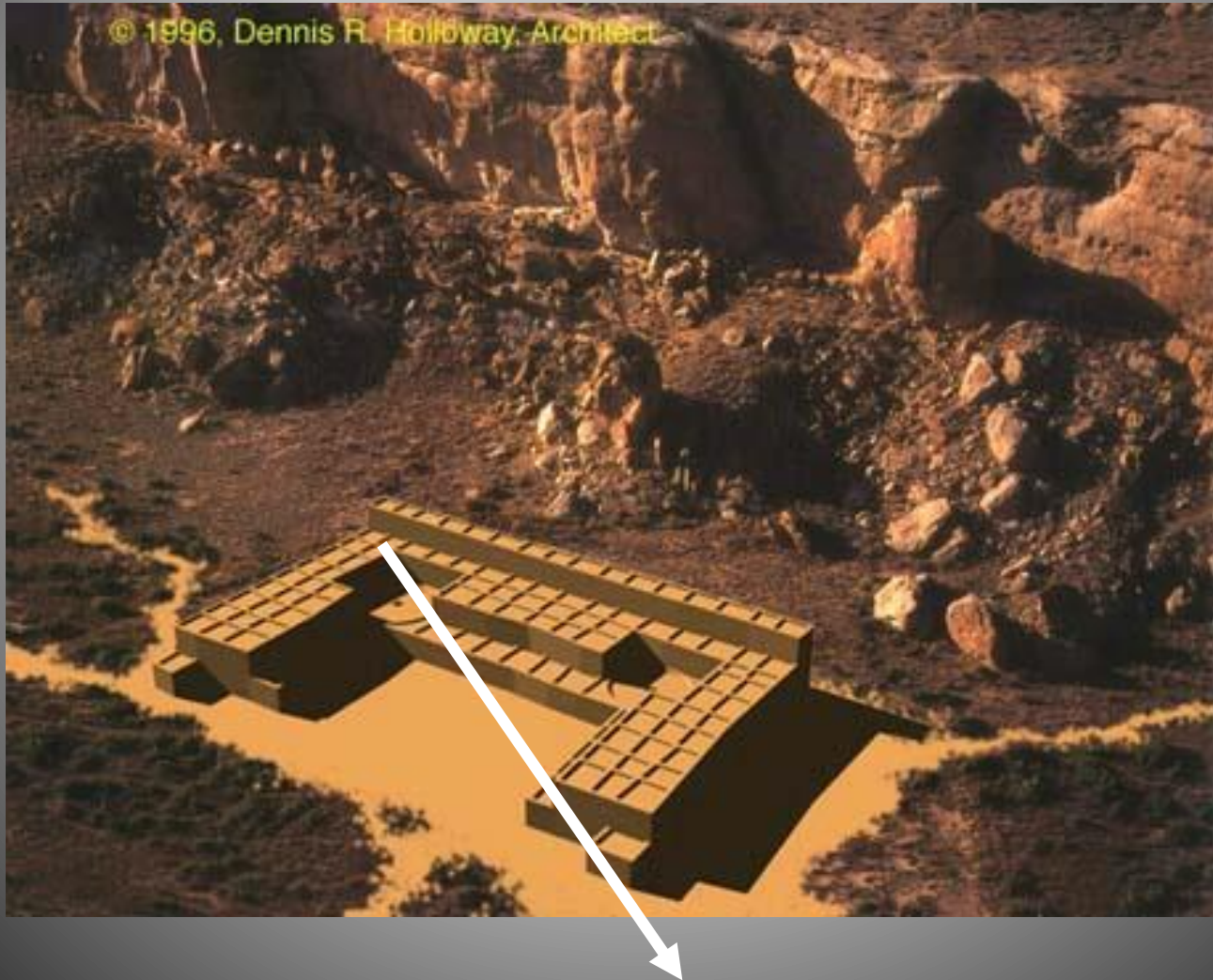
Fajada Gap Community

Great Drought of 1090s

A.D.1105:

Wijiji:

winter solstice sunrise



November 20



Wijiji 2 weeks before Winter Solstice



December 5

Winter Solstice



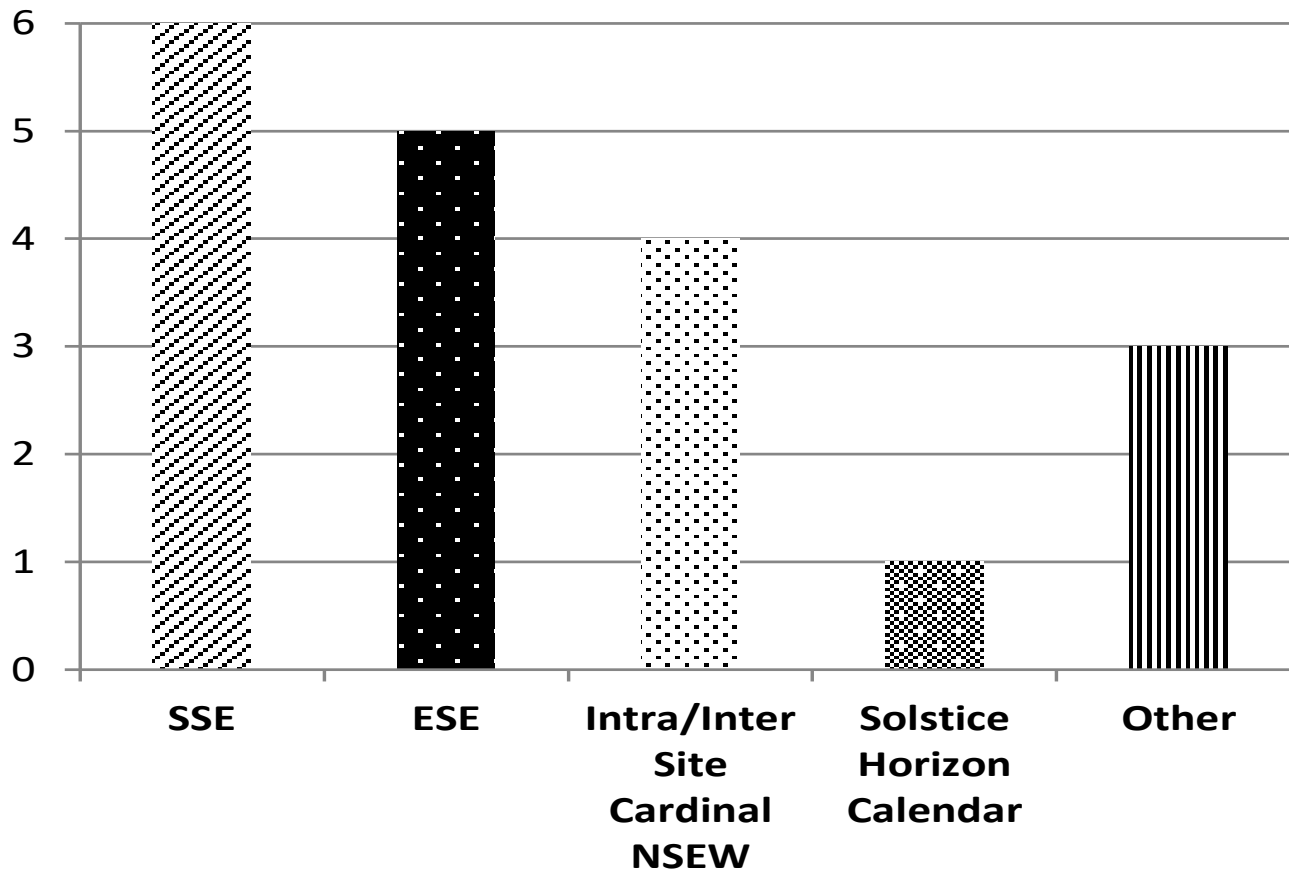
December 21

Kin Kleto December Solstice

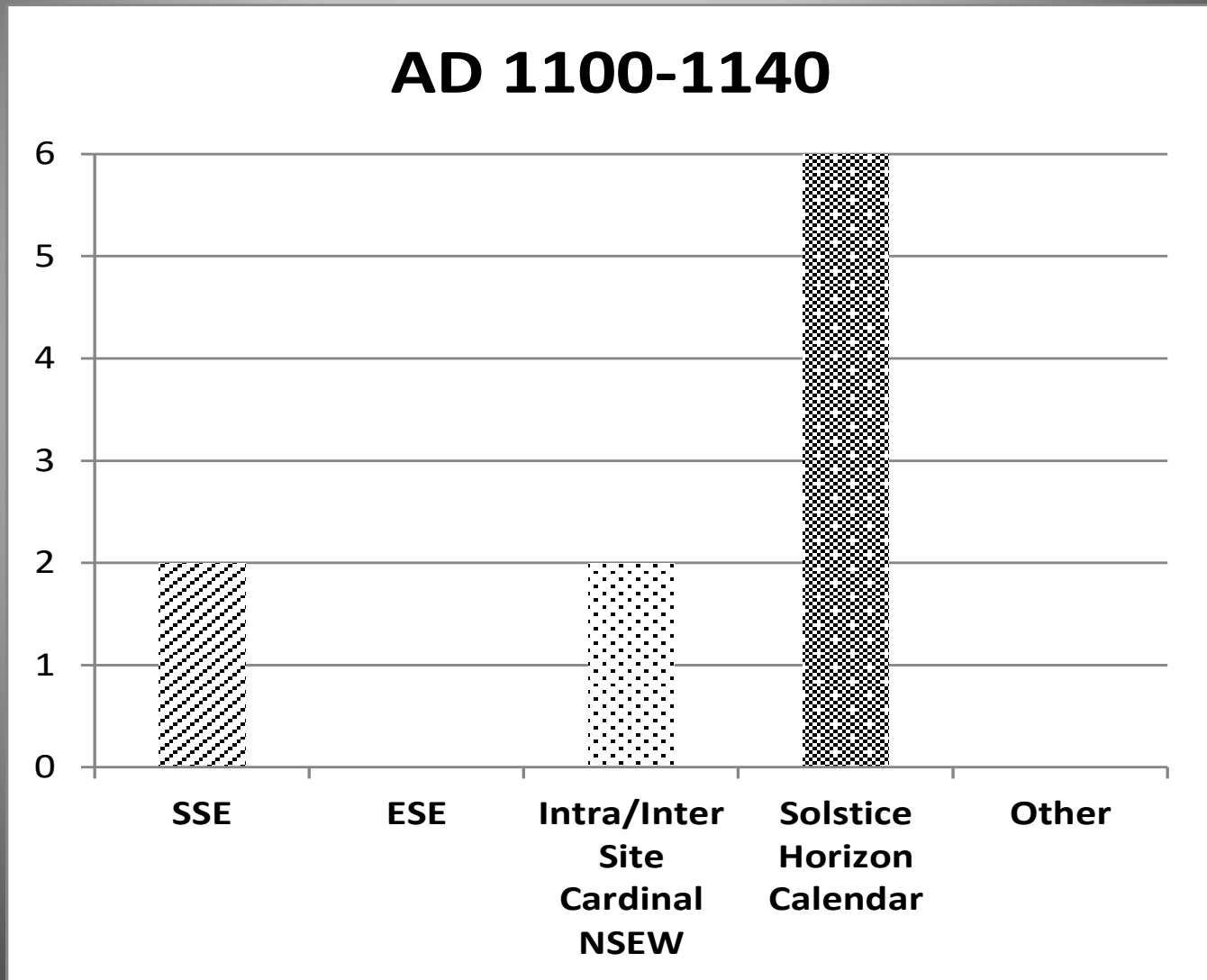


Early & Classic Bonito Phase: Three Orientation/Alignment Traditions Dominate

Cumulative AD 860-1100



Late Bonito Phase: Placement at or near to Solar Horizon Calendars Dominates



Conclusions

1

- The leaders in the Canyon enlisted astronomical ceremonialism in an attempt to preserve the system and bolster their political and economic power and legitimacy after the disastrous drought of the 1090s. Why would pilgrims walk into the canyon to ask the gods for prosperous harvests?
- These leaders exercised authority over a diminished labor pool to build monumental architecture on a smaller scale.
 - *These new monumental structures may have been intended to enable pilgrims to witness proof visually of the astronomical knowledge and power of the leaders.*

Conclusions

2

- The Late Bonito Great Houses are the result of a religious revival following the great drought of 1090-1100.
- Spontaneous expressions built between 1100-1130
- Exclusively ceremonial: no middens, not primarily residential
- The revival did not succeed, and abandonment became complete within 30 years

Conclusions

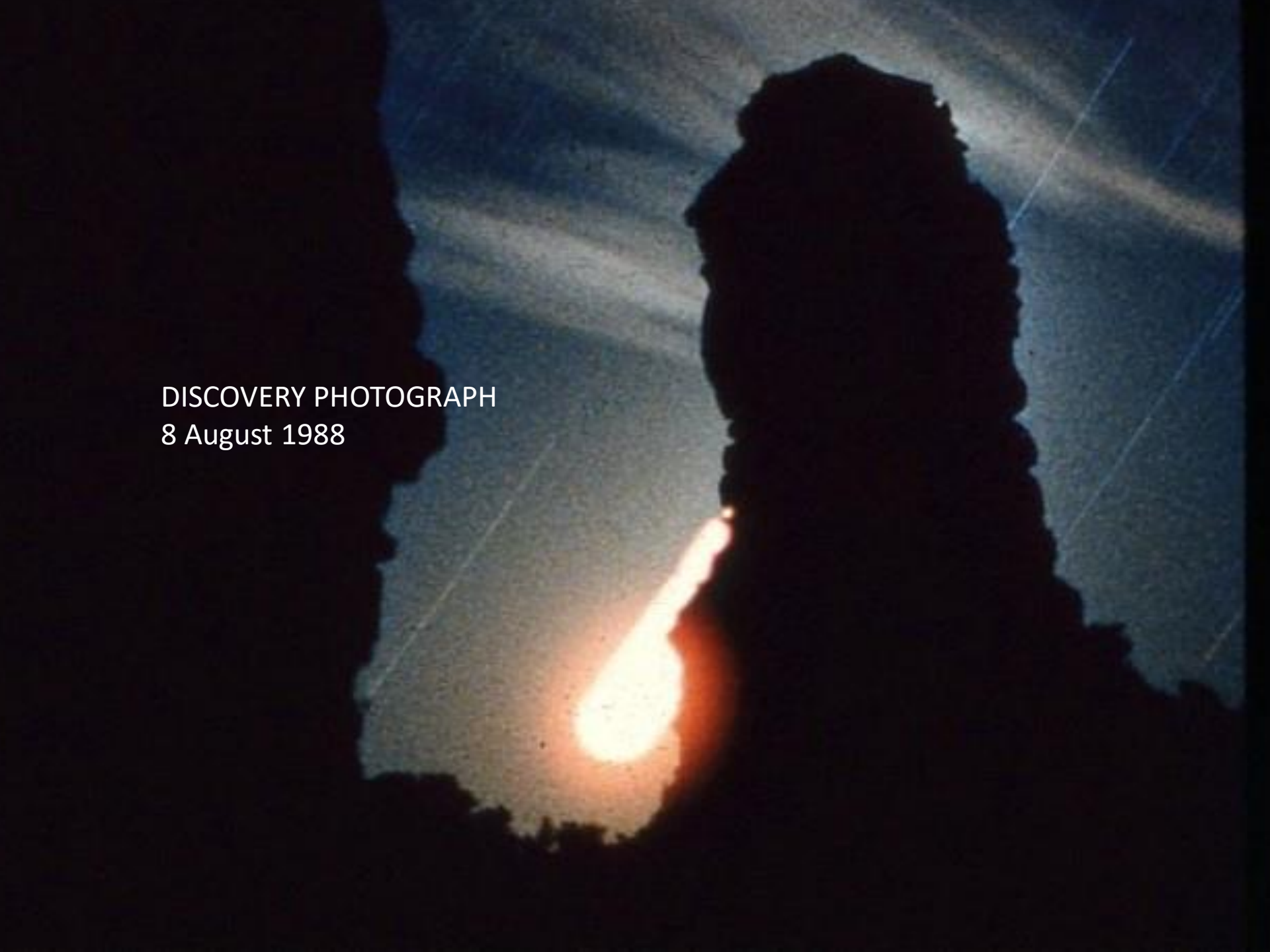
3

- These sunrises and sunsets were seen as theophanies, the appearances of the gods of the sky and earth, which had power, and could be involved in reciprocal social contracts.
- The power of these horizon-solar events can be understood by means of *animistic* and *relational* ontologies, which grew in power over the two centuries of the Great House culture of Chaco Canyon, i.e. the relationship between people, the sky, and the sacred land intensified.





DISCOVERY PHOTOGRAPH
8 August 1988





16 YEARS LATER
DECEMBER 2004

Major standsills: 1076 and 1093

Same dates as construction episodes
at the Great House



Chimney Rock become a National Monument!

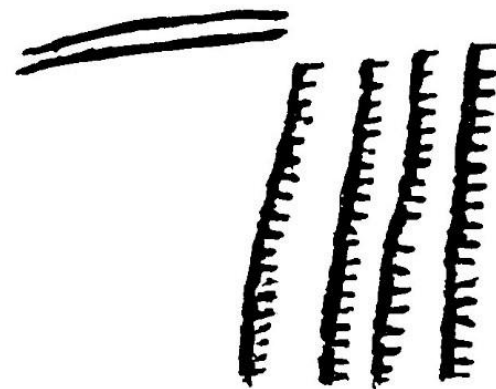




Brewed with

- Squash
- Beans
- and a hint of prickly pear!







December Solstice Sunset





December solstice sun



Major standstill moon