

Sacred Rocks and Sacred Landscapes

- What is the meaning of these rocks themselves?
- Were they understood as aspects of the sacred?
Entry of the sacred into the ordinary world as hierophanies?
- Were they living?
- Were they more than building blocks or sighting stones?
- Were horizons more than calendars using the sun as a device to mark the date?

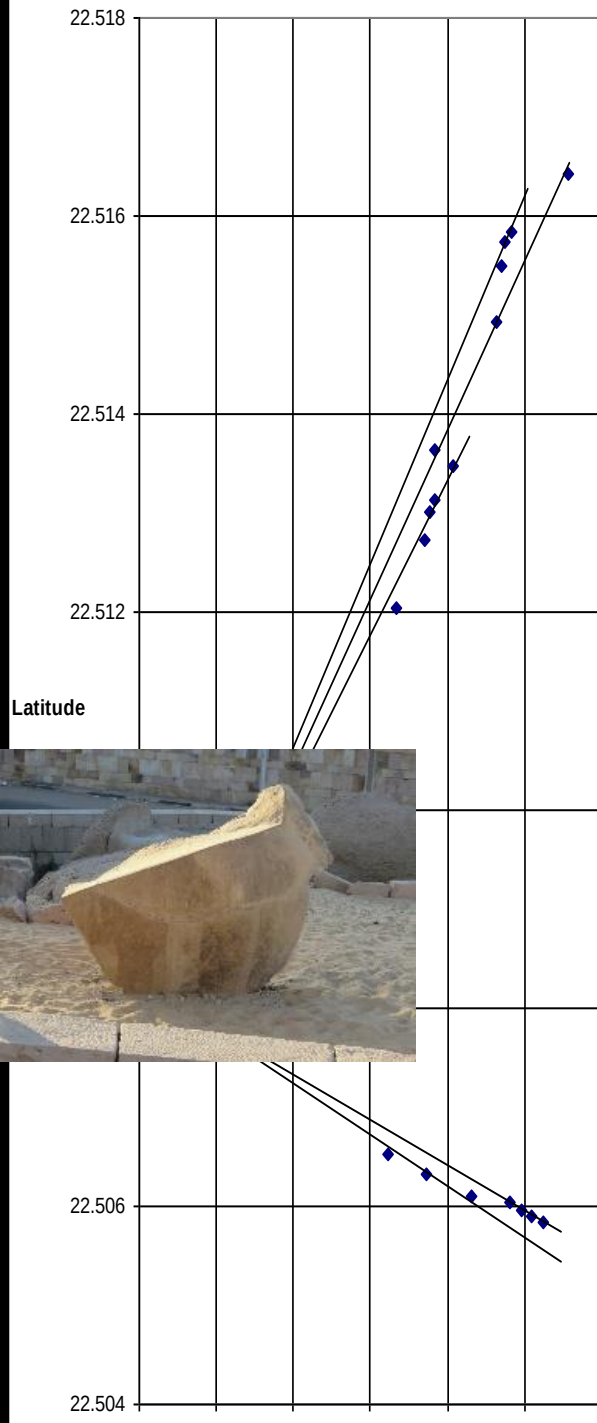
Measuring sacred rocks and sacred landscapes

- Keep in mind the emic quality of these places- what did they mean to other peoples.
- Being present at a sunrise or sunset gives one a sense of what that experience may have meant in the past. These times are potentially very deep experiences shared with the past.
- Starting with the rocks at Nabta Playa, we will explore other rocks and landscapes, leading to Chaco Canyon, Chimney Rock, and Mesa Verde

Nabta Playa: did they come alive when watered at their feet at solstice?



Sacred rock overlooking
the rocks in the playa
standing in water.



Sacred Rocks of the Inca: Huacas

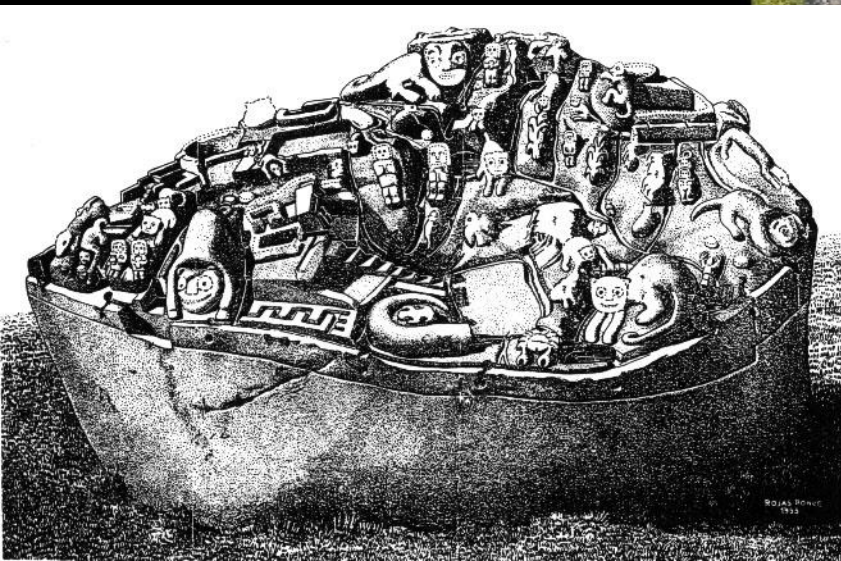


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Saihuite, Peru: the whole world brought alive by flowing water or chicha (corn beer)



Urubamba, Peru: center of huge plaza in palace of Huayna Capac



Urubamba, Peru





Chincheró, Peru: did carving bring
these rocks alive? Close to running
water. (photo by Tore)



Machu Picchu: Double-jamb door for
the sun at June solstice: did the sun
energize these stones?



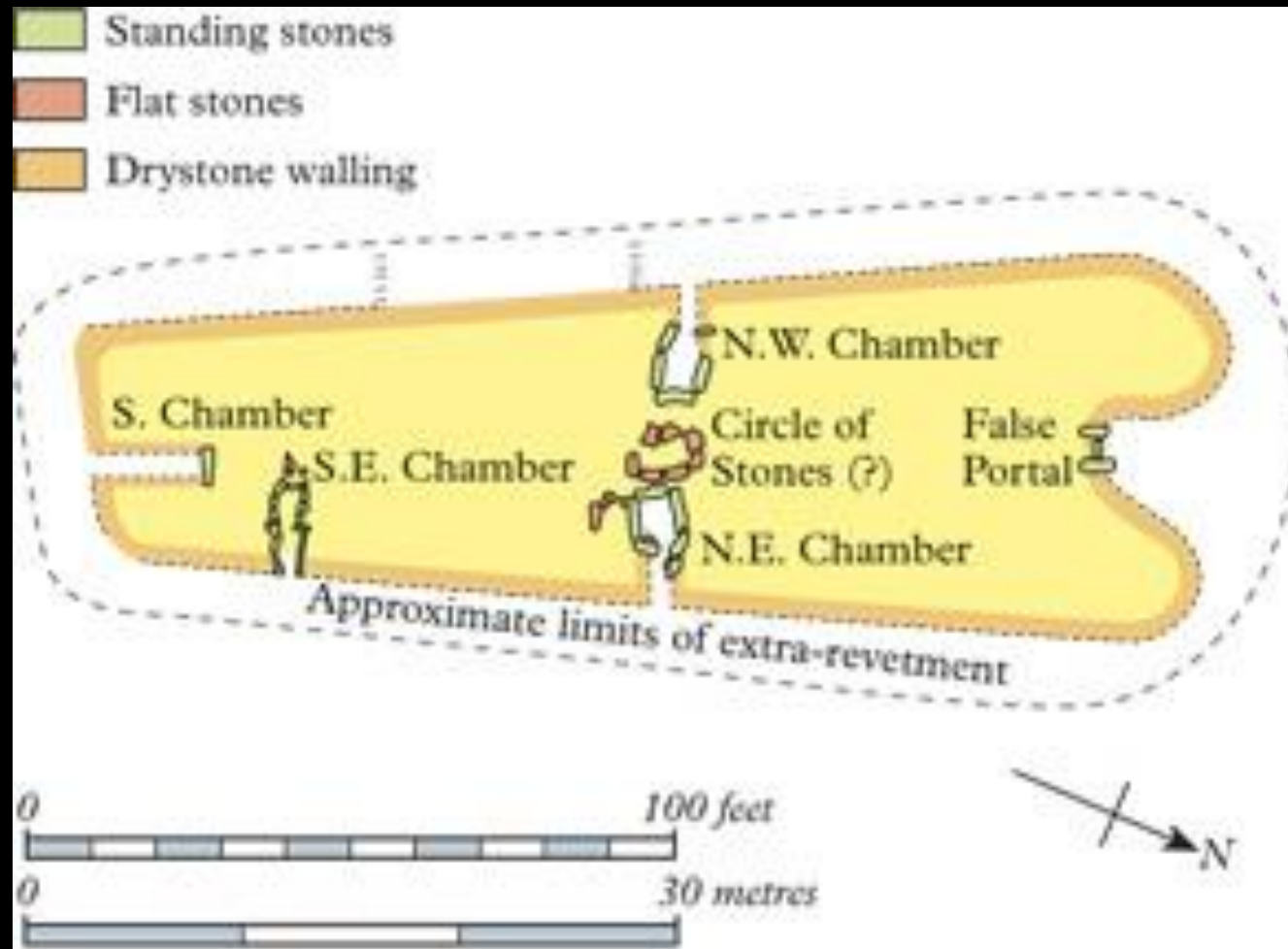
Cusco: Piedra Cansada



Belas Knap: Cotswold



Neolithic Long Barrow: ~2000 BC









Belas Knap

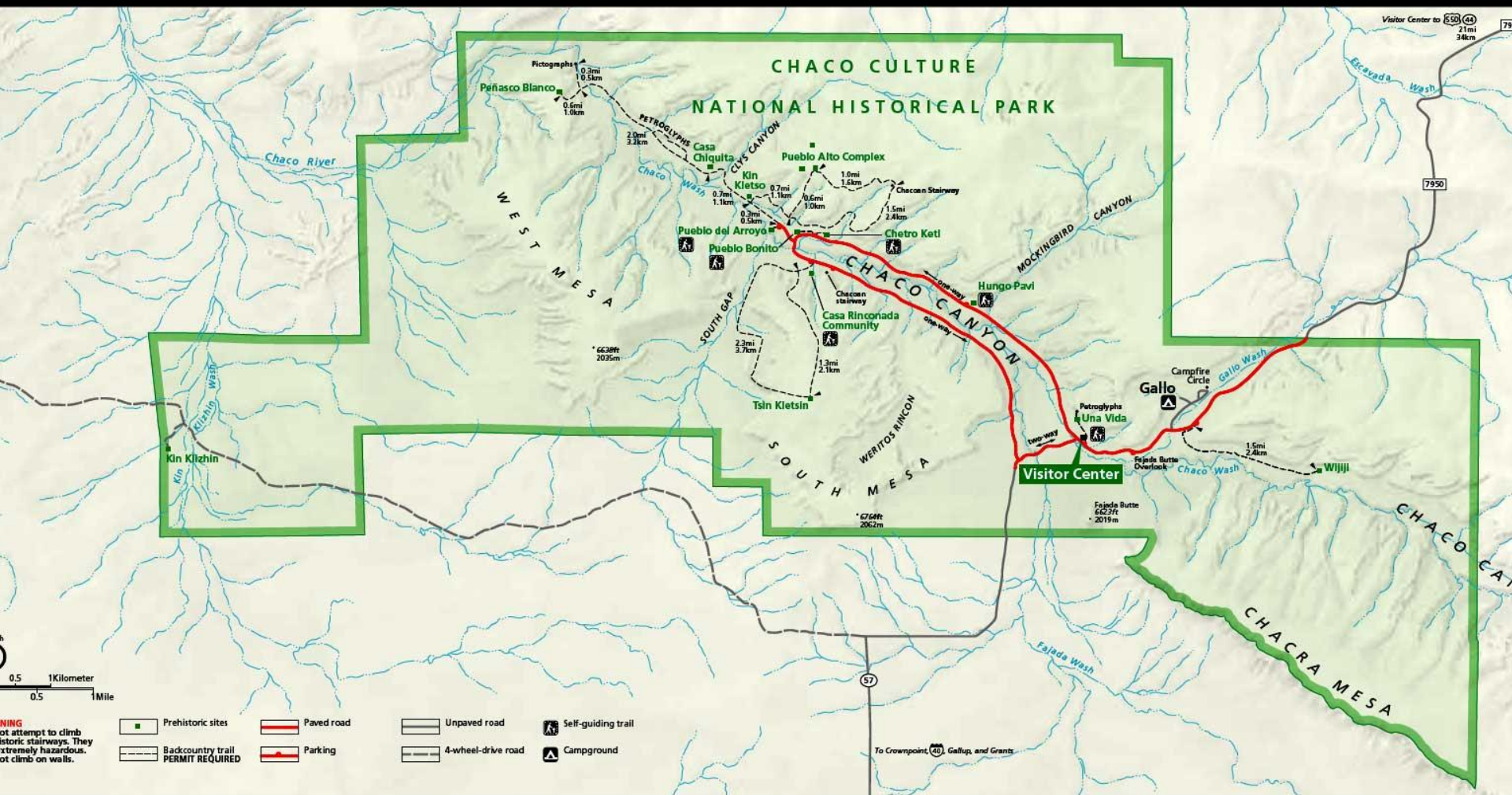


Quoits in Cornwall

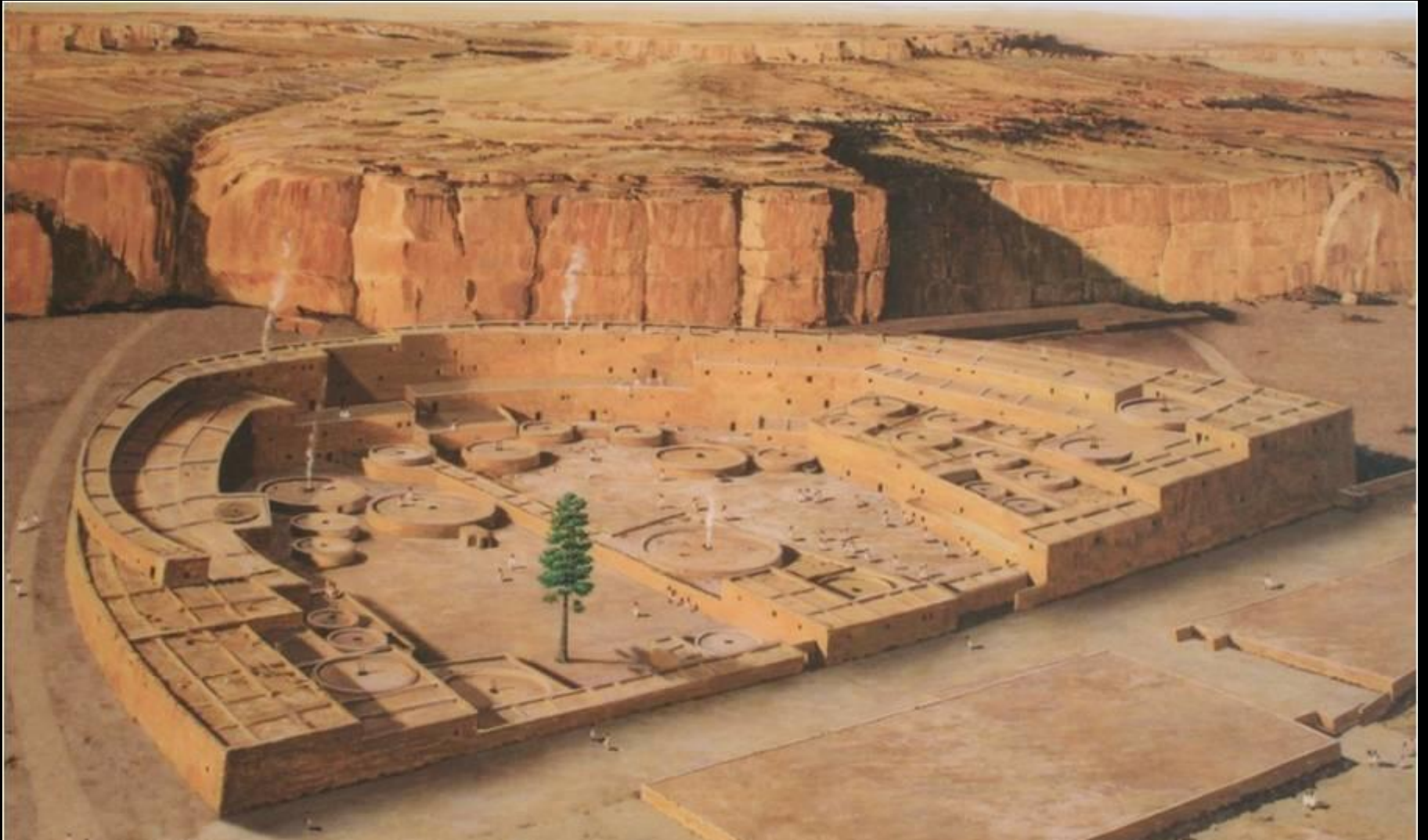


Chaco Canyon, New Mexico: 1000-1150 CE

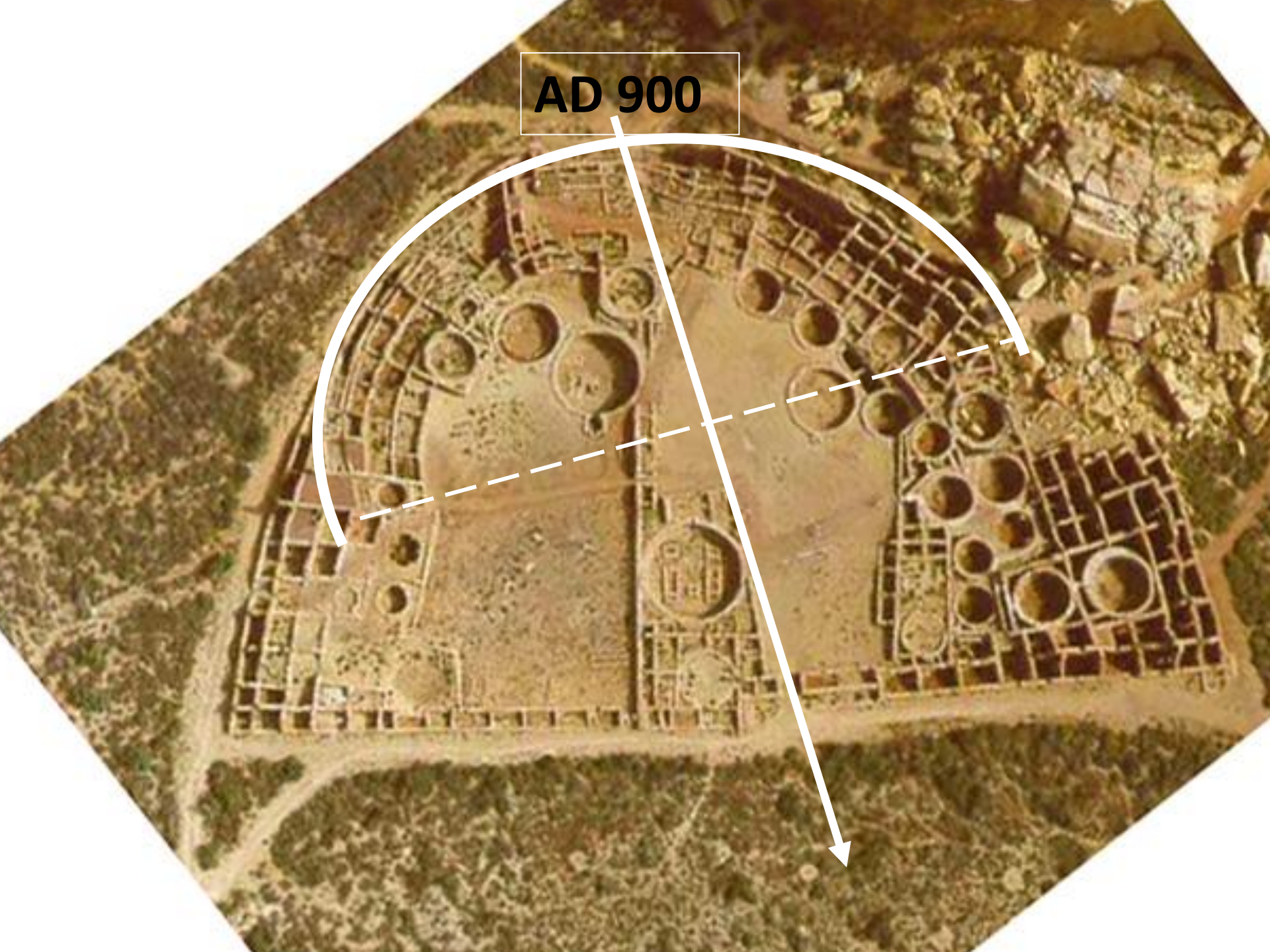




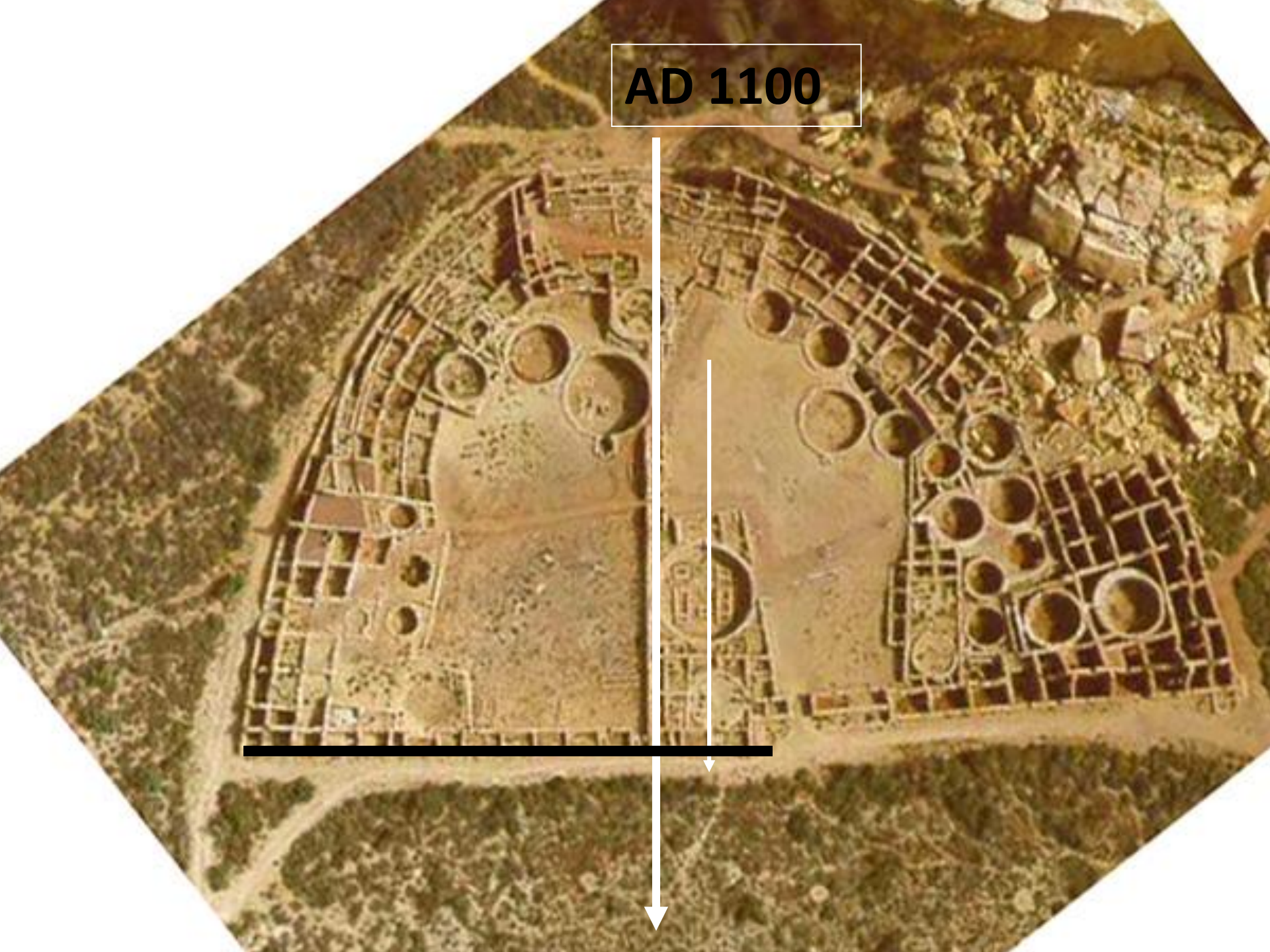
Pueblo Bonito: after realignment- and a serious ethnic dispute (?)



AD 900



AD 1100

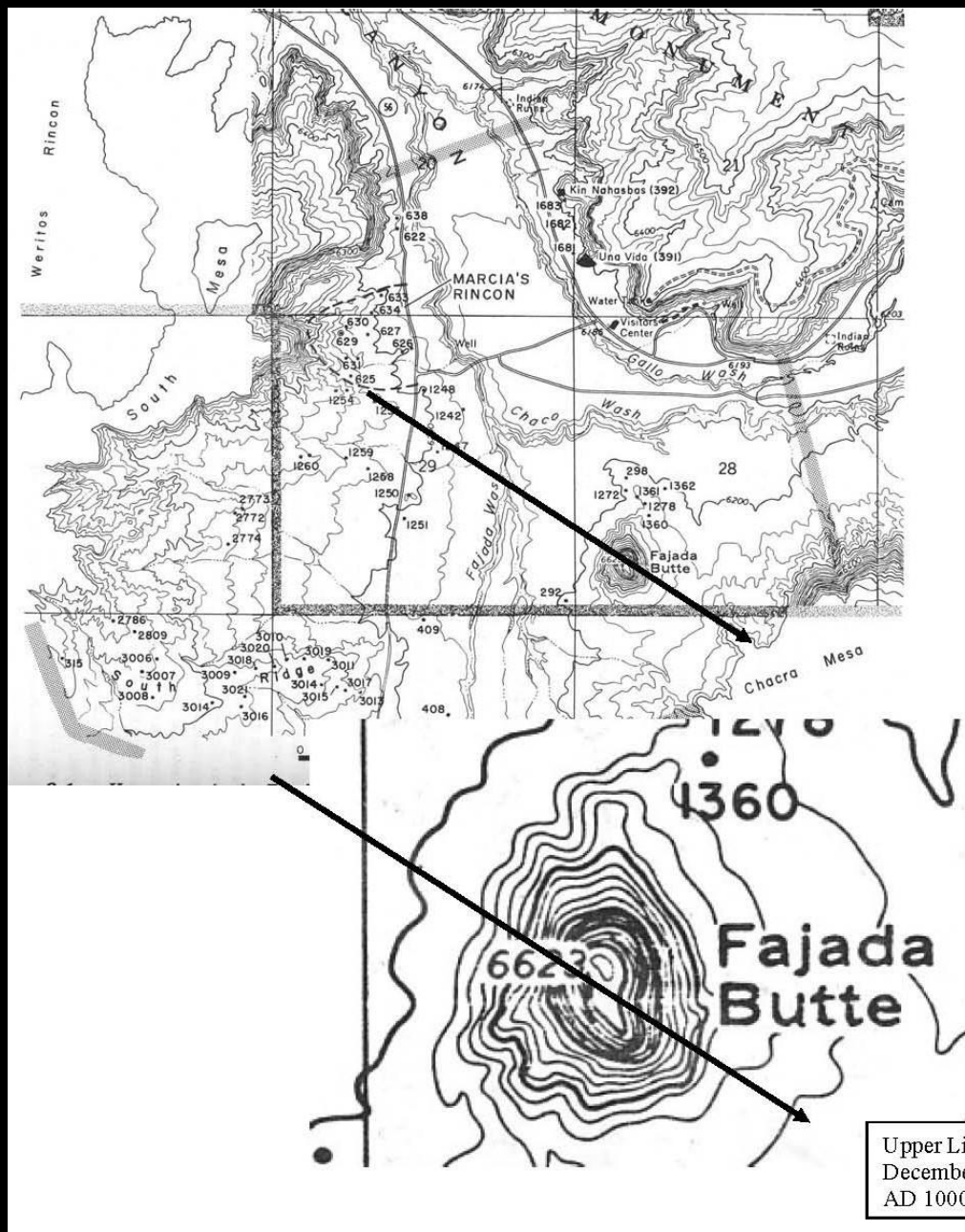






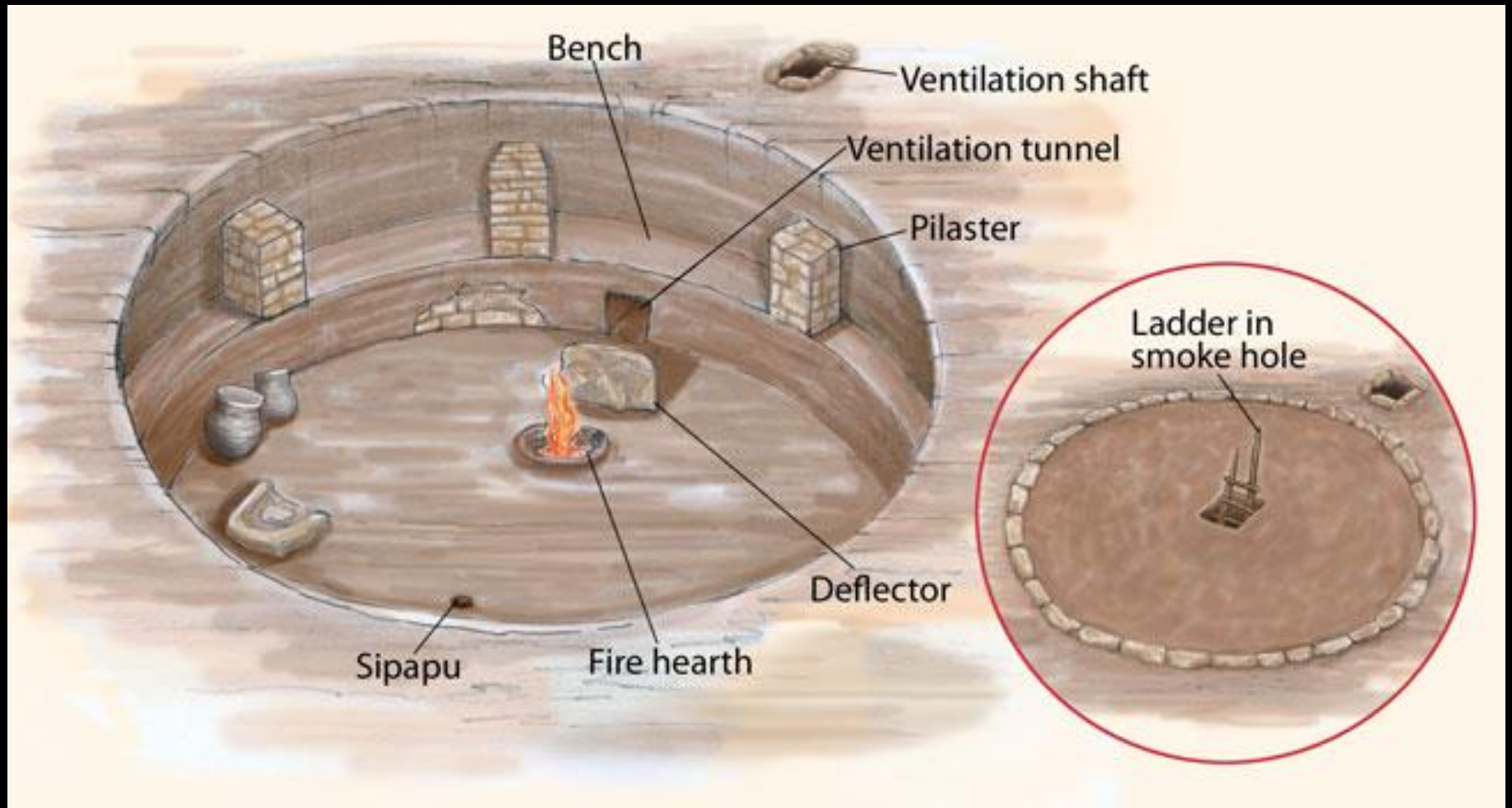
Fajada Gap Community 800-1020

- 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





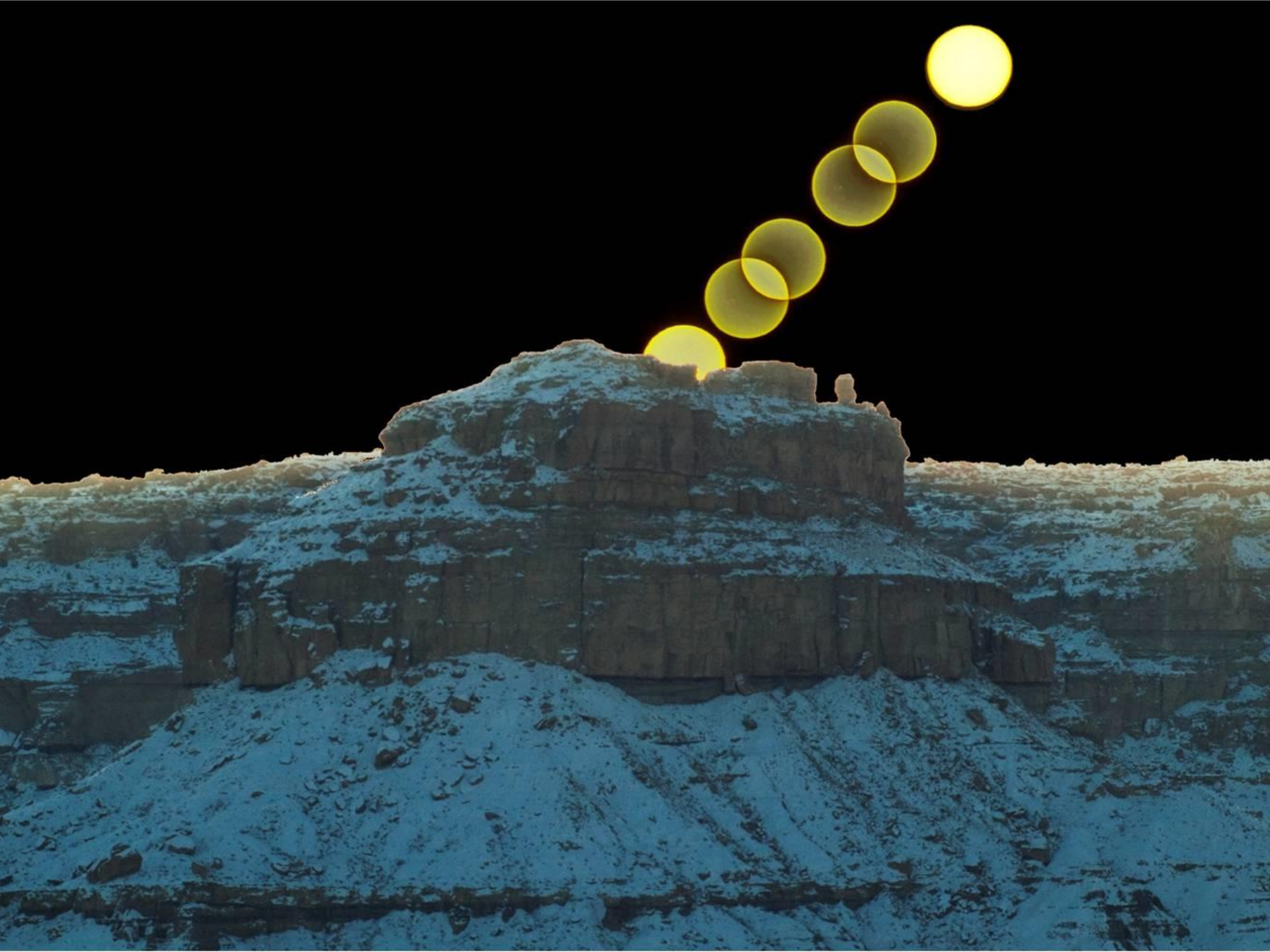
Kiva: representation of the cosmos-
sipapu the place of entry into this
world of the ancestors: verticality



Great Kiva in Aztec, Colorado





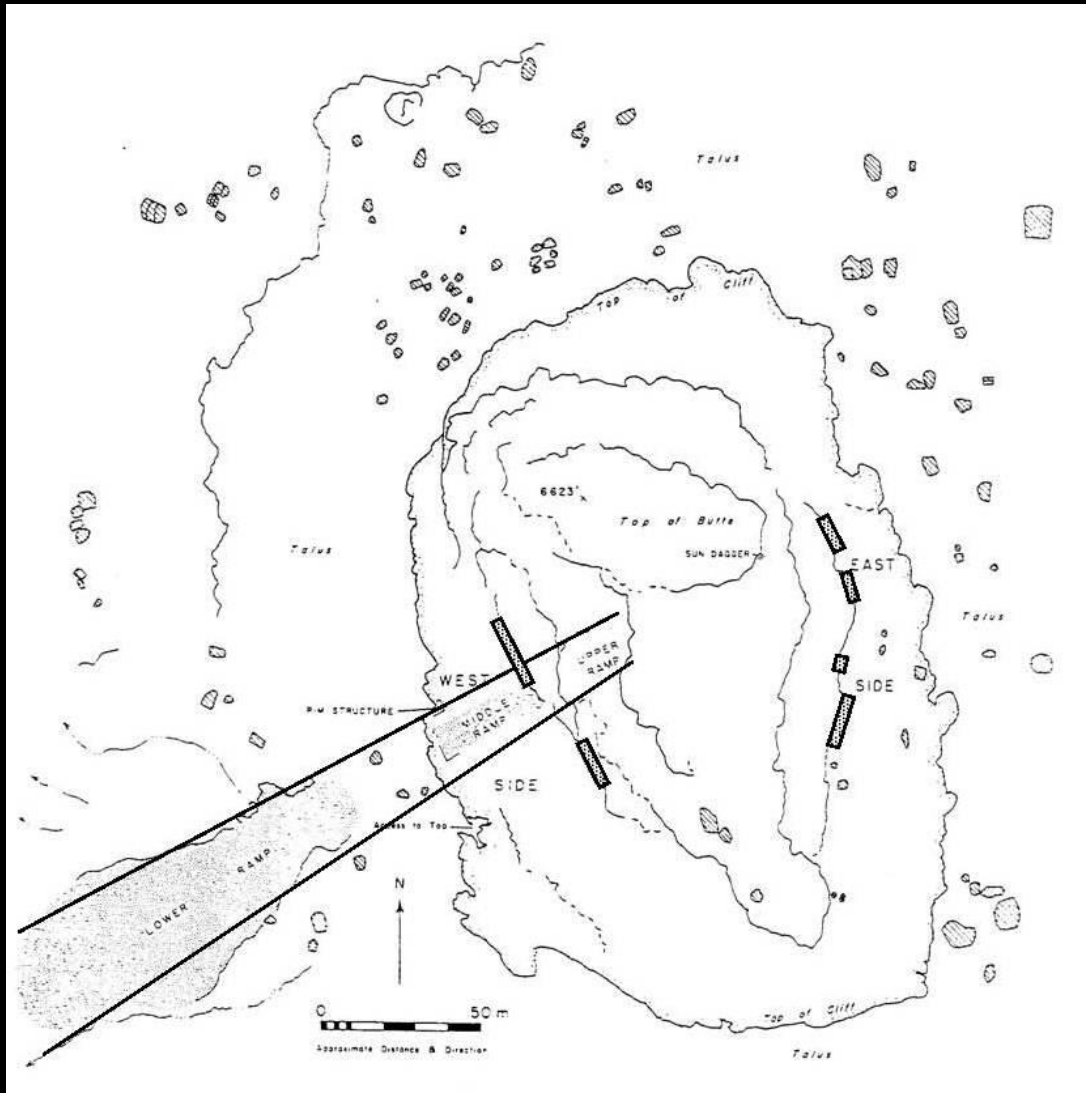








Ramp and room at the top-



Winter solstice celebration

- Sunrise over Fajada Butte
- Celebrants emerge from the underworld of the Great Kiva: observe a “theophany”
- Sacred sun joining the sacred rock spire, which may have been the cosmic axis- *axis mundi*
- Fires at the base and top of the base of the ramp- miming the sun?

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



View to the north east: a sacred stone?



Northeast face of rock with spiral



Two weeks before June solstice



Piedra del Sol: is this a theophany- sacred rock and sacred sun?

June 4-5



summer solstice



South side covered with petroglyphs

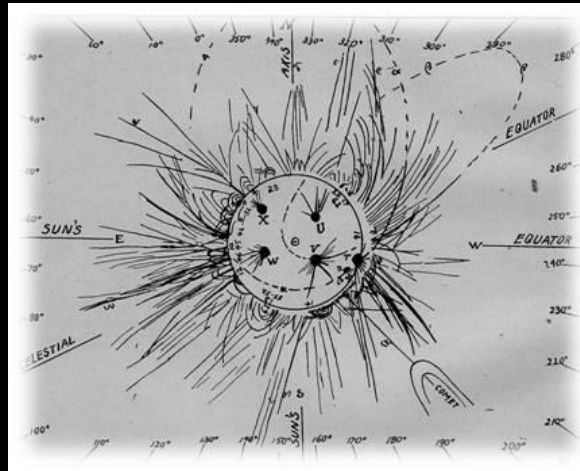
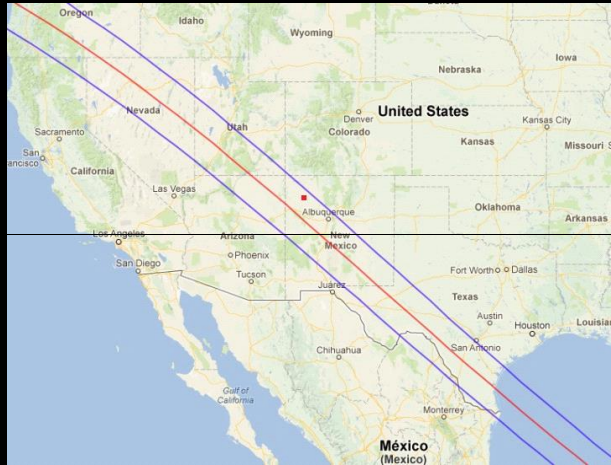




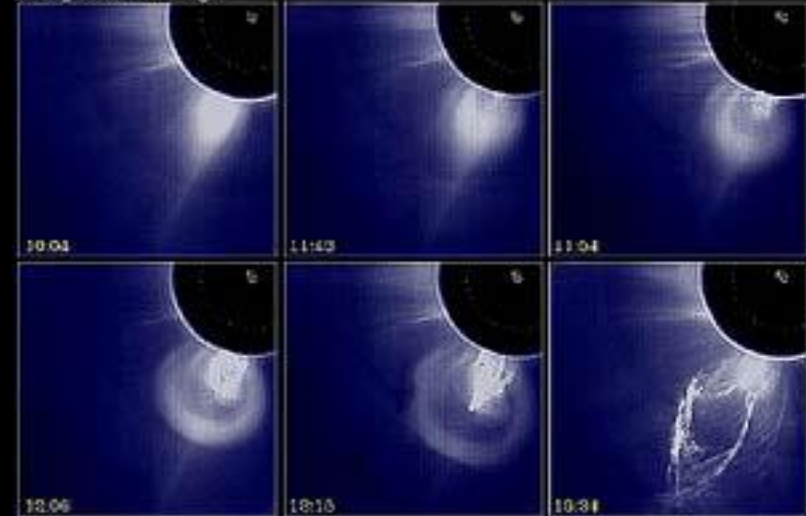


Total solar Eclipse: July 11 1097

Total eclipse A.D. 1097



18 Aug 1990: White Light



Source: High Altitude Observatory/Solar Maximum Mission Archive

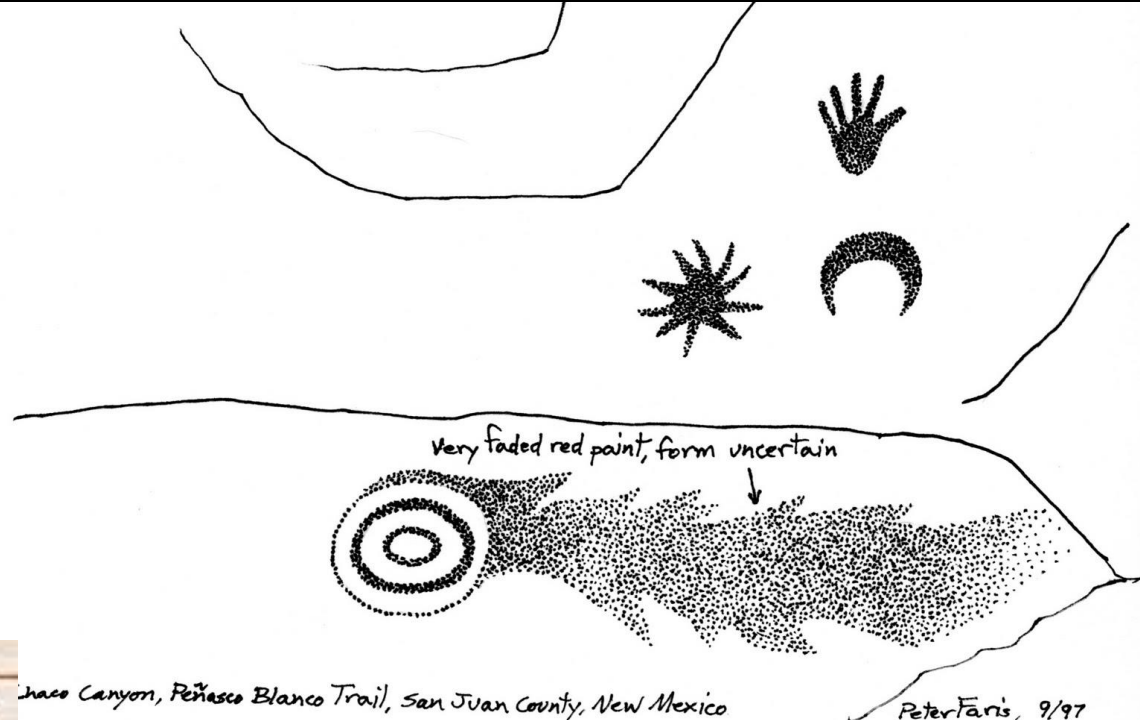
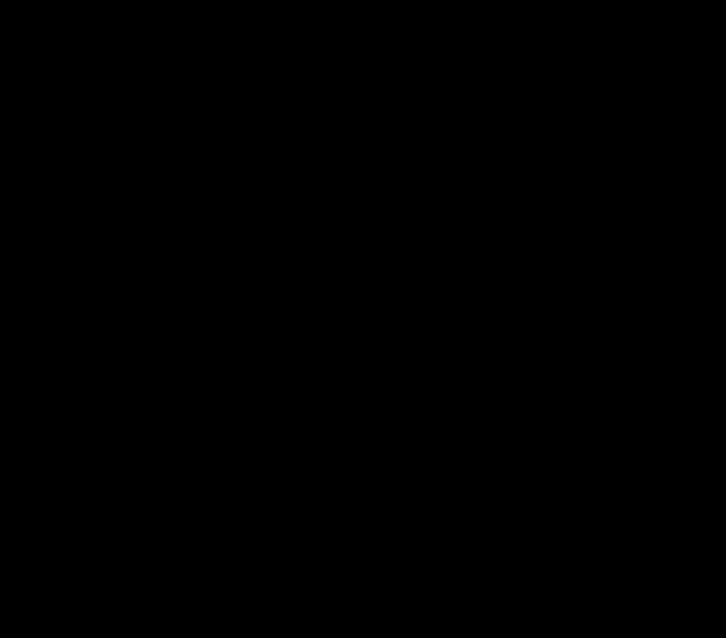
SDO A-717

Looking upward to an overhang: a representation of the heaven?

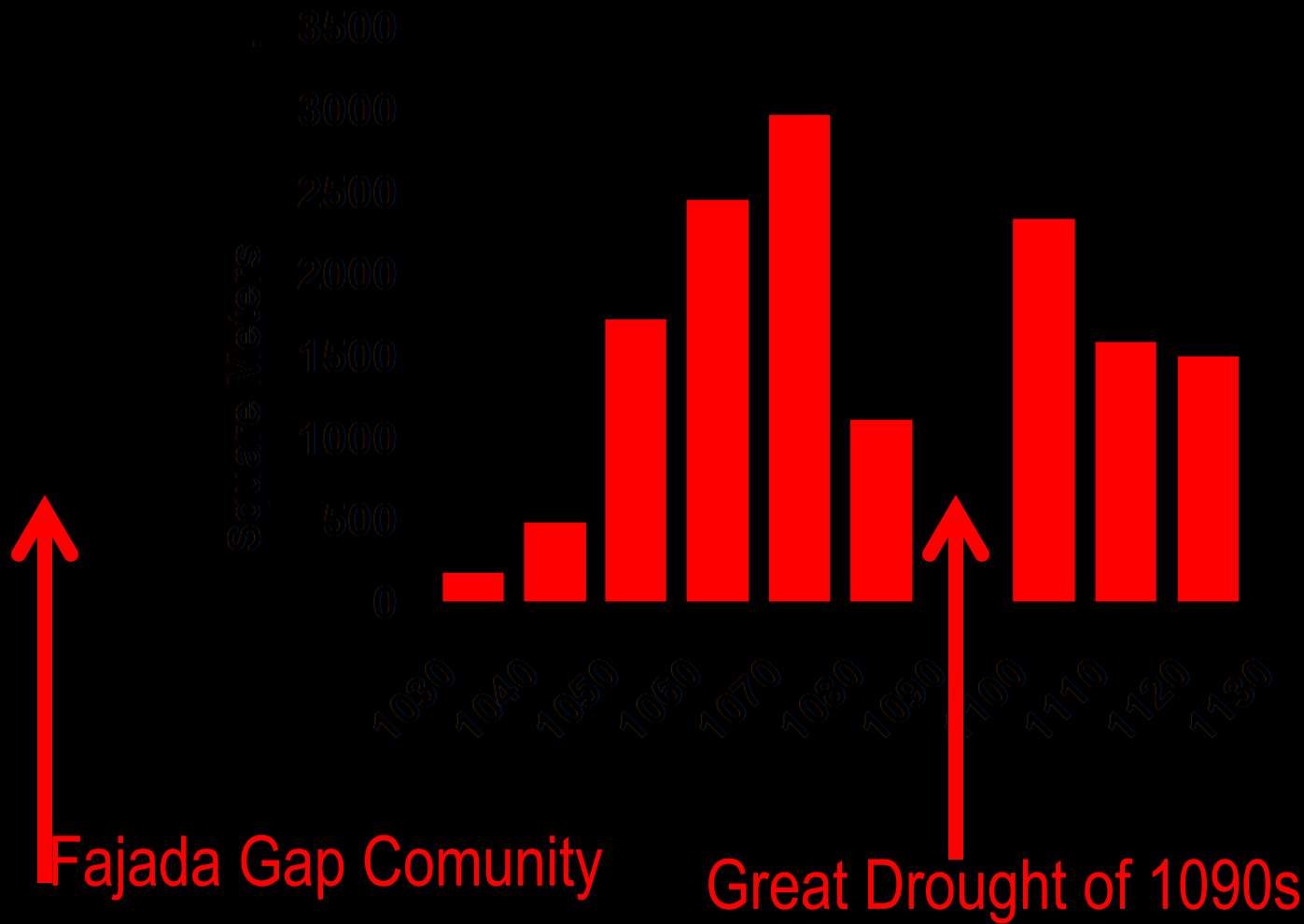
- Super nova of 1054?
- Halley's comet of 1066?







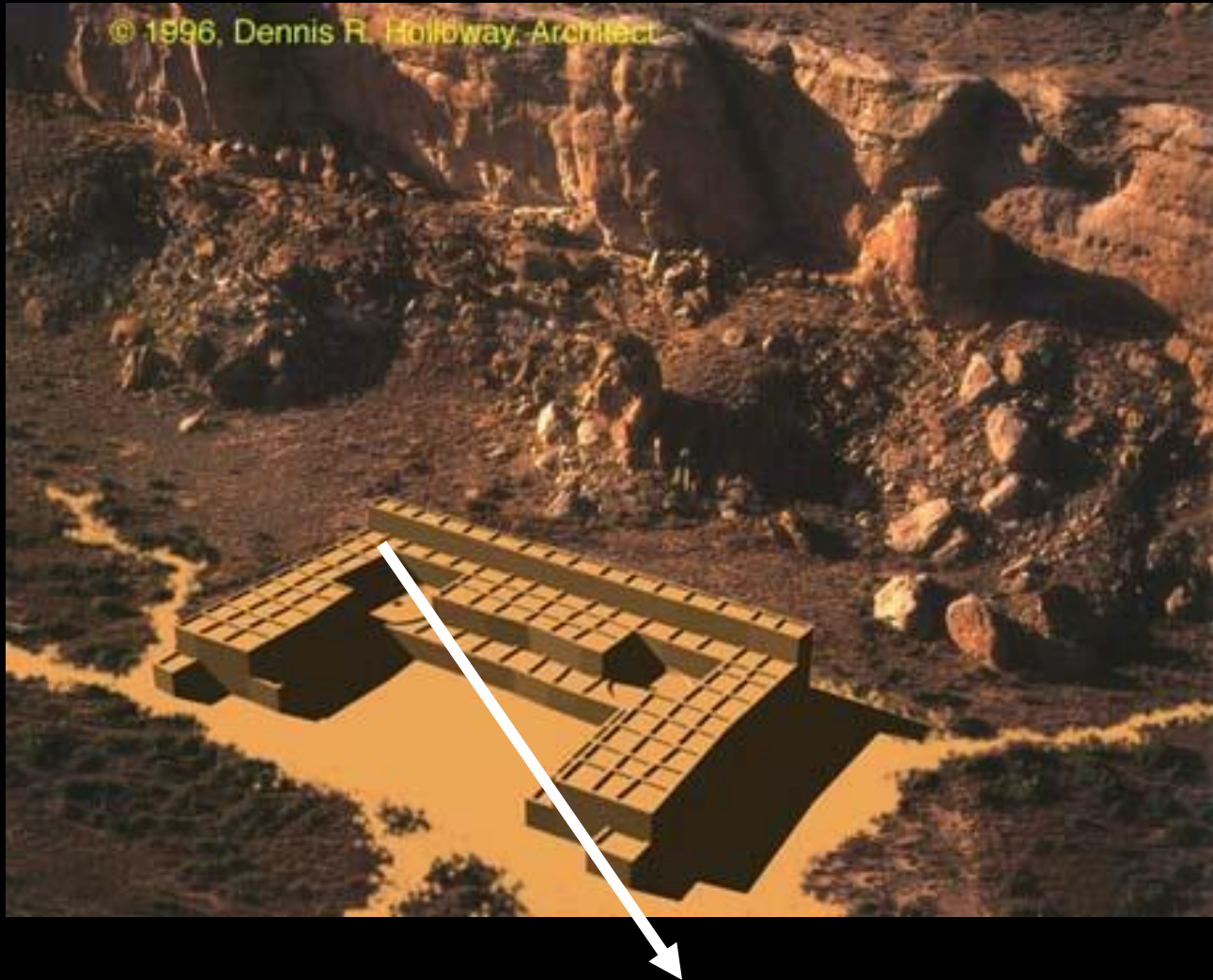
Great House Construction



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



Astronomy at Chaco after 1100 CE: the sun rising behind horizon features. What was the meaning?

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?

2. These Great Houses built after 1100 are the result of a religious revival following the great drought of 1090-1100.

Spontaneous expressions of devotion to the sun.

Exclusively ceremonial: no middens, not primarily residential

The revival did not succeed, and abandonment became complete within 30 years

3. These sunrises were seen as theophanies, the conjoining of the gods of the sky and earth, which had power, and could be involved in reciprocal social contracts.

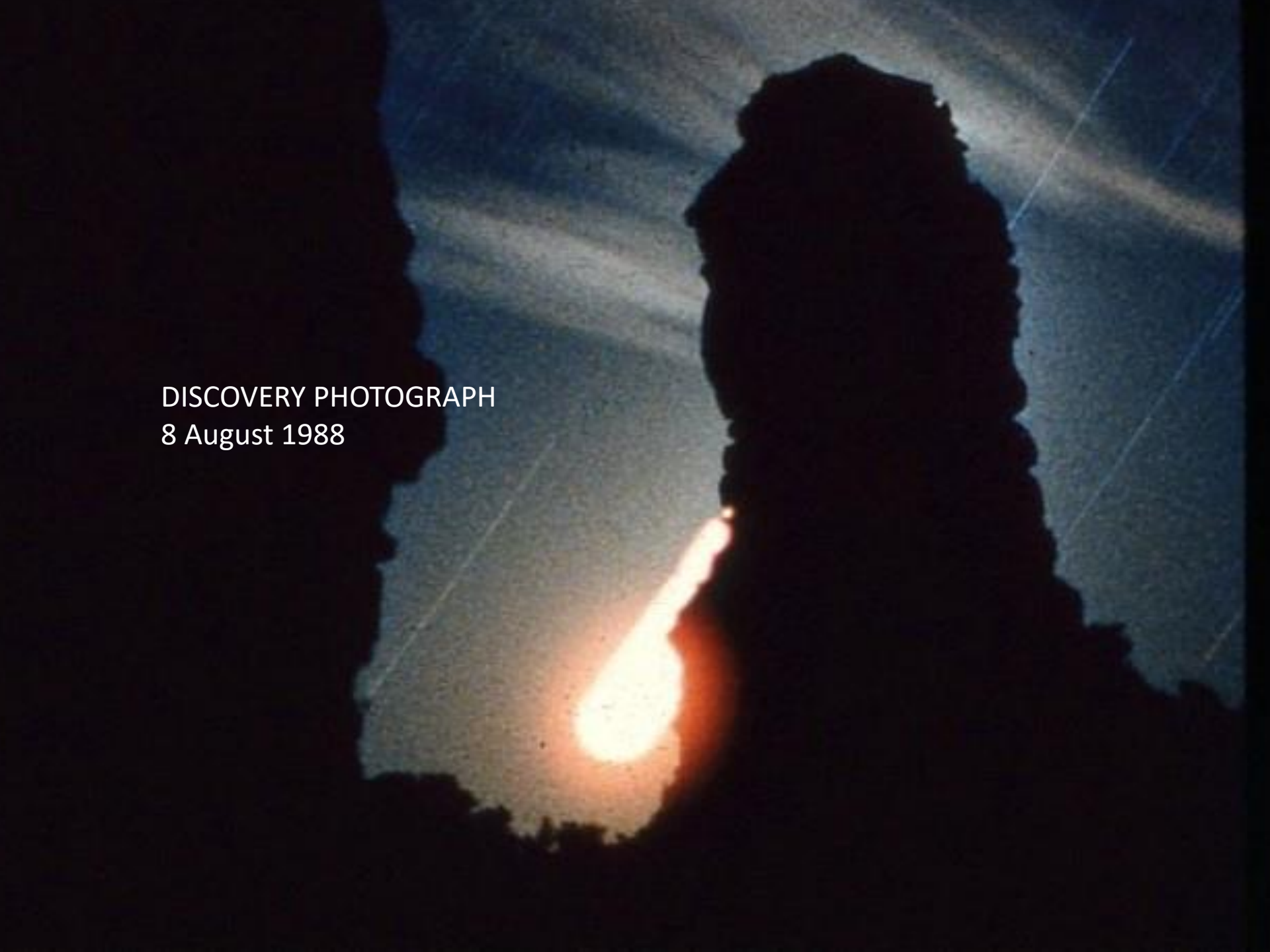
Can the power of these horizon-solar events can be understood by means of *animistic* and *relational* ontologies, which grew in power over the two centuries of the Great House culture of Chaco Canyon, i.e. the reciprocal relationship between people, the sky, and the sacred land intensified?

Chimney Rock, Colorado





DISCOVERY PHOTOGRAPH
8 August 1988



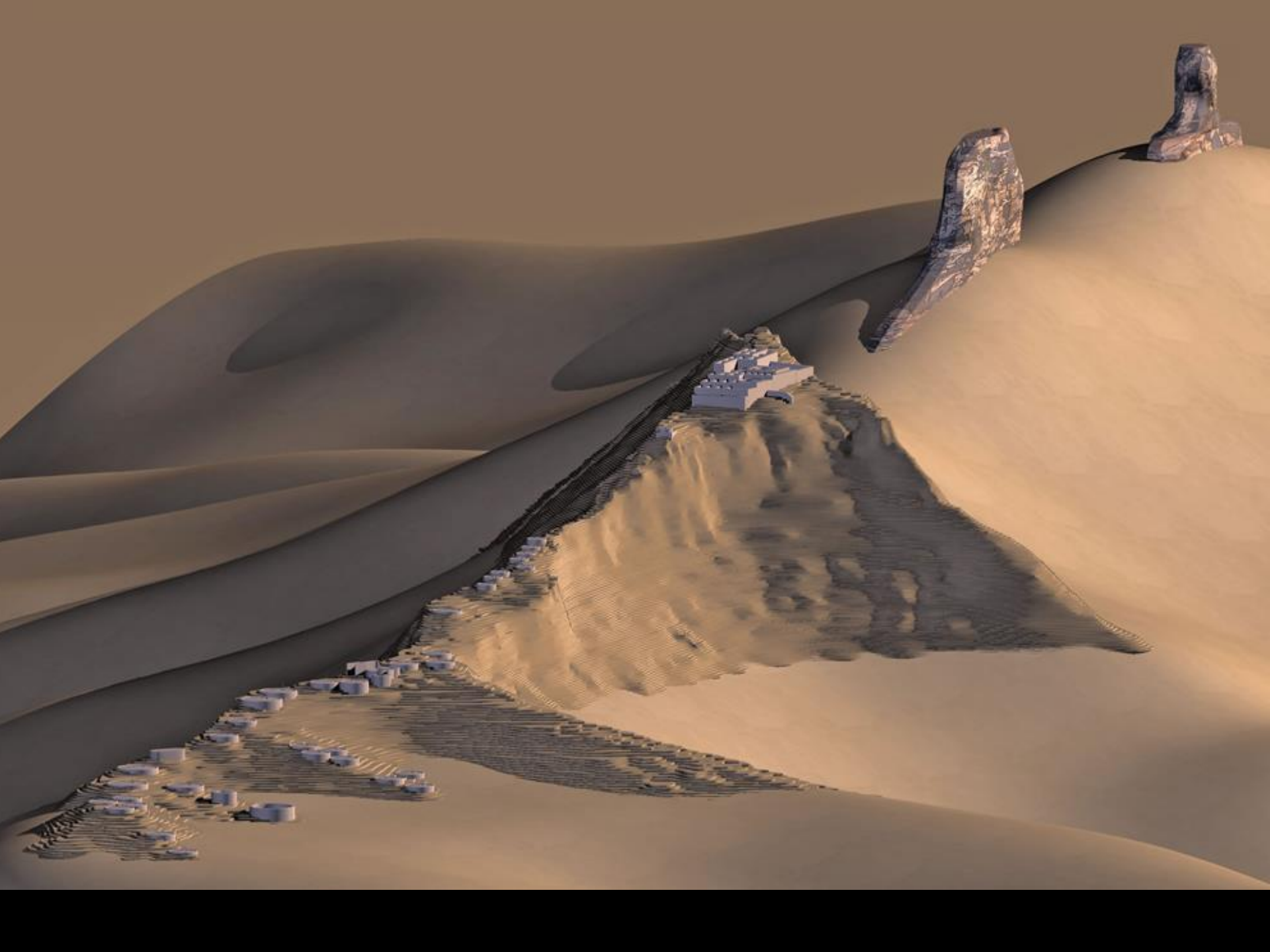


16 YEARS LATER
DECEMBER 2004

Major standsills: 1076 and 1093

Same dates as construction episodes
at the Great House





Chimney Rock becomes a National Monument!





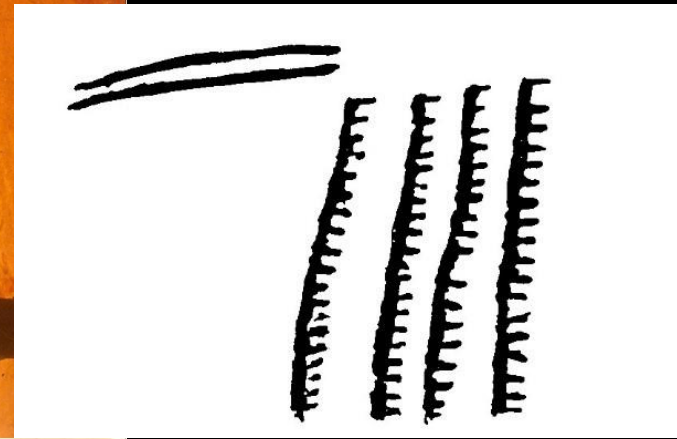
Brewed with

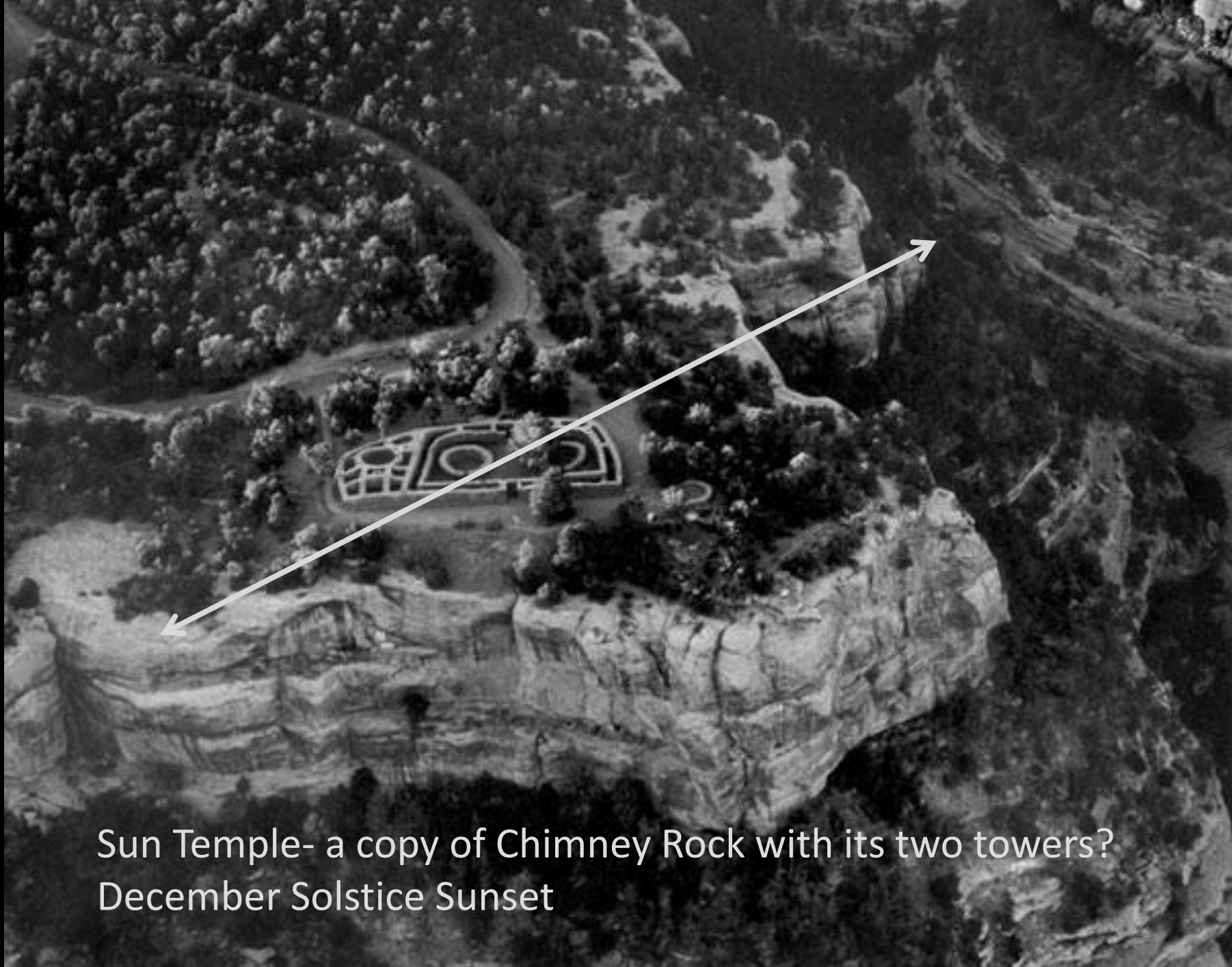
- Squash
- Beans
- and a hint of prickly pear!

Mesa Verde, Colorado: Cliff Palace



In side the tower at Cliff Palace, next
to a window viewing the Sun Temple.
Marking the 18.6 year cycle of lunar
standstills?





Sun Temple- a copy of Chimney Rock with its two towers?
December Solstice Sunset



December solstice sun



Major standstill moon