

Some Celestial Rock Art Motifs at Fremont Indian State Park

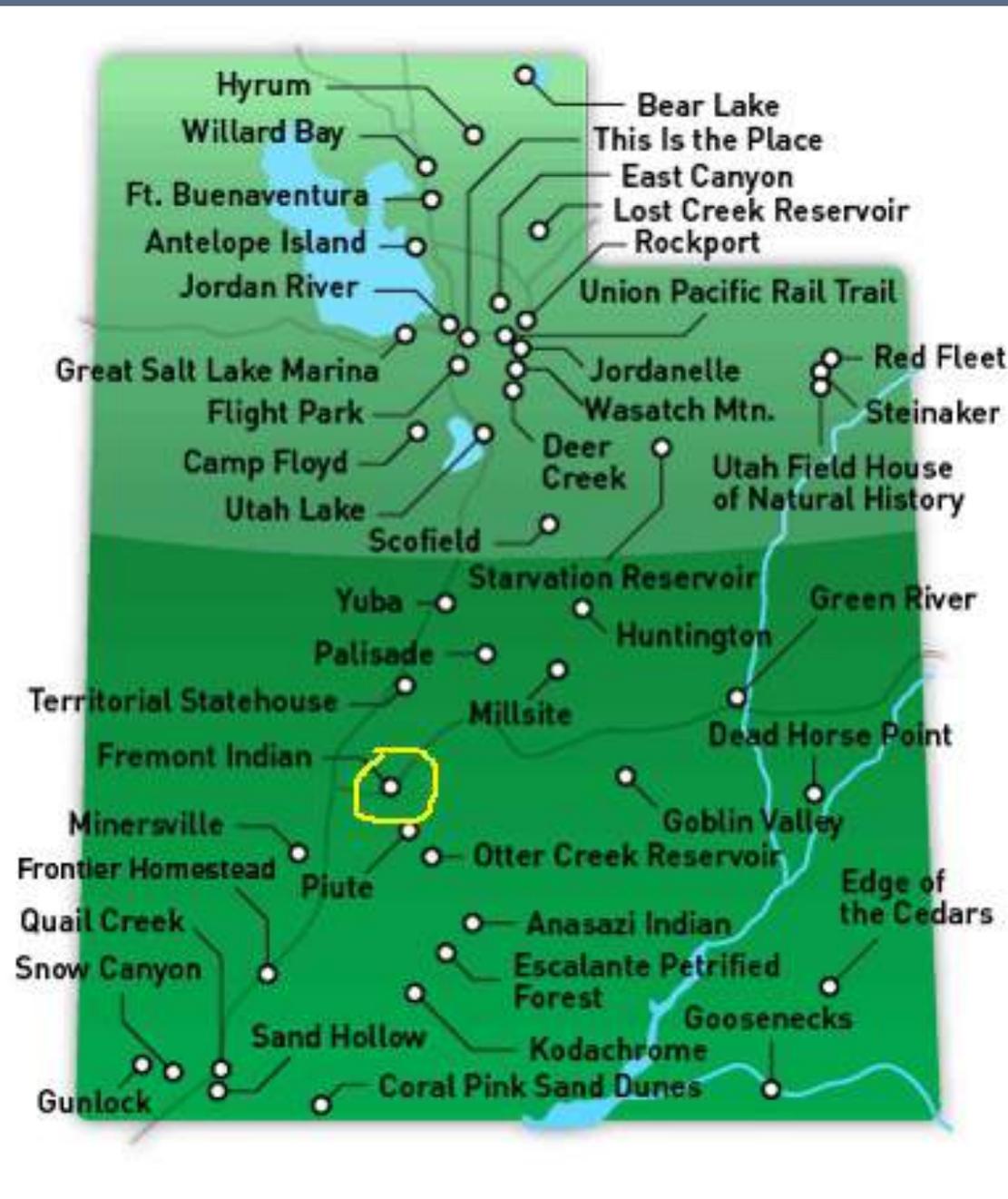


and

Tentative

Interpretations of
Their Function and
Meaning

by John McHugh



Fremont Indian State Park: Backstory

- Expansion of I-70 through Clear Creek Canyon in the early 1980s necessitated **recording of numerous archaeological and rock art sites**
- **Clear Creek Canyon Archaeological Project** created
- Excavation at **Five Finger Ridge**

Five Finger Ridge = large Fremont pithouse village



Five Finger
Ridge:

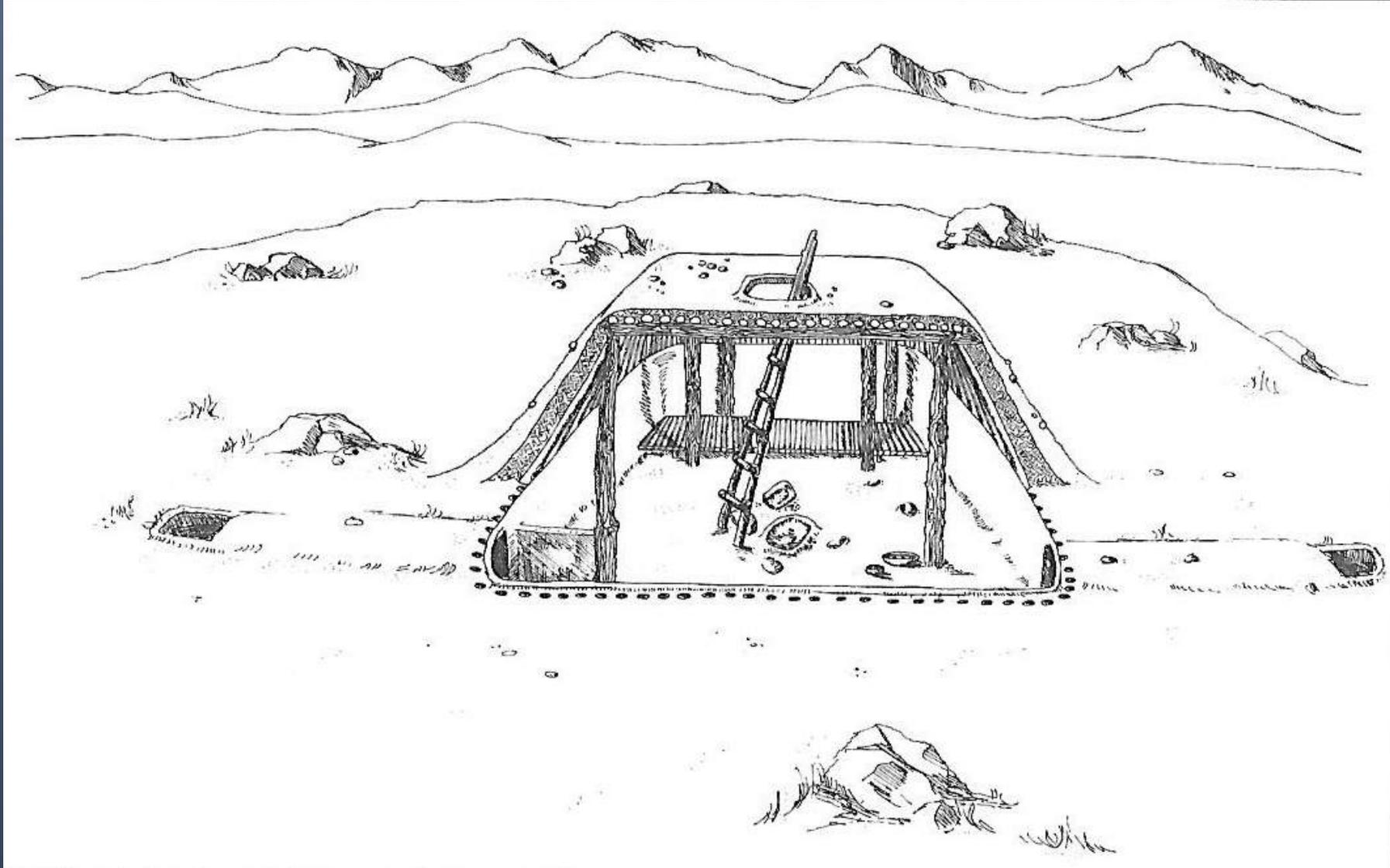
View of east
finger



Typical Five Finger Ridge rectangular pithouse

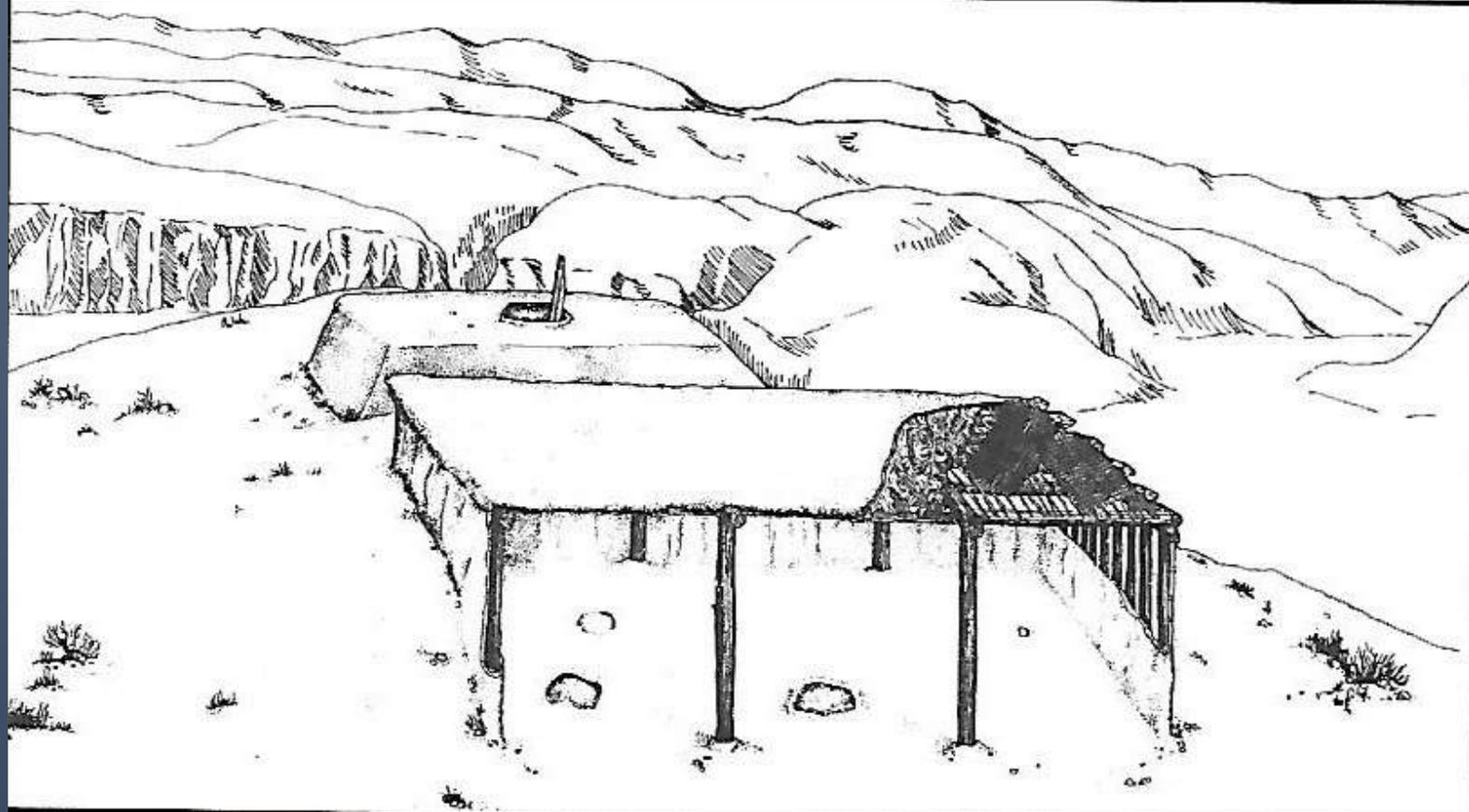


Sketch of Fremont Pithouse

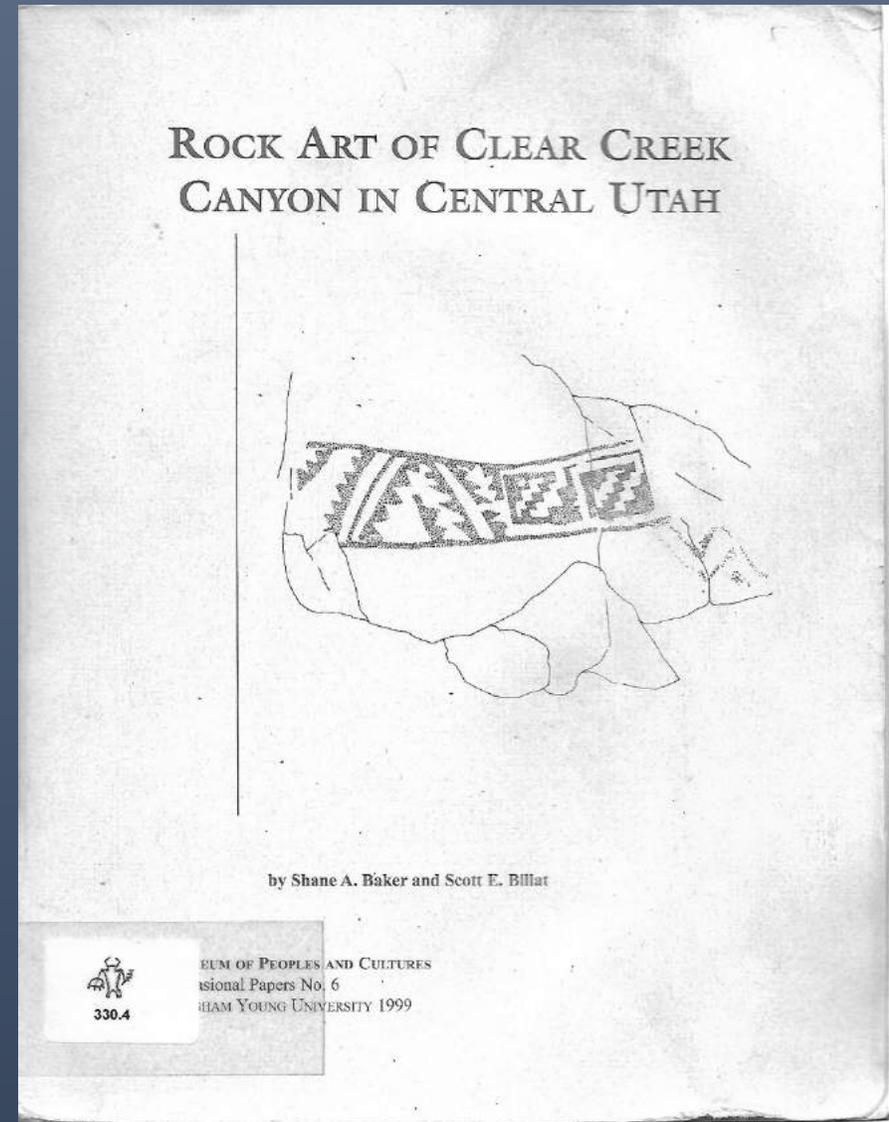


Five Finger Ridge:

- Largest Fremont occupation in 13th century AD
- 100 inhabitants



Fremont
Indian State
Park rock art
catalogued by
Shane Baker
& Scott Billat

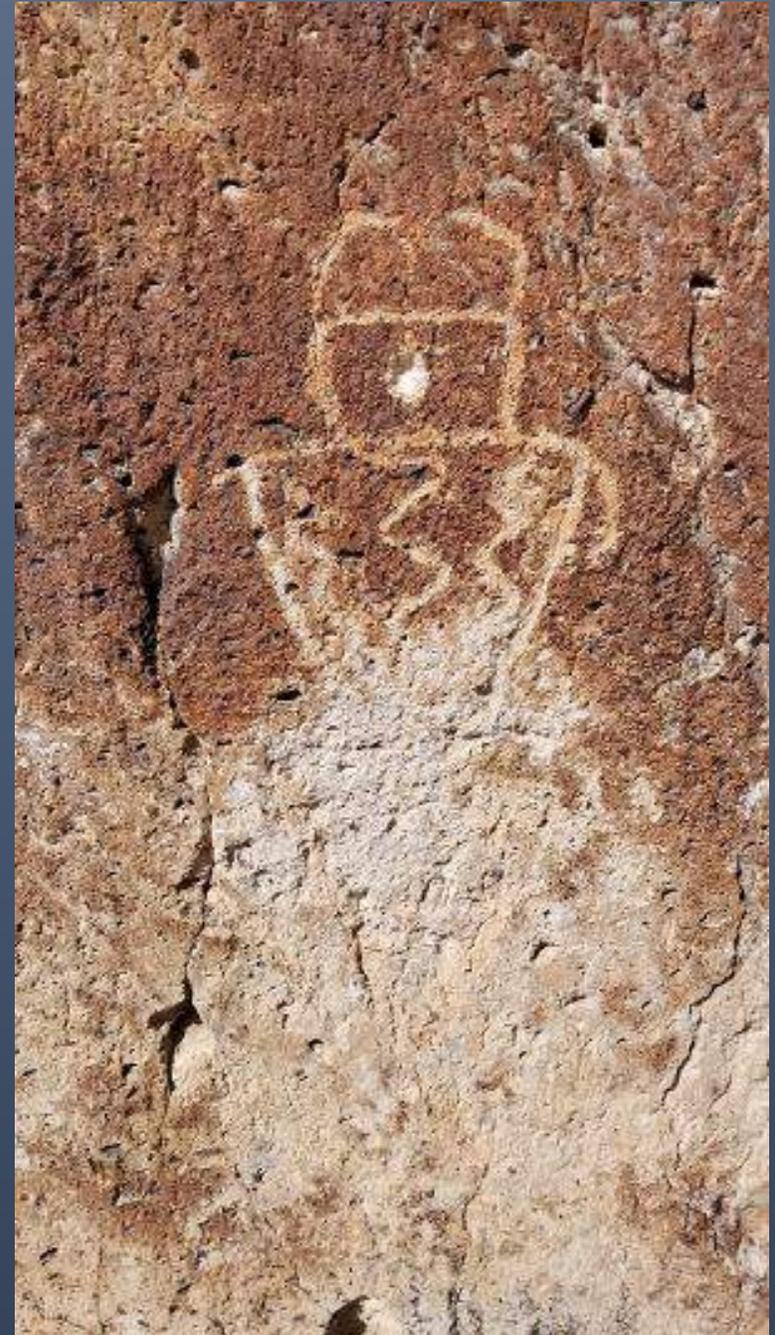


Clear Creek Canyon rock art consists of:

- 697 panels
- Over 3000 individual rock art elements
(petroglyphs, pictographs, or pictoglyphs)

Sevier Style A (Fremont)

most frequent rock art style
at Fremont Indian State Park



Spring 2017

- Dr. John Lundwall suggested we commence an independent analysis of rock art at Fremont Indian State Park
- Focus: potential relationship between Fremont rock art and astronomical knowledge

Who are the Fremont?



Who are the Fremont?

- Current mtDNA evidence indicates:
- Fremont are Ancestral Puebloan
- Closest Fremont genetic affiliation: Jemez Pueblo (NM)

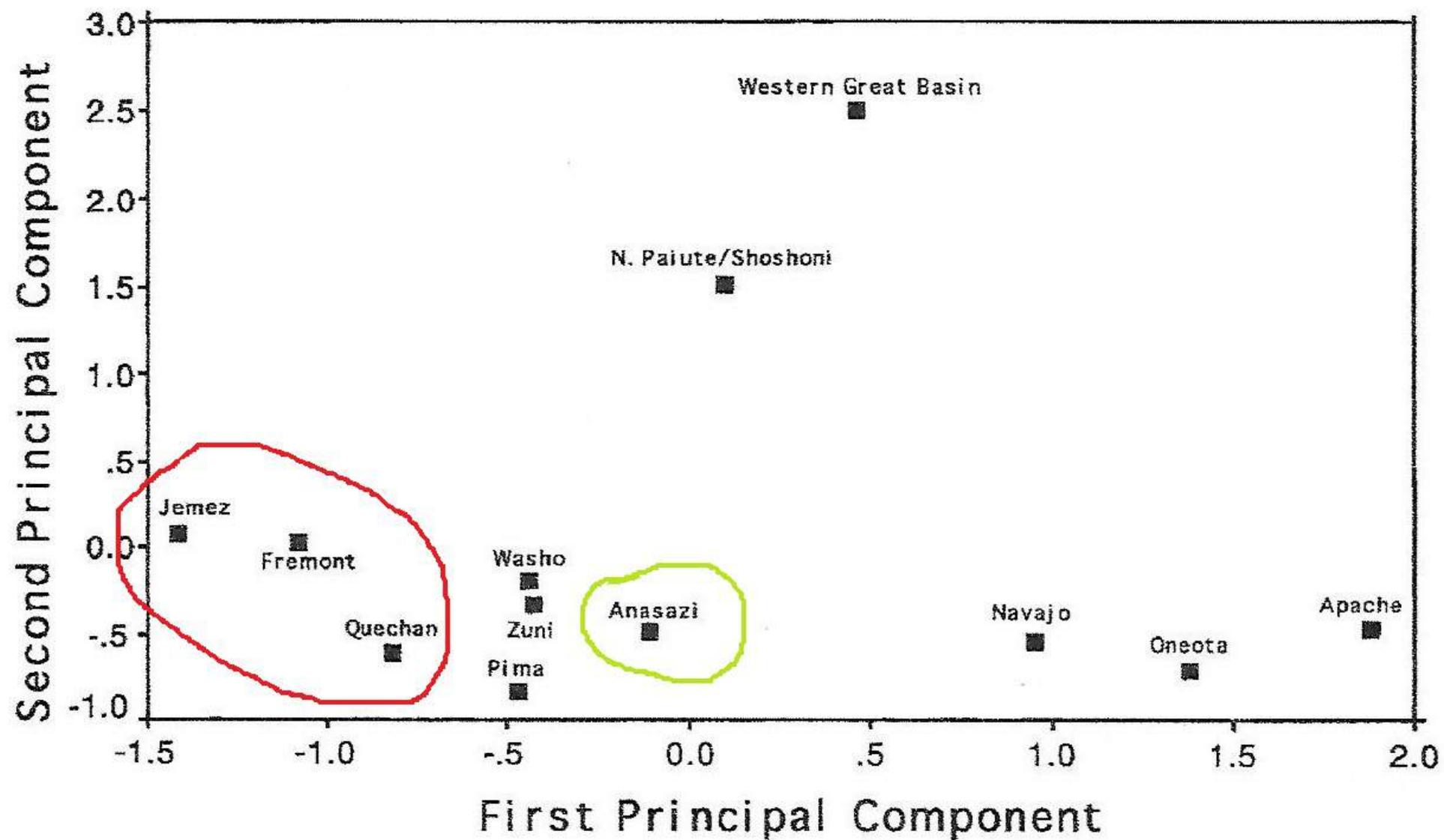
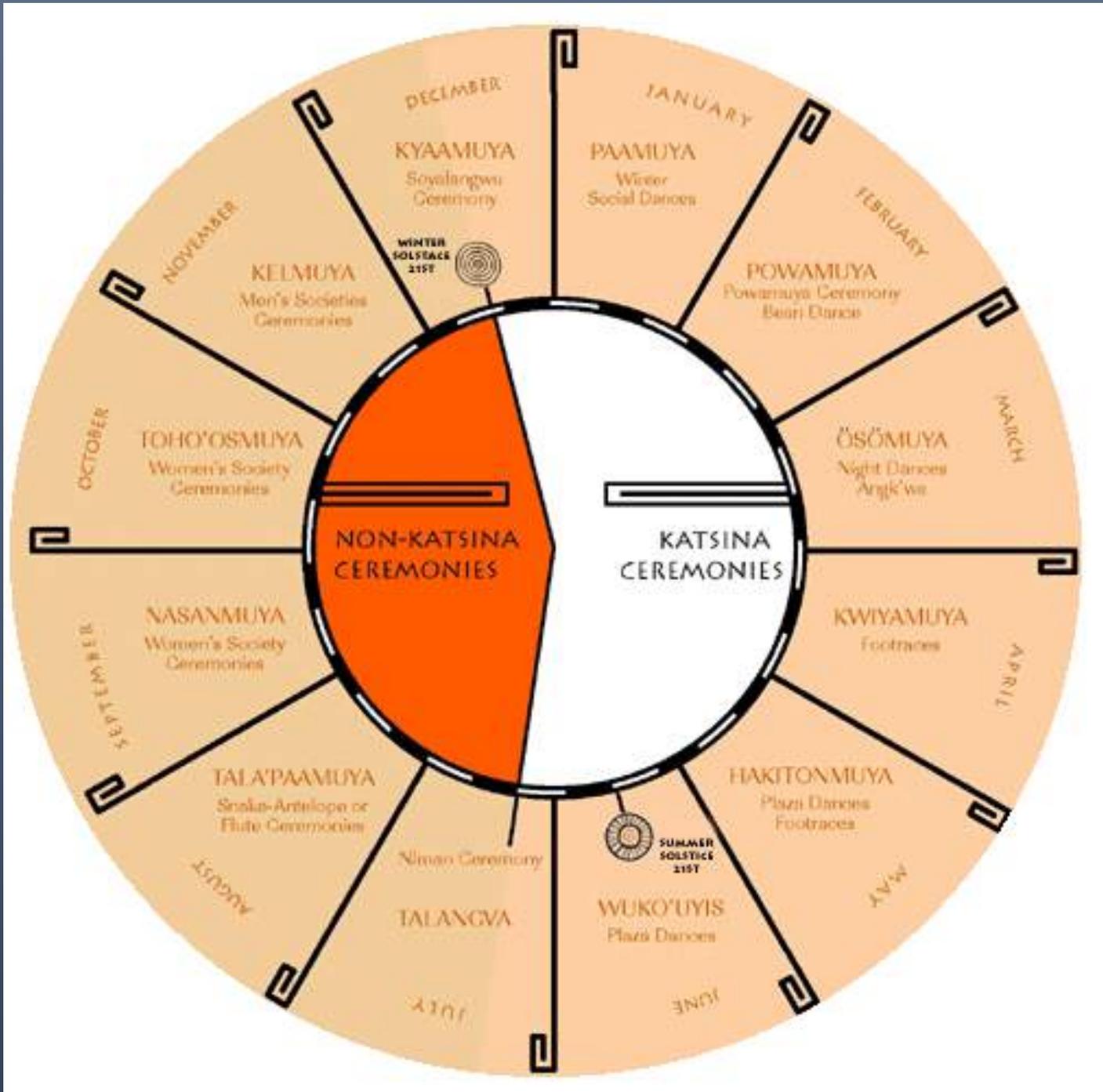


Fig. 3. Principal component analysis.

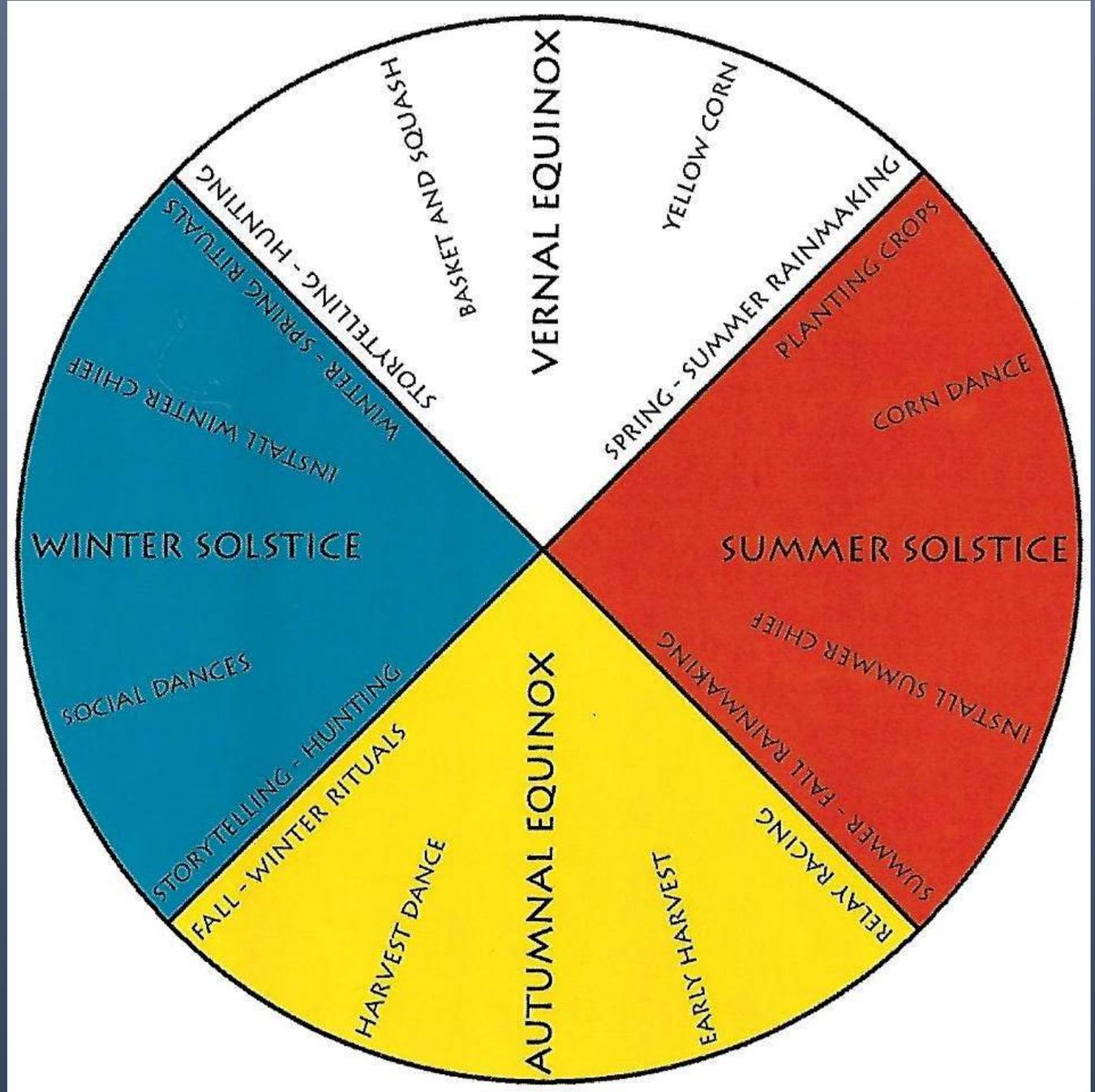
Fremont are Ancestral Puebloan

1. Fremont probably embraced some variation of Ancestral Puebloan religious ideology
2. Utilized Solar-Lunar calendar
3. Conceptualized Sun, Moon, Stars as deities

Hopi Indian Ceremonial Calendar

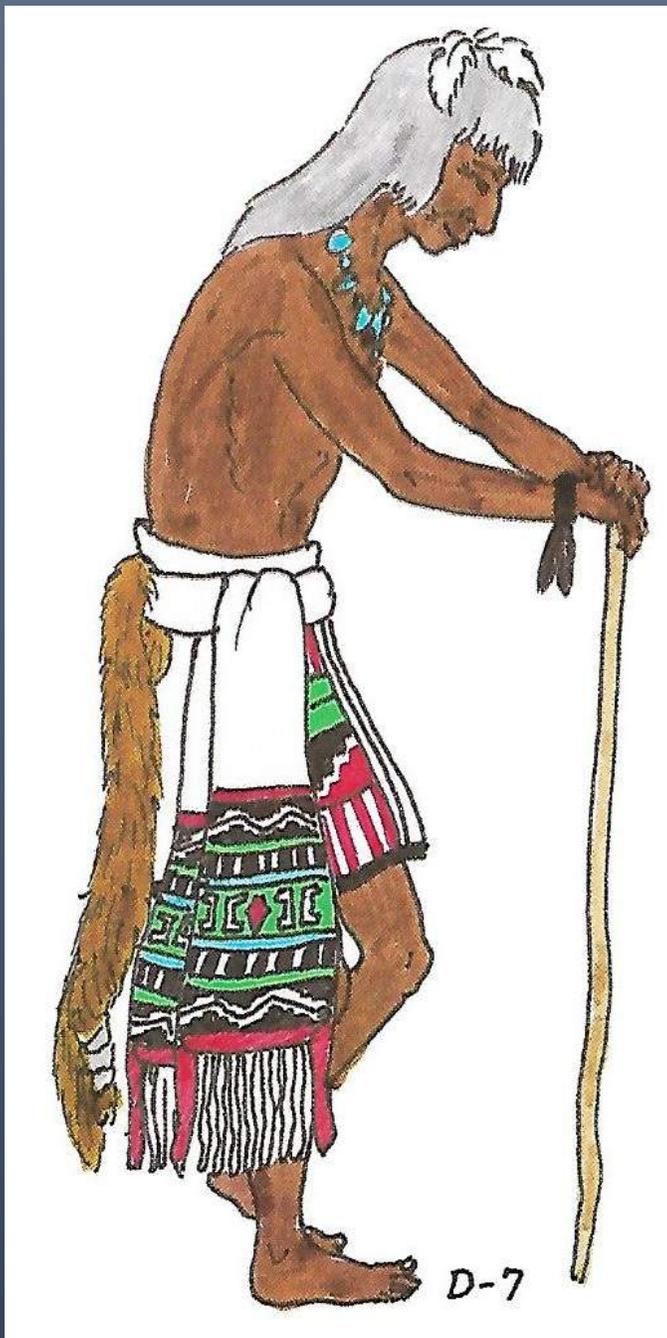


Tewa Indian Ceremonial Calendar





Tawa = Sun-god

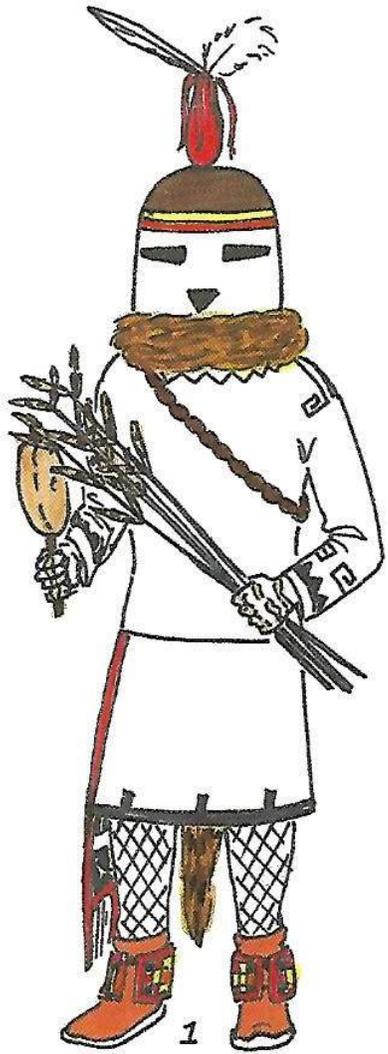


Muyawu = Moon-god



Talatumsi = Dawn-woman

(Childbirth-goddess)



Soyal =
Winter Solstice
Ceremonies

Personified as *Soyal*
Katsina

Fremont Indian State Park rock art:

- Author has examined approx. 150 panels
- All rock art located $\frac{1}{4}$ mile or more from the pithouse village of Five Finger Ridge
- 99% of rock art faces Southeast, South, Southwest

Why did the Fremont produce rock art on cliffs that face SE, S, SW?

- Ancestral Puebloans possessed Sun-priests
- Sun-priests witnessed the Sun-god's movement from its summer solstice "house" to its winter solstice "house"
- Used this solar wisdom to set the ceremonial calendar



Soyal = Winter Solstice Ceremonies

Mischa Titiev: "... the main purpose of the Soyal [ceremonies] is to perform compulsive magic at the winter solstice, so that the sun may be induced to start back towards its summer home and thus bring suitably warm weather to permit the Hopi to plant their fields. At the same time, the ceremony aims to ensure plentiful crops and general prosperity and good health for the next season."

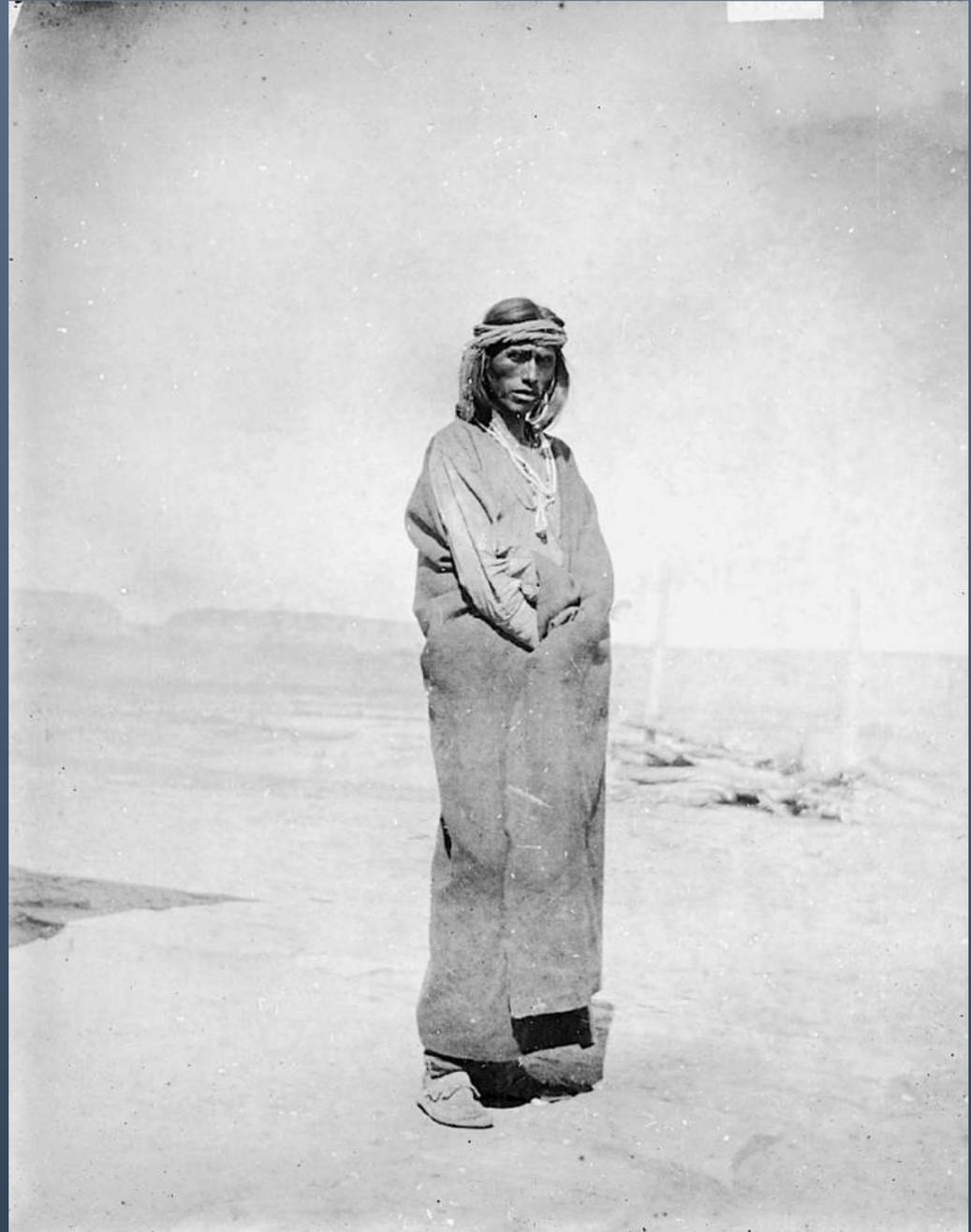
(1944, p. 146)

Soyal = Winter Solstice Ceremonies

Ray Williamson writes: “Winter Solstice ceremonies at all the Pueblos, though they differ in detail, are uniformly designed for the purpose of turning the sun around and setting *him* on his true northward course.”

(Williamson 1984, 79)

- Fremont probably had Sun-priests akin to the Zuni *Pekwin* (1896)



Why did the Fremont Indians chose to create rock art on cliff walls that face SE, S, and SW?

Fremont interpretation:

- Our religious images (rock art) face the Sun-god's journey across the sky at the most crucial time of the year (winter solstice).

Fremont Sun-Sheep Imagery







All Sheep point west—the Sun's directional movement across the sky



Hopi kiva screen depicting the Two-Horned-god, *Alosaka*.

Note the *Sun-god/Tawa* image lower-right



Attributes of *Alosaka*:

J. Walter Fewkes writes:

- *Alosaka* represented by a Bighorn Sheep
- *Alosaka* “is intimately associated with the sun”
- *Alosaka* functions as an ceremonial escort for other deities

(Fewkes 1899, p. 532 n. 2, p. 544, p. 534, pp. 524-25)



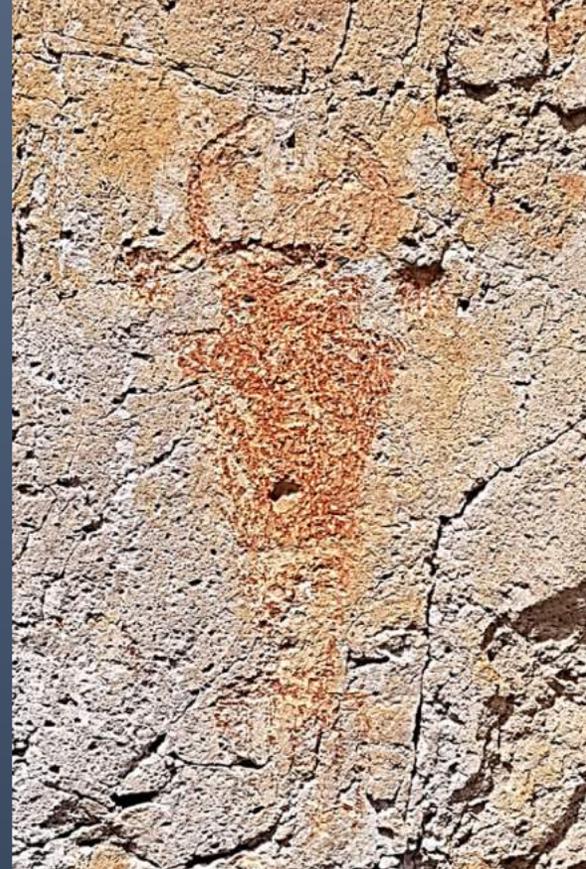
Potential interpretation of Sun-Sheep motif:

Like *Alosaka*, the Sun-Sheep may serve as a directional “escort” which conveys the meaning that the Sun-god is indeed “moving westward.”



Prototypical Fremont Anthropomorph:

- Bucket-shaped head
- Horned
- Earbobs
- Frequently armless
- “Rakes” or “Combs” where one would expect feet

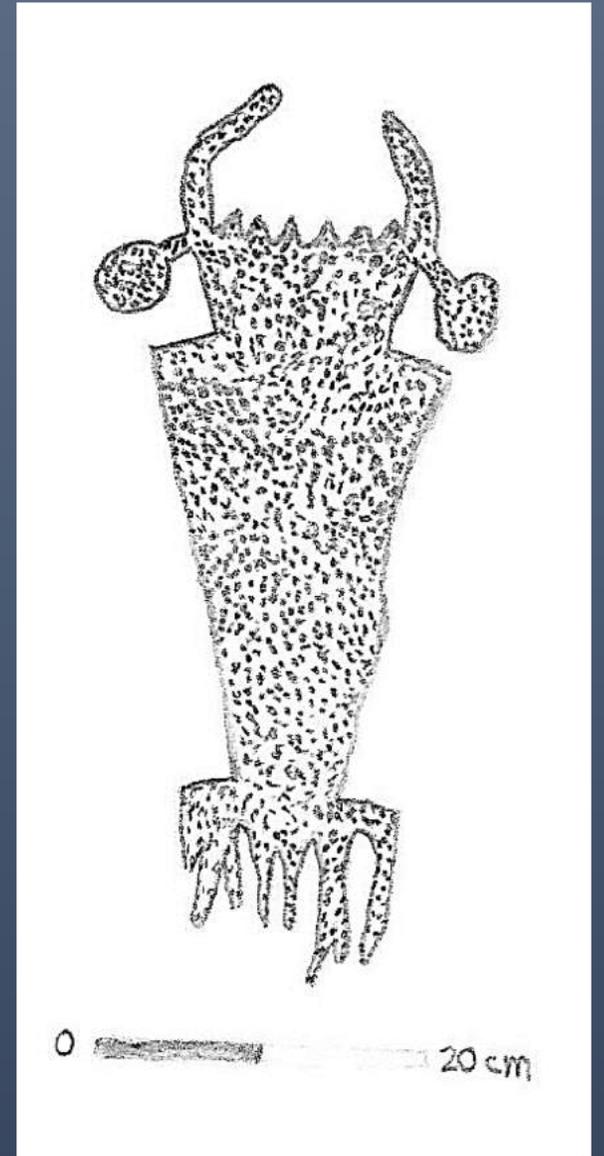


Pictoglyph:

Horned

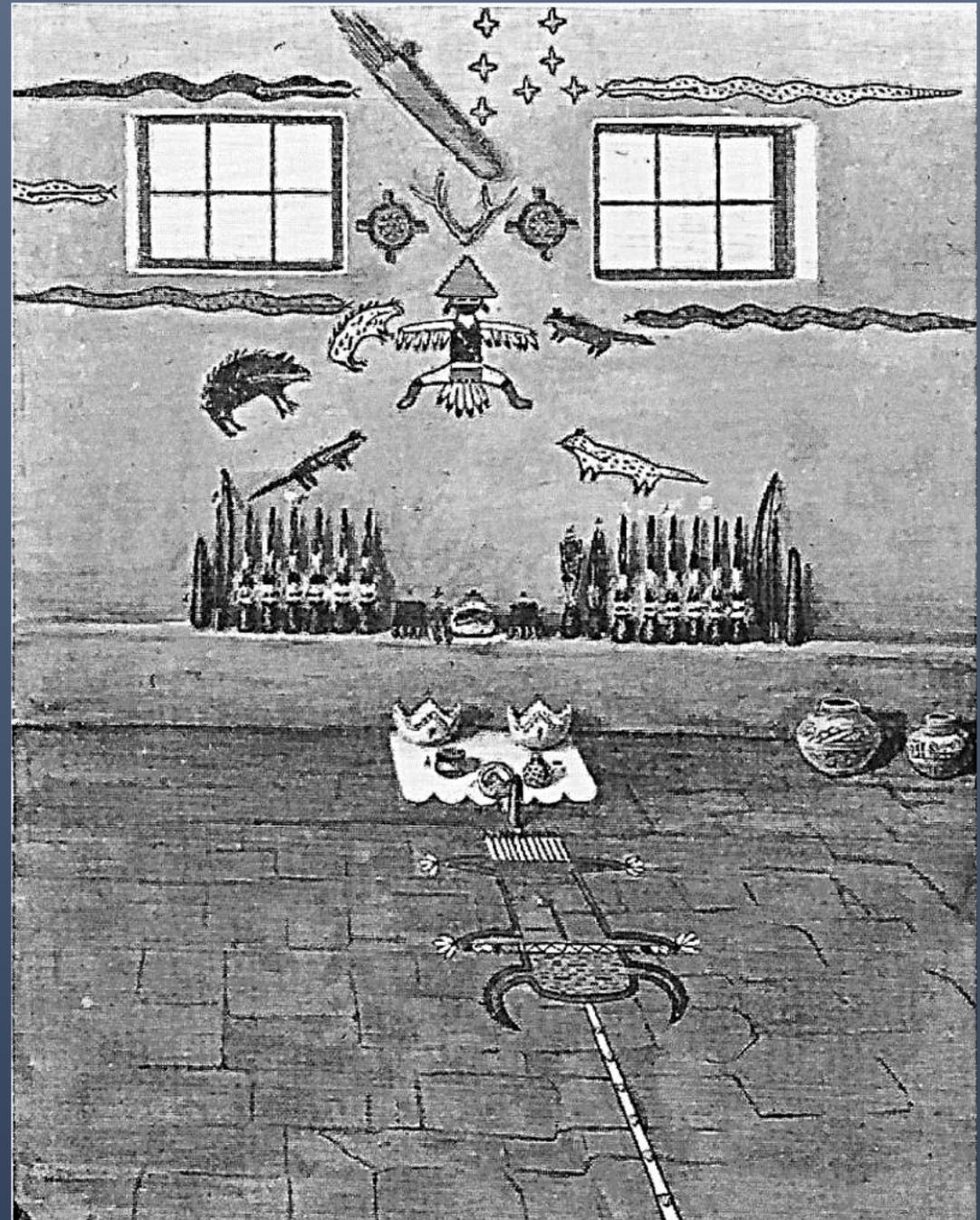
Bucket-shaped head

Rakes/Combs



Zuni Thele'wekwe (Wood Society) Altar (ca. 1900)

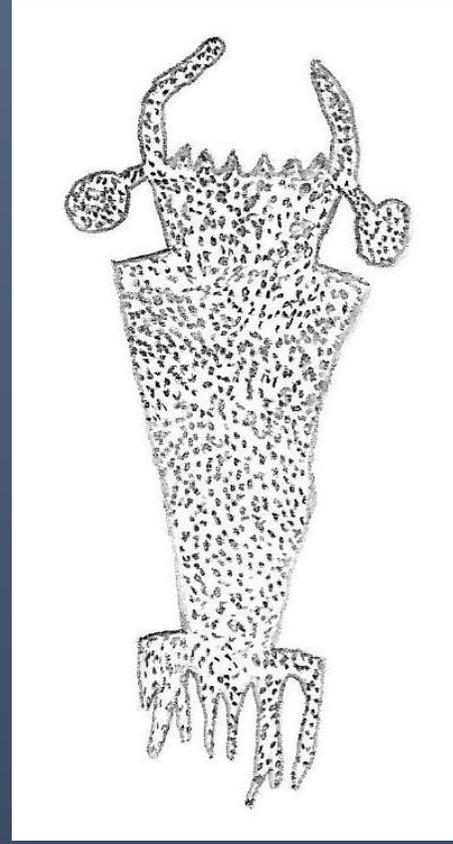
Note the seven stars of
the Big Dipper in top-
center part of wall



- 2016 URARA presentation

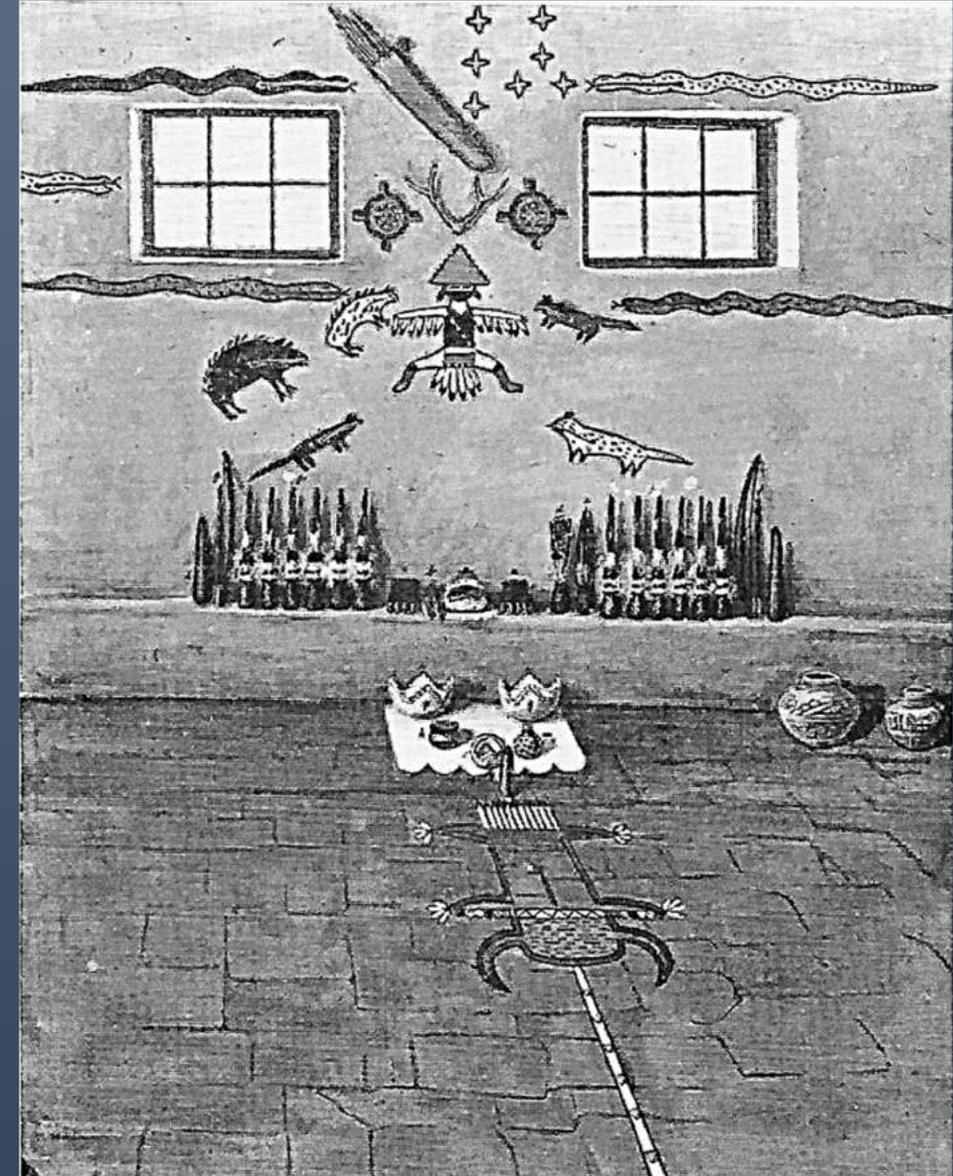
- Jim Farmer

- Rakes depict ephemeral waterfalls seen during thunderstorms



Author's conclusion:

- The priests that created Fremont Anthropomorphs were imbued with wisdom seen on the Zuni Wood Society altar.



A Case for Fremont Lunar
Knowledge:

Pithouse 57

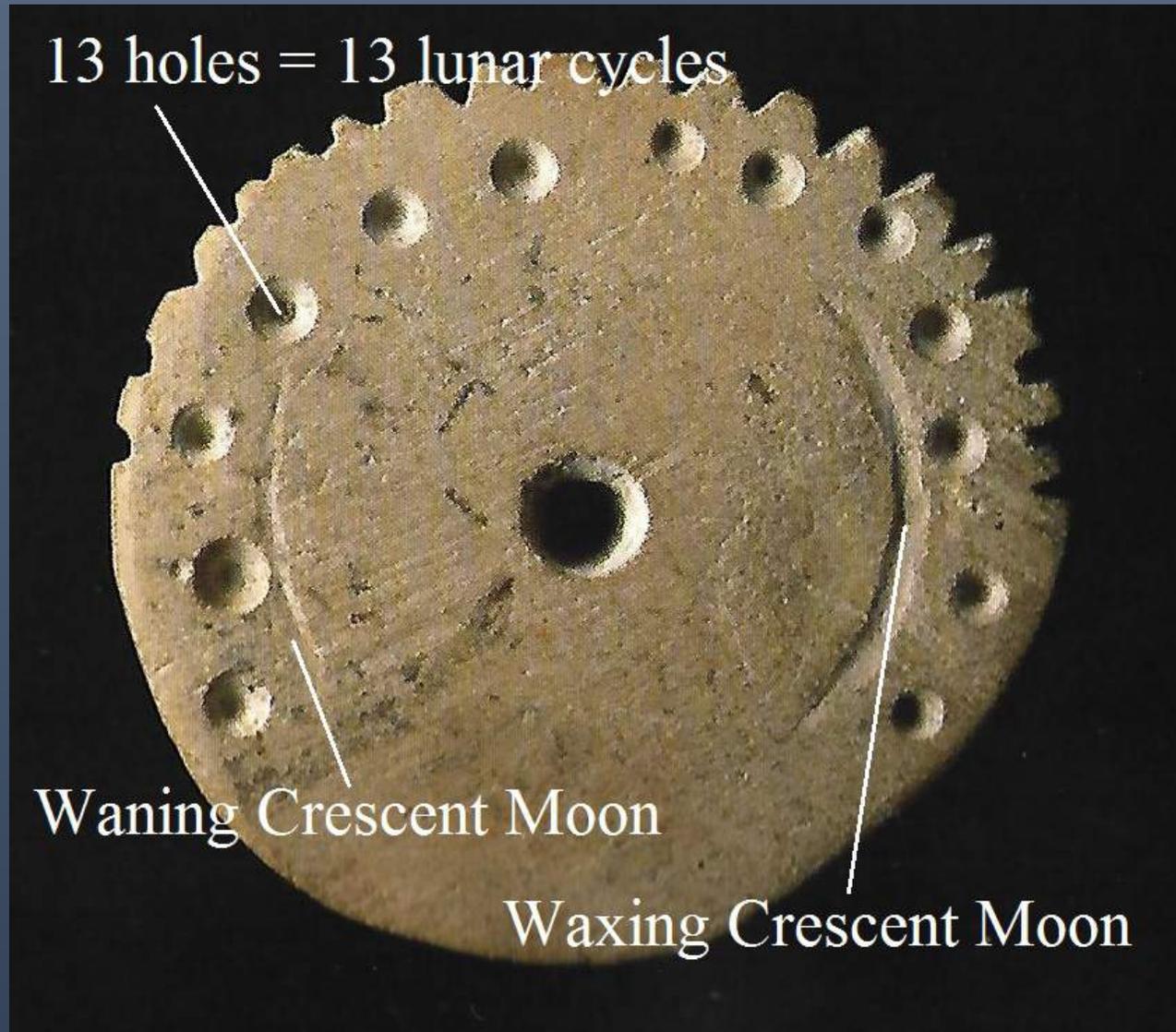
Pithouse 57

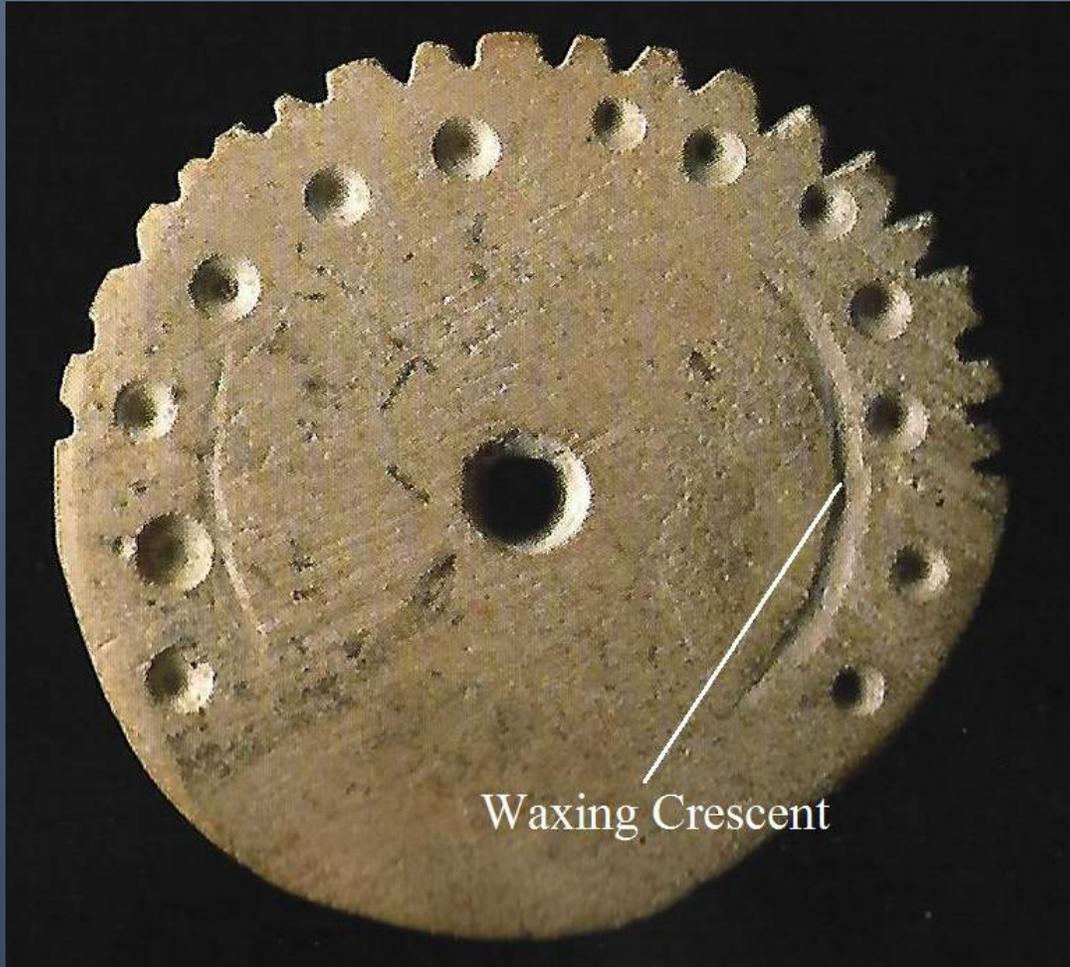
- Extra-large Five Finger Ridge pithouse
- Roof beam radiocarbon date: **1295 AD**

3.9 cm pink-lavender rhyolite Pendant



“Moon” Pendant





Waxing Crescent

New/Waxing Crescent Moon



Appears on western
horizon after sunset



Waning Crescent



Waning Crescent Moon

Appears on the eastern horizon before sunrise

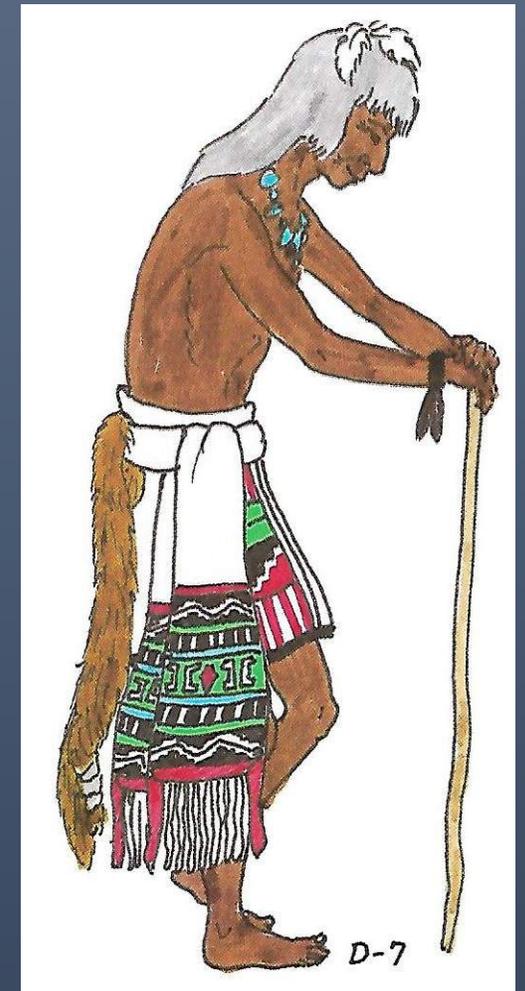
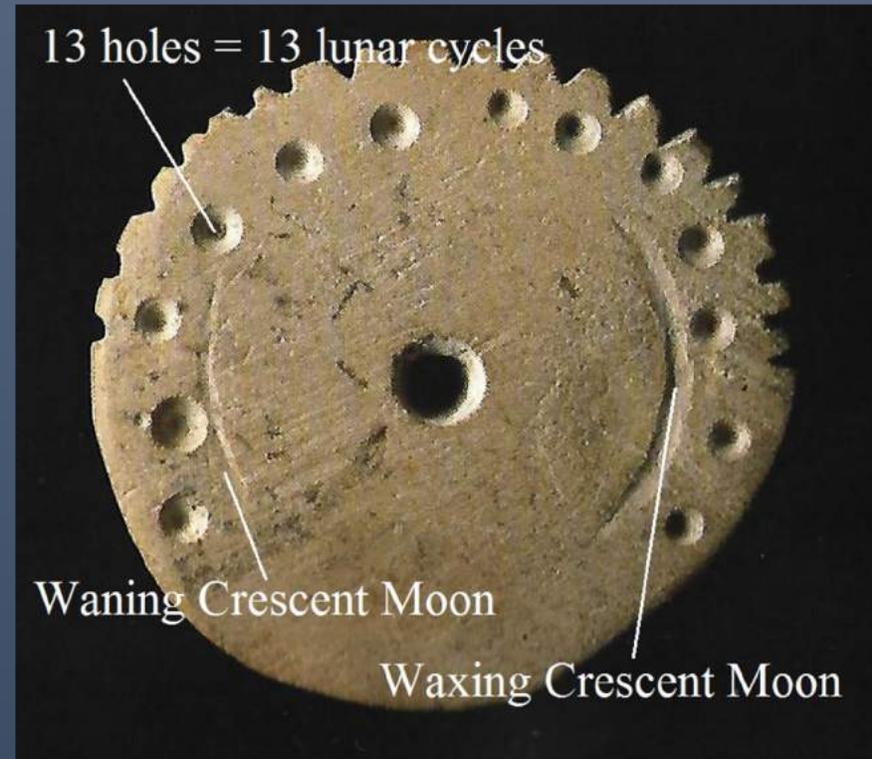


13 lunations commenced in a year



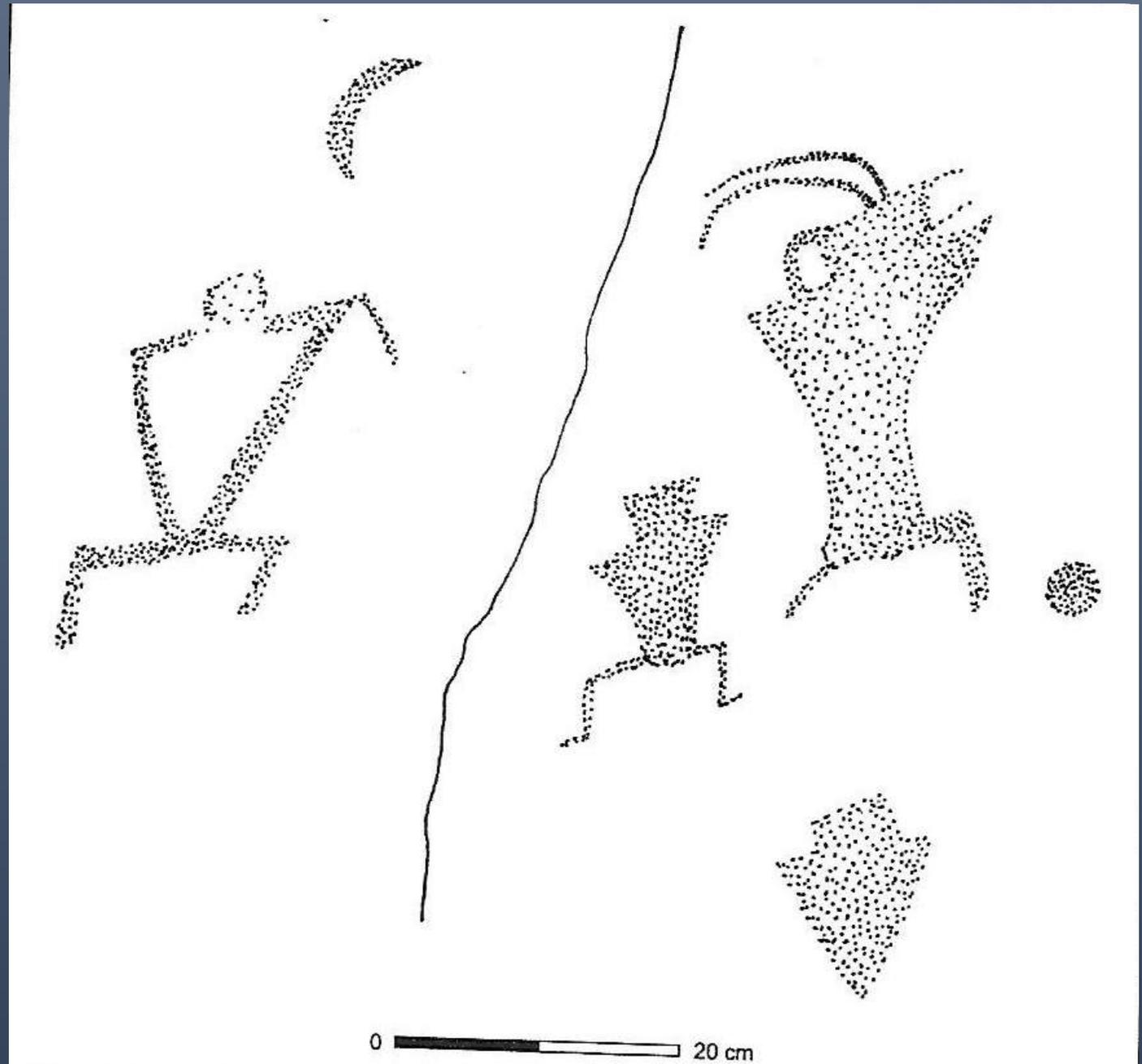
Interpretation:

- Moon-pendant encrypted with essential attributes of the Moon-god



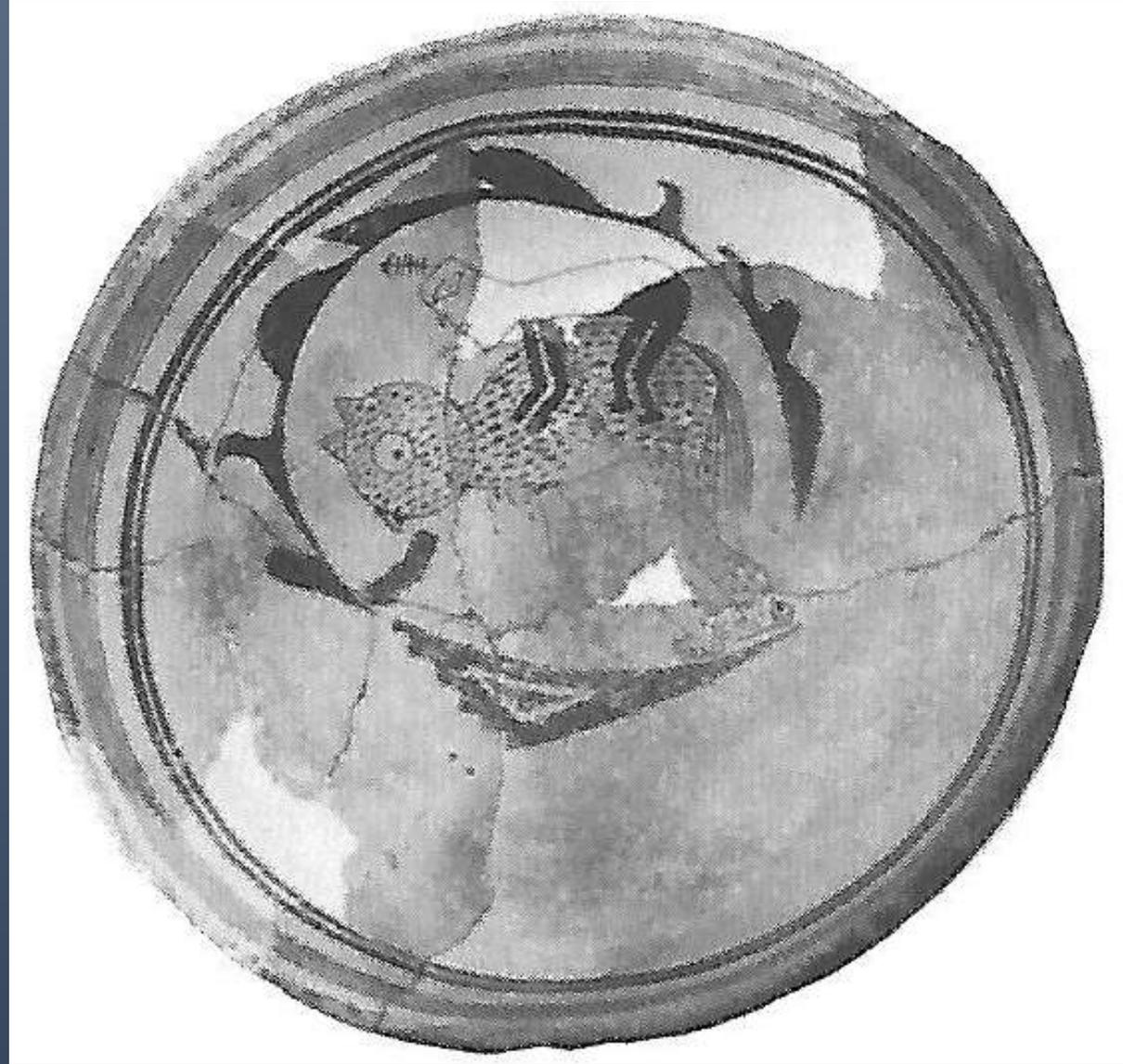
Vestige of the Warrior-Twin Battle in the
Popol Vuh, or the Hopi Dawn-Maiden
Goddess *Talatumsi*?

Fremont
petroglyph depicts
a One-Armed-
Anthropomorph
with
Waning Moon
motif

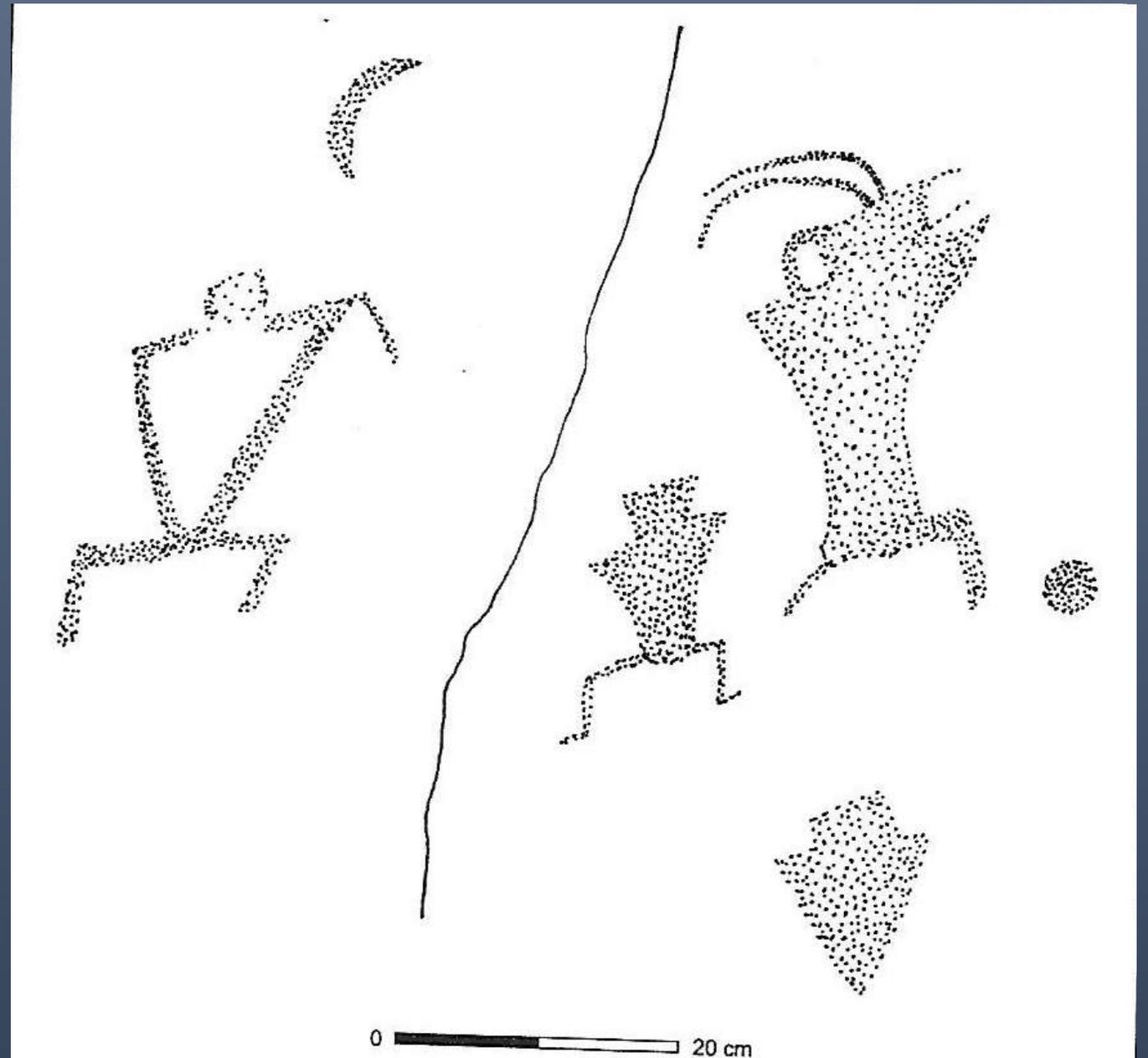


- Warrior-Twins embody Venus at dusk and dawn.
- A scene from the Mayan *Popol Vuh* recounts that the elder Warrior-Twin had his left arm torn off in a battle with Seven-Macaw (Big Dipper).
- Keresan-speaking Pueblos (Zia, Santa Ana, Laguna, and Acoma) recall a similar mythical battle, except that Seven Macaw has been transformed into a Bear/Giant called *Cko yo*.

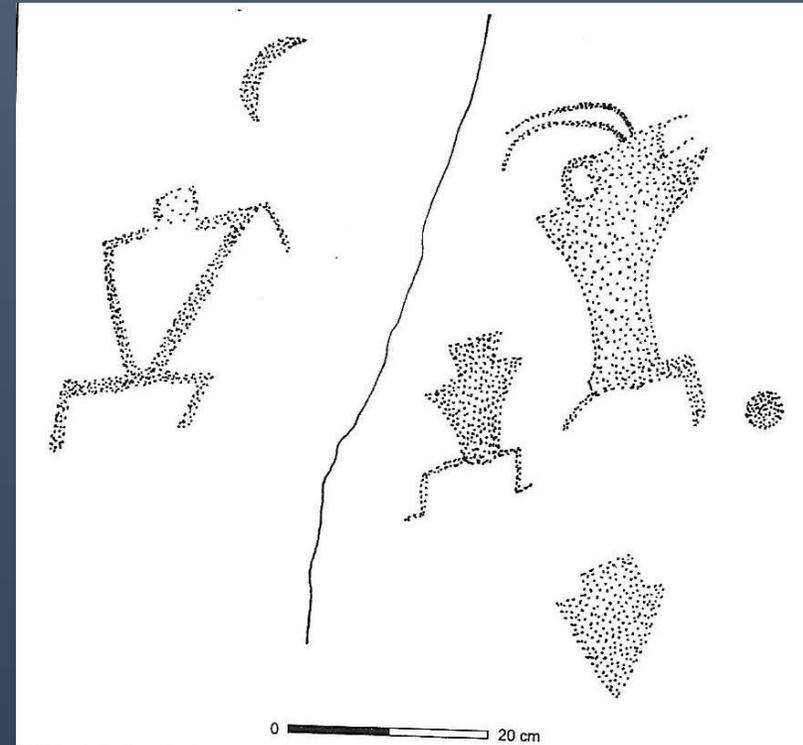
This Mimbres phrase (1000-1150 AD) Mogollon bowl motif depicts younger Warrior-Twin (Venus) in battle with an avian Giant, attempting to retrieve the elder Warrior-Twin's missing arm (beneath Giant's mouth).



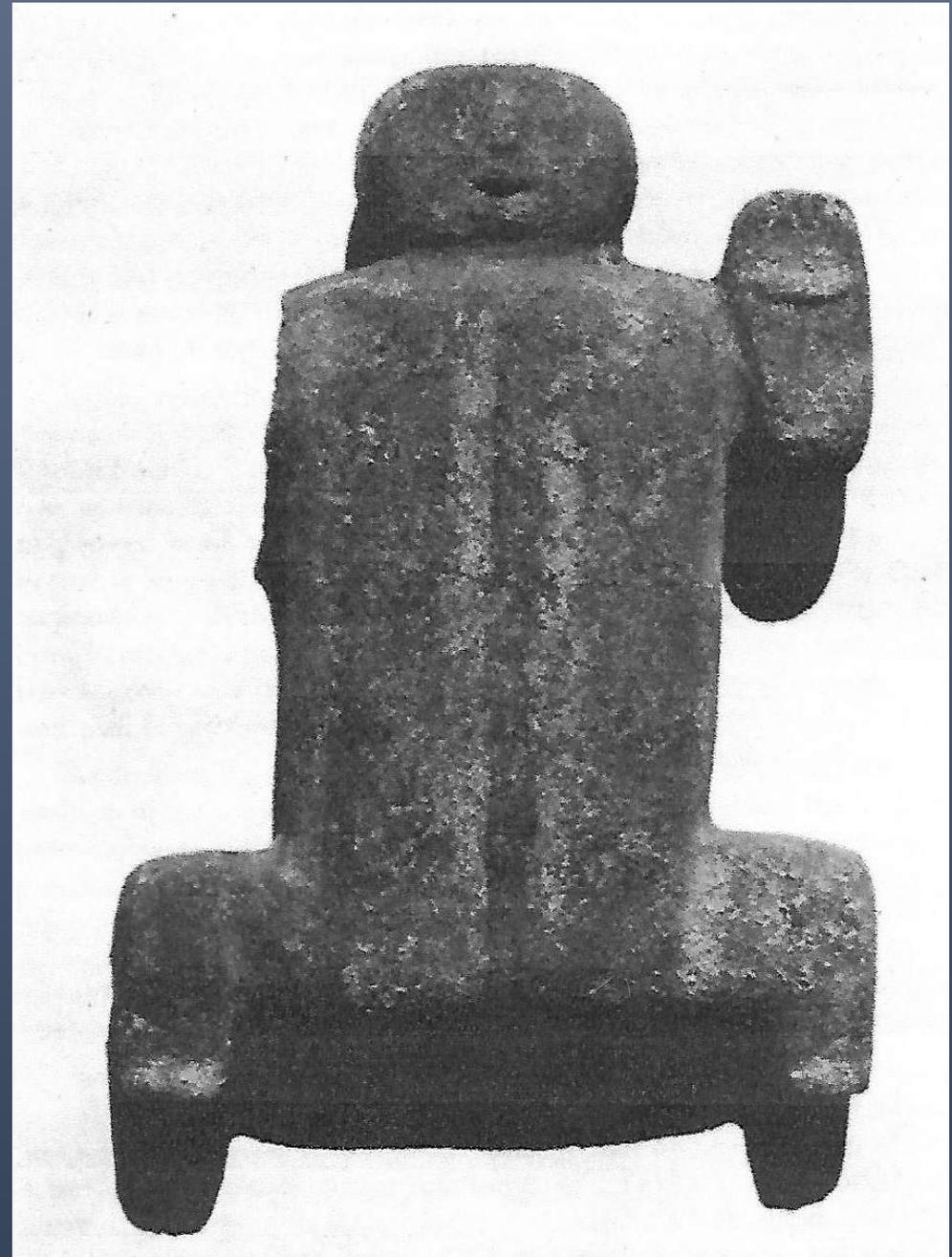
The waning moon confirms that the scene takes place on the eastern horizon at dawn



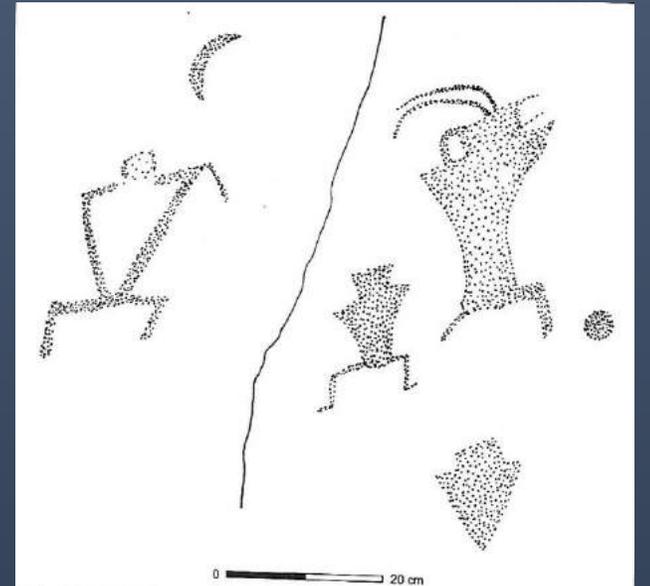
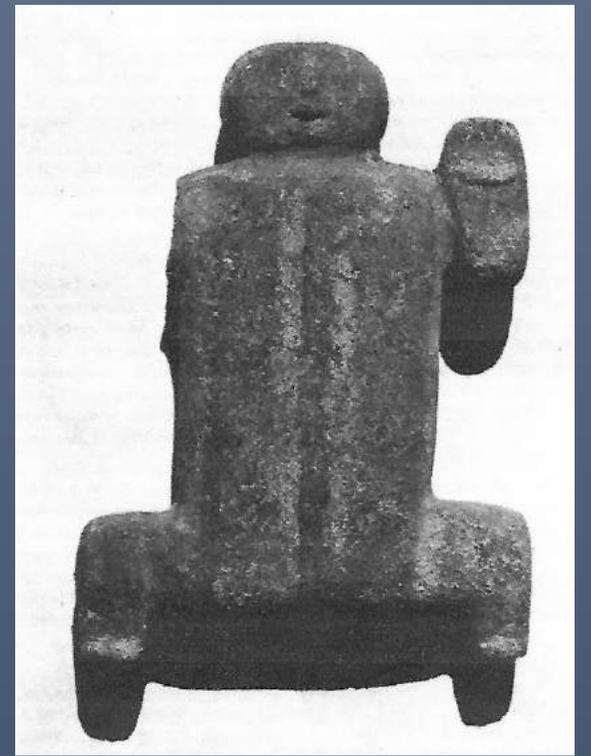
- Venus (Warrior-Twins) is the “morning” star.
- If the One-Armed Anthropomorph depicts the elder Warrior-Twin (Venus), then this petroglyph may contain a vestige of the “lost arm” vignette from the *Popol Vuh*.



- Stone effigy from great kiva at Hooper Ranch Pueblo (1230 AD)
- Right arm broken off in ancient times
- Abducted legs and deposition in a crypt in the kiva floor **may suggest the Hopi “Dawn-Maiden” (*Talatumsi*)**



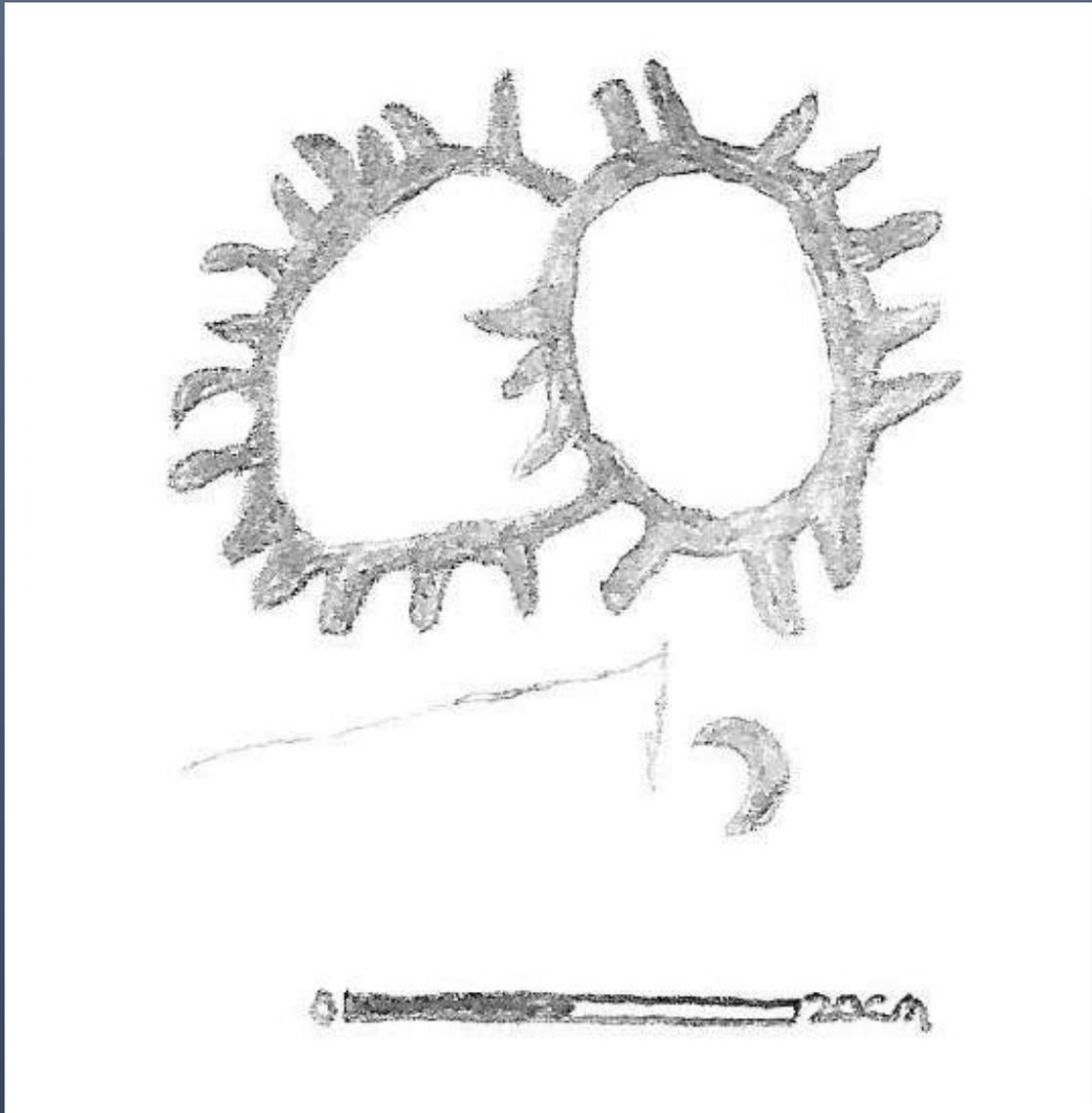
- If the stone effigy represents “Dawn-Woman”/*Talatumsi*.
- The One-Armed Anthropomorph beneath the dawn moon may depict a Fremont equivalent to “Dawn-Woman.”
- Hopi elders inform that right arms were broken off clan deity (*wu'ya*) or clan fetish (*tiponi*) effigies so that the god's malevolent powers could not be utilized.



Dual-Suns-with-Crescent-
Moon Icon

Dual Suns with
Waxing
Crescent Moon





Ancient corn cob
beneath petroglyph
(circled)



Ancient corn cob
(approx. 2.5 in)
beneath
petroglyph



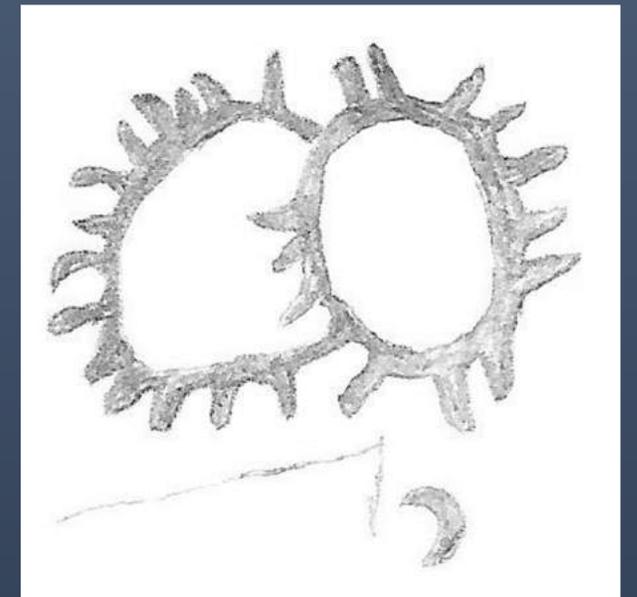
- Elsie Clews Parsons recounts how, on the fourth day of a Soyal (i.e., Winter Solstice) ceremony **a sun-symbol is placed on a kiva roof only to be replaced the following dawn.**

(Parsons 1939, II, pp. 704-705)



- Mischa Titiev elaborates on this practice: **“[it] dramatizes ... the placing of the new sun in the sky ...”**

(Titiev 1944, p. 149)



Dual-Sun with
Crescent Moon
may face winter
solstice sunset
(red oval)



Author's interpretation:

The Dual-Sun with waning moon motif depicts the "new sun" leaving its southern house at winter solstice and moving northward again.



You already know where I'm going to be
at sunset, on December 21st!

THANK YOU!!!

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