

Using Ethnography to Shed Light on Celestial Motifs in Prehistoric Utah Rock Art

by John McHugh

Interpreting prehistoric rock art involves delving into Ancient cognition

- Functional-processual archaeologists assert that archaeology's purpose is to: “study what people did, not how they thought.”
- Study of religious ideology is akin to practicing “palaeopsychology.”

Mappa: Internalized cognitive map of world and how it functions.

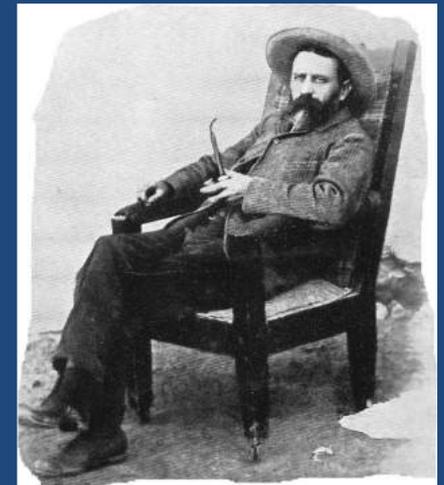
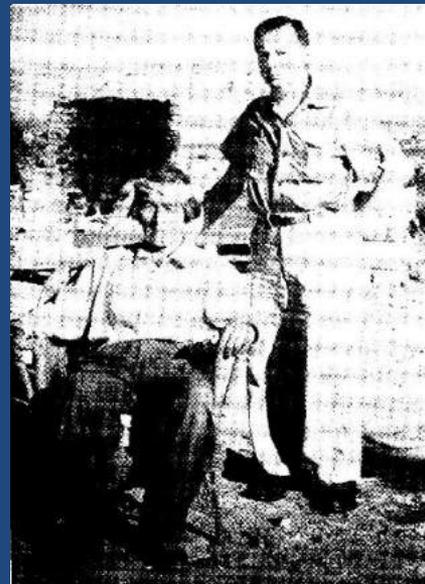
- The mappa of pre-scientific cultures came from religious cosmology.
- **Mythology was history.**
- Example: **Sipapu**



Ethnography

- The scientific description of the customs of individual peoples and cultures.
- Includes the study of a culture's religious beliefs and rituals.

Late-19th Early-20th
Century
ethnographers:
F. Cushing
E. C. Parsons
M. Titiev
A. Stephen



Continuity in Puebloan Ethnography

“The historic Pueblos of the U. S. Southwest preserve a remarkable cultural tradition descended, in part, from prehistoric times...

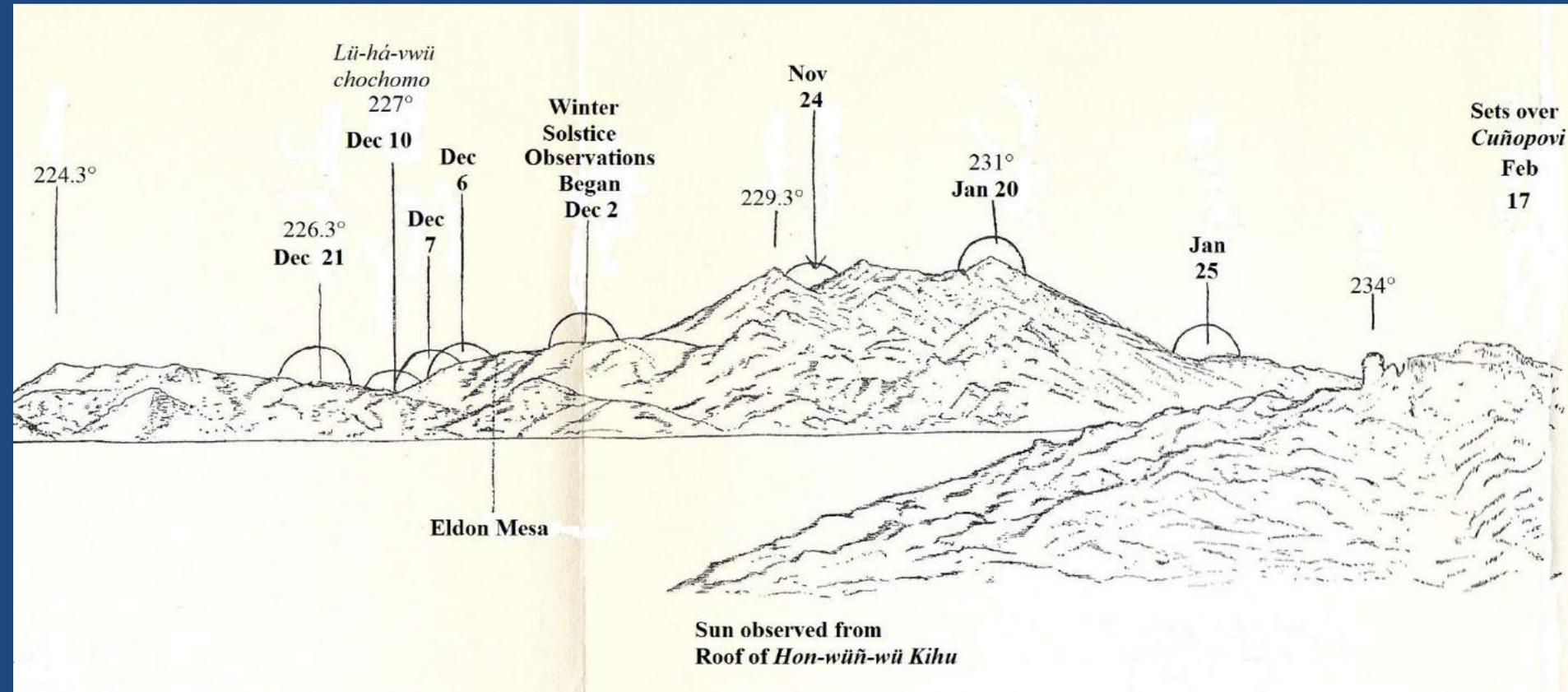
The religious ceremonies reported at the beginning of this century [AD 1900] ... probably have the greatest longevity and the strongest connections to prehistory.”

(Zeilik, 1985: S1)

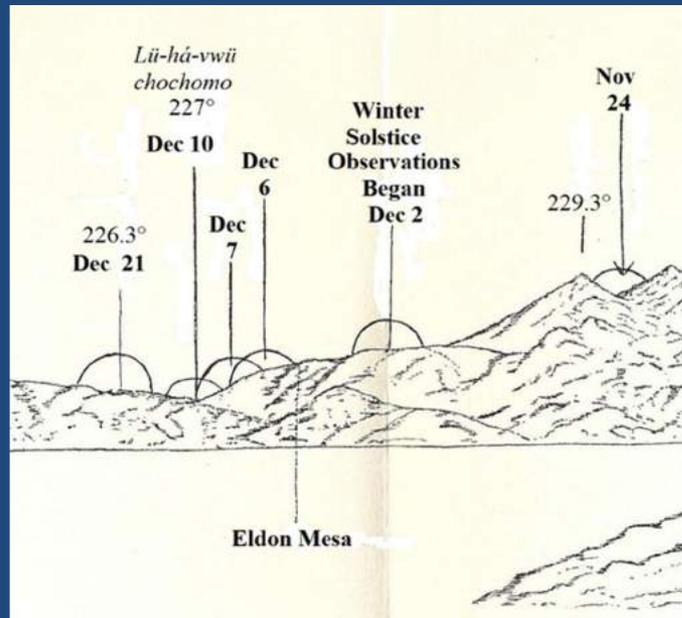
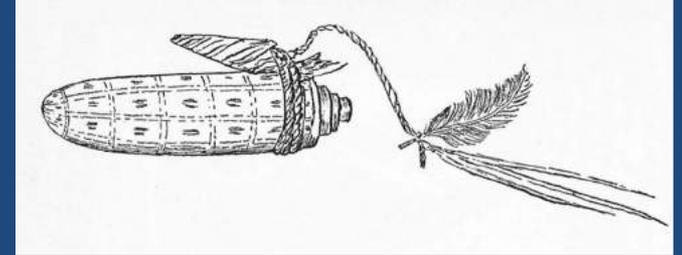
Archaic
hunter-
foragers
evolve into
the
agricultural
cultures of
Southwestern
n
Archaeology



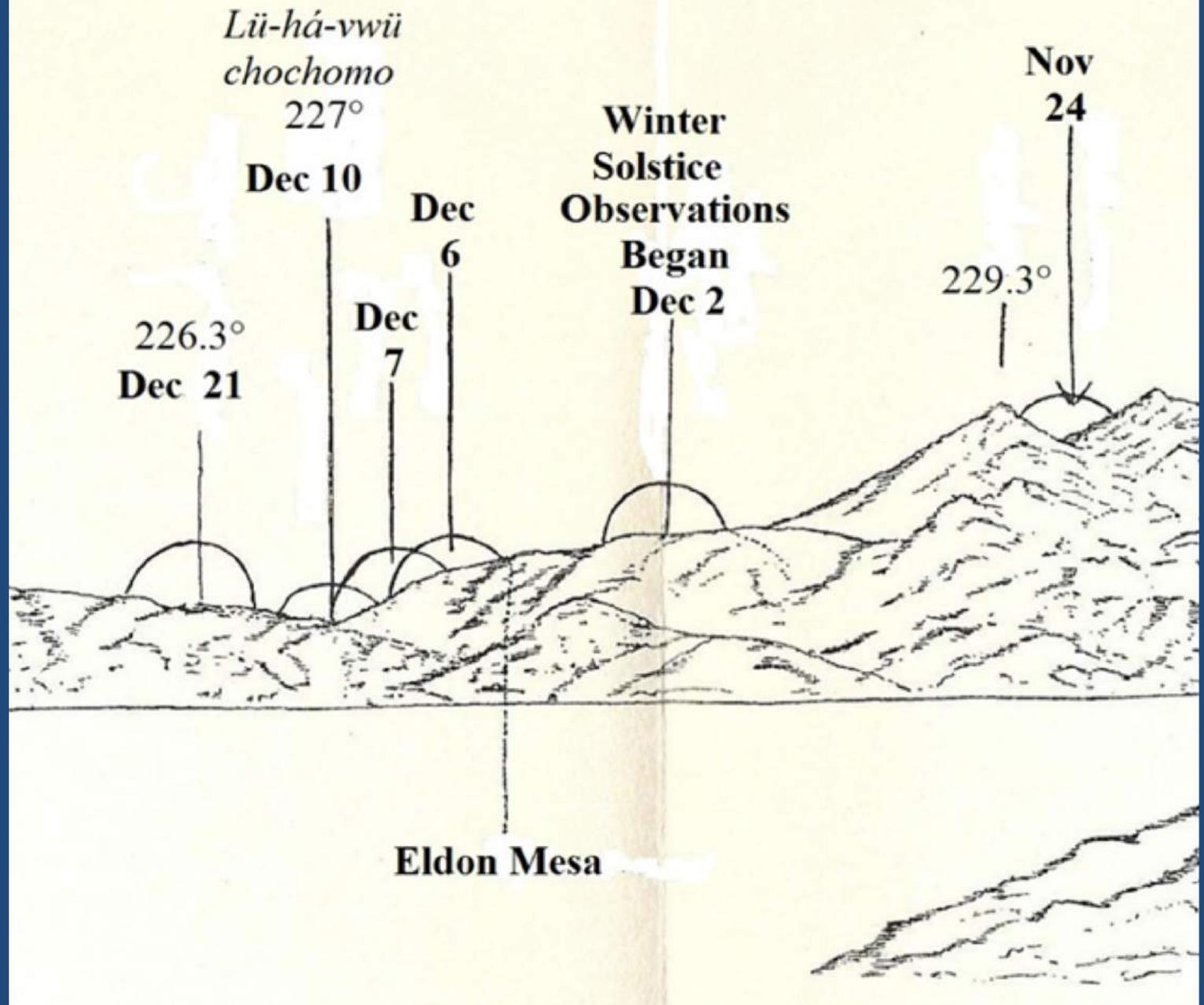
Ethnography reveals that Puebloan people forged a Solar calendar based on rising/setting sun



Puebloan Ethnography



**Puebloan cognitive map
(*mappa*) holds that the Sun-god
needs to be coaxed back
from his four-day standstill at
winter solstice.**



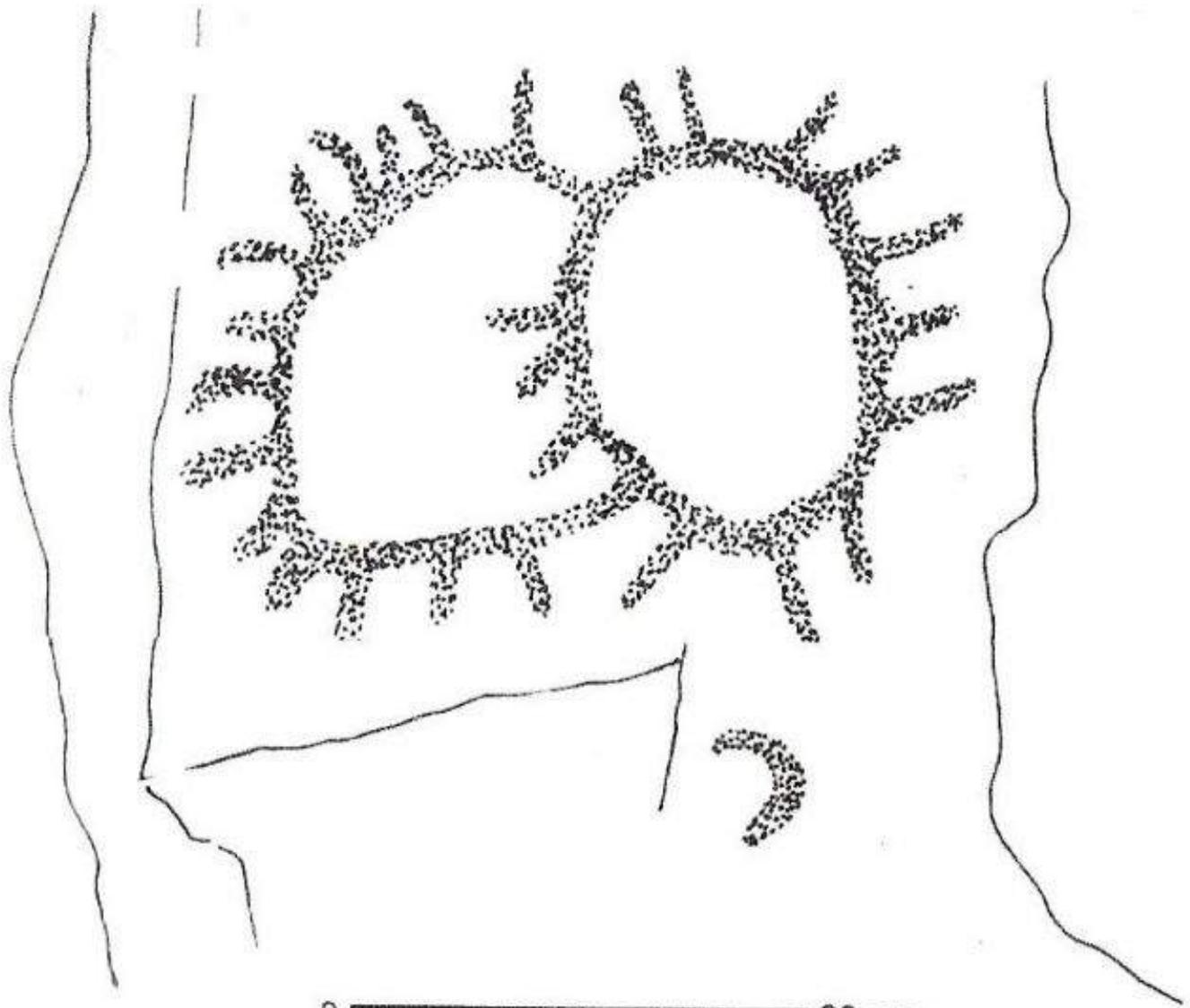
Hopi call the Winter Solstice moon
Kyamuya = “Sacred-But-Dangerous-
Moon”

- Witchcraft abounds for 5 days
- Children may be kidnapped by the Moon-god as sacrifices

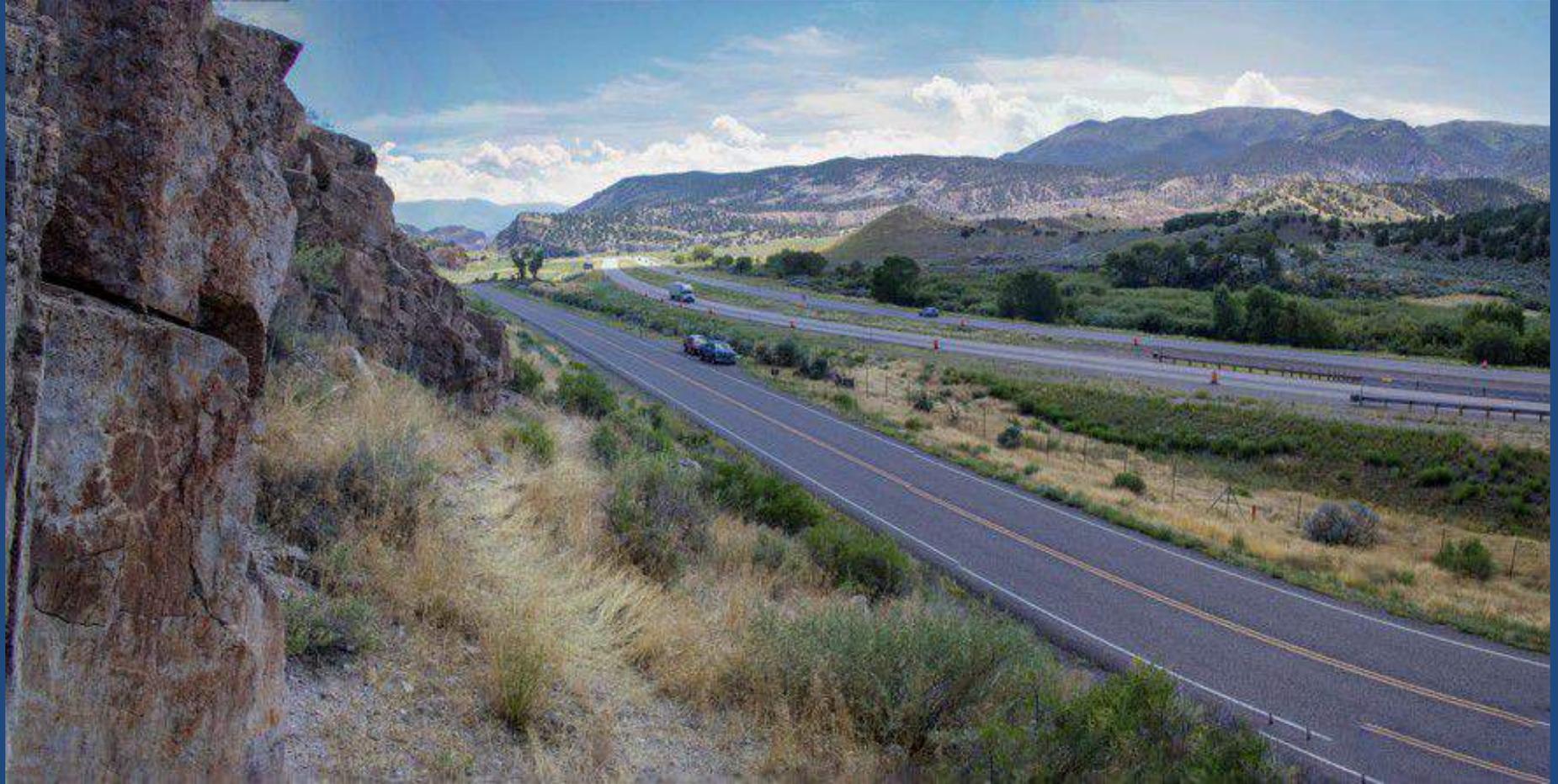
Dual-Suns-with-Crescent-Moon Petroglyph

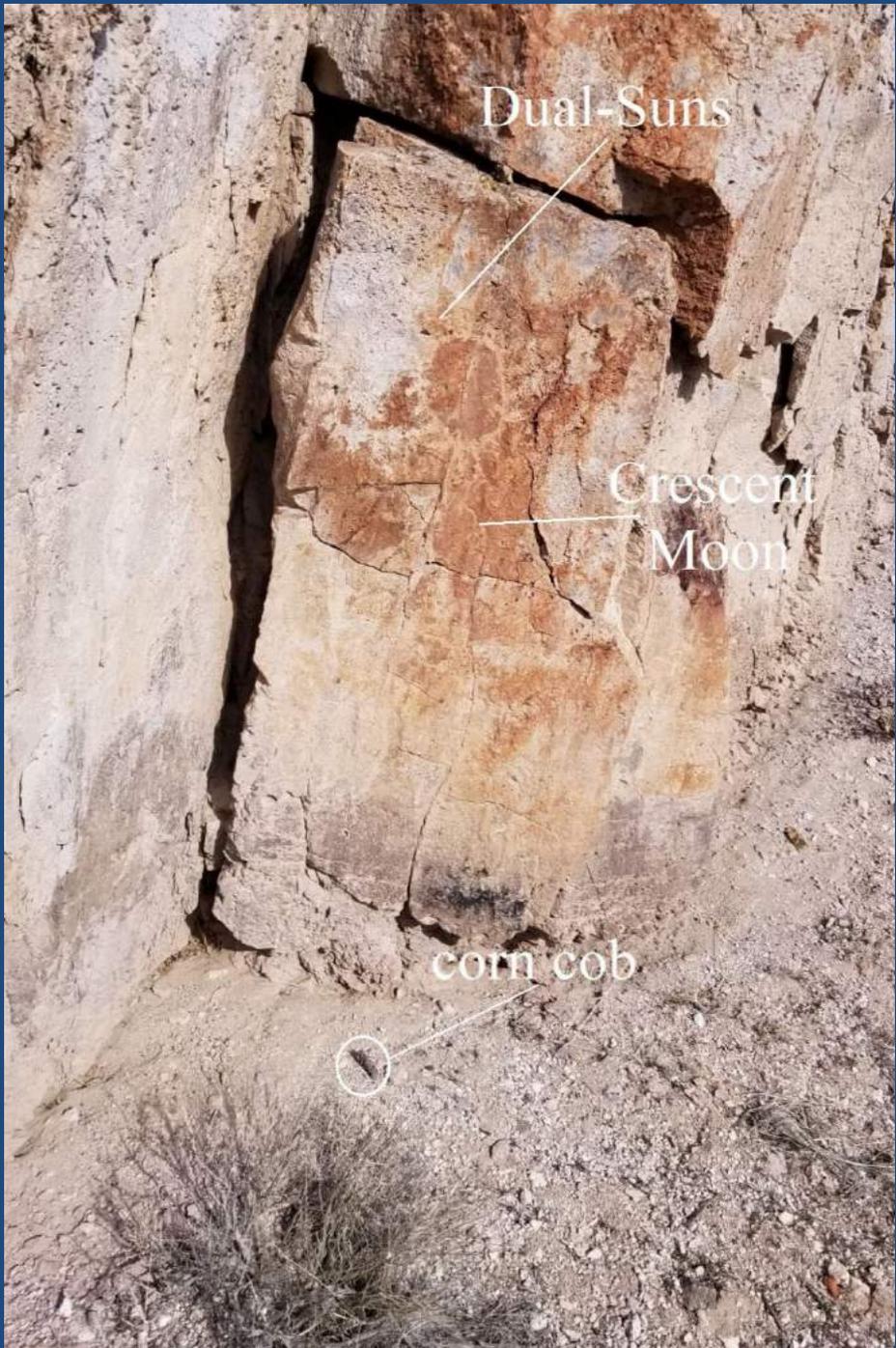
Fremont Indian State Park





0  20 cm





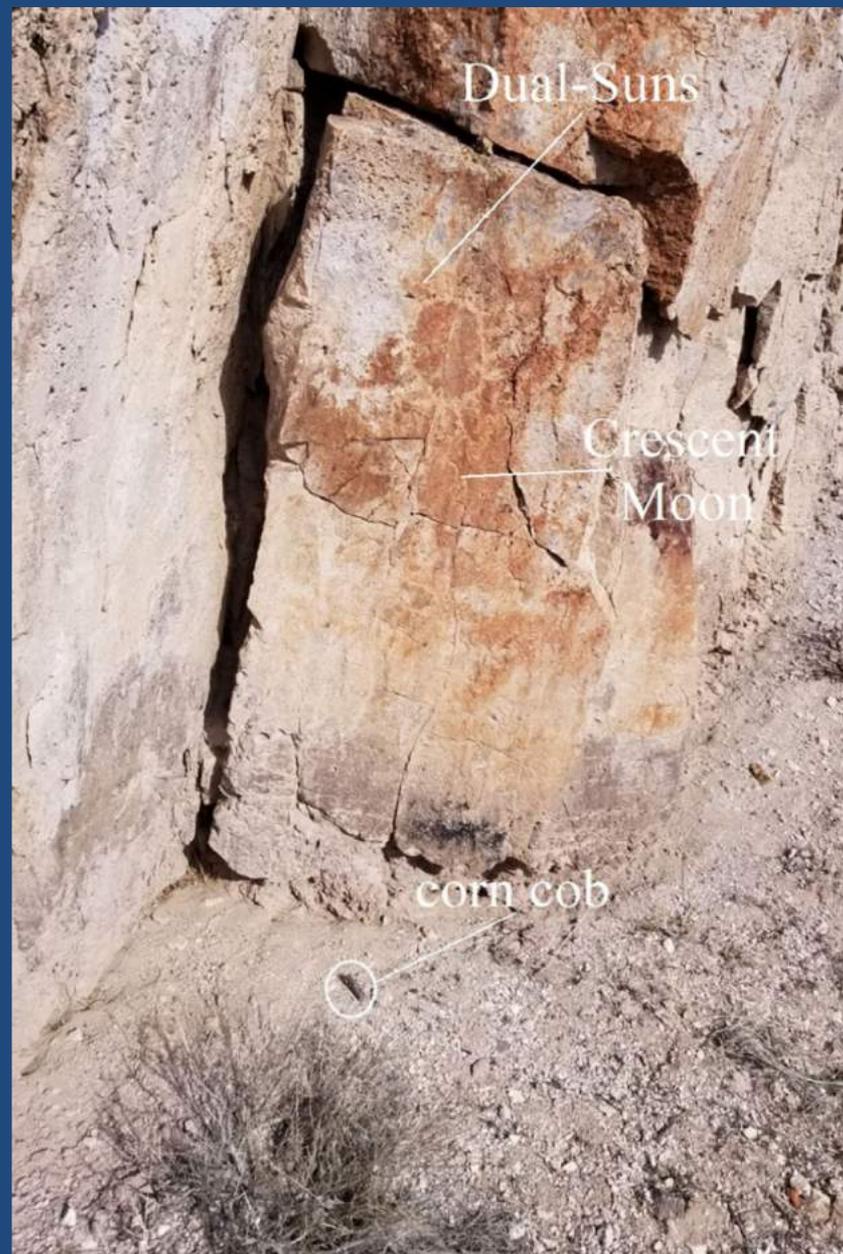
Dual-Suns

Crescent
Moon

corn cob



Prehistoric corn cob (probably Fremont)



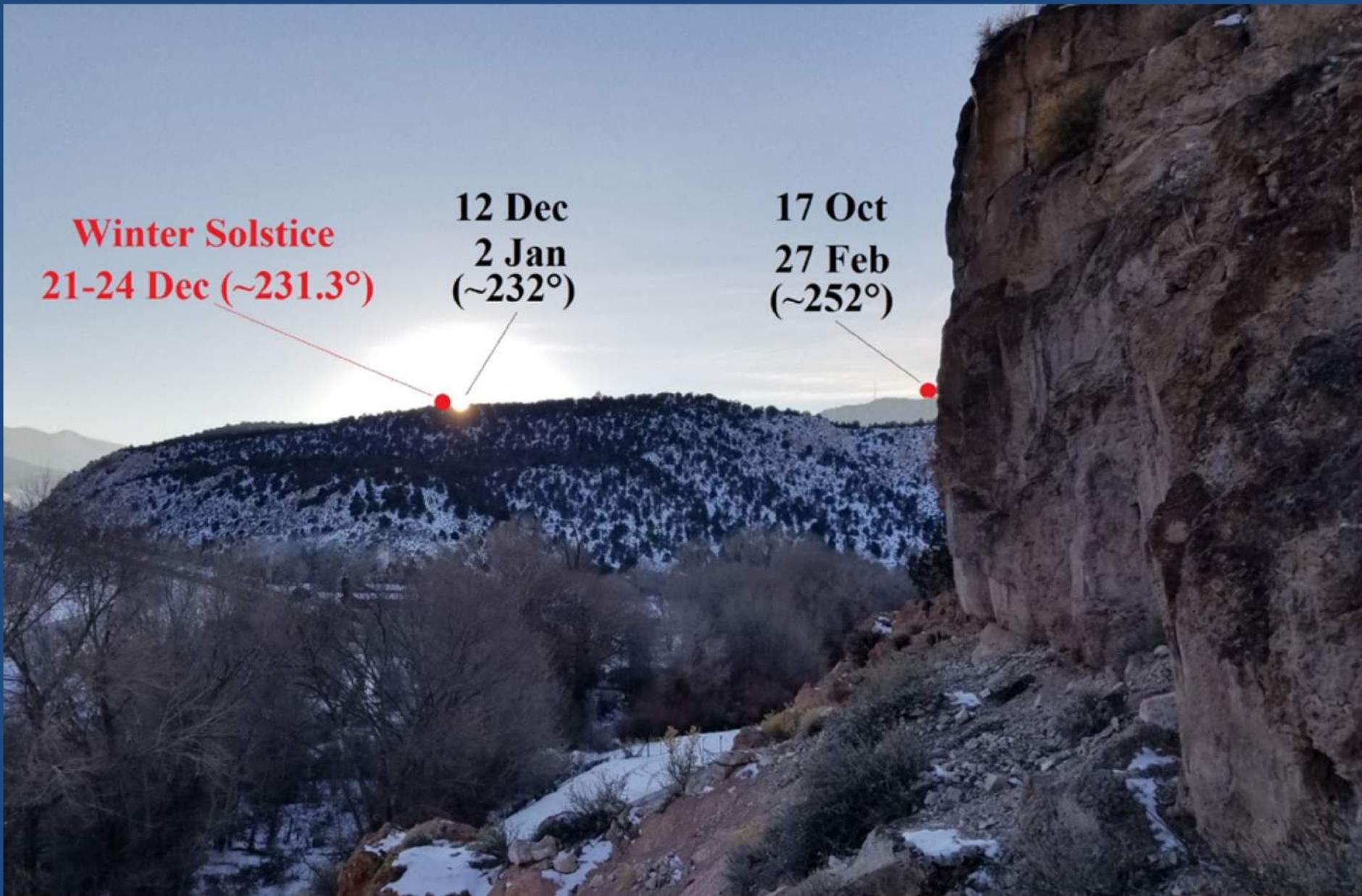
Sunset from Dual-Suns glyph (Jan. 2)



Winter Solstice
21-24 Dec (~231.3°)

12 Dec
2 Jan
(~232°)

17 Oct
27 Feb
(~252°)



“Lower Shrine”



“Lower Shrine” with obsidian



“Upper Shrine”



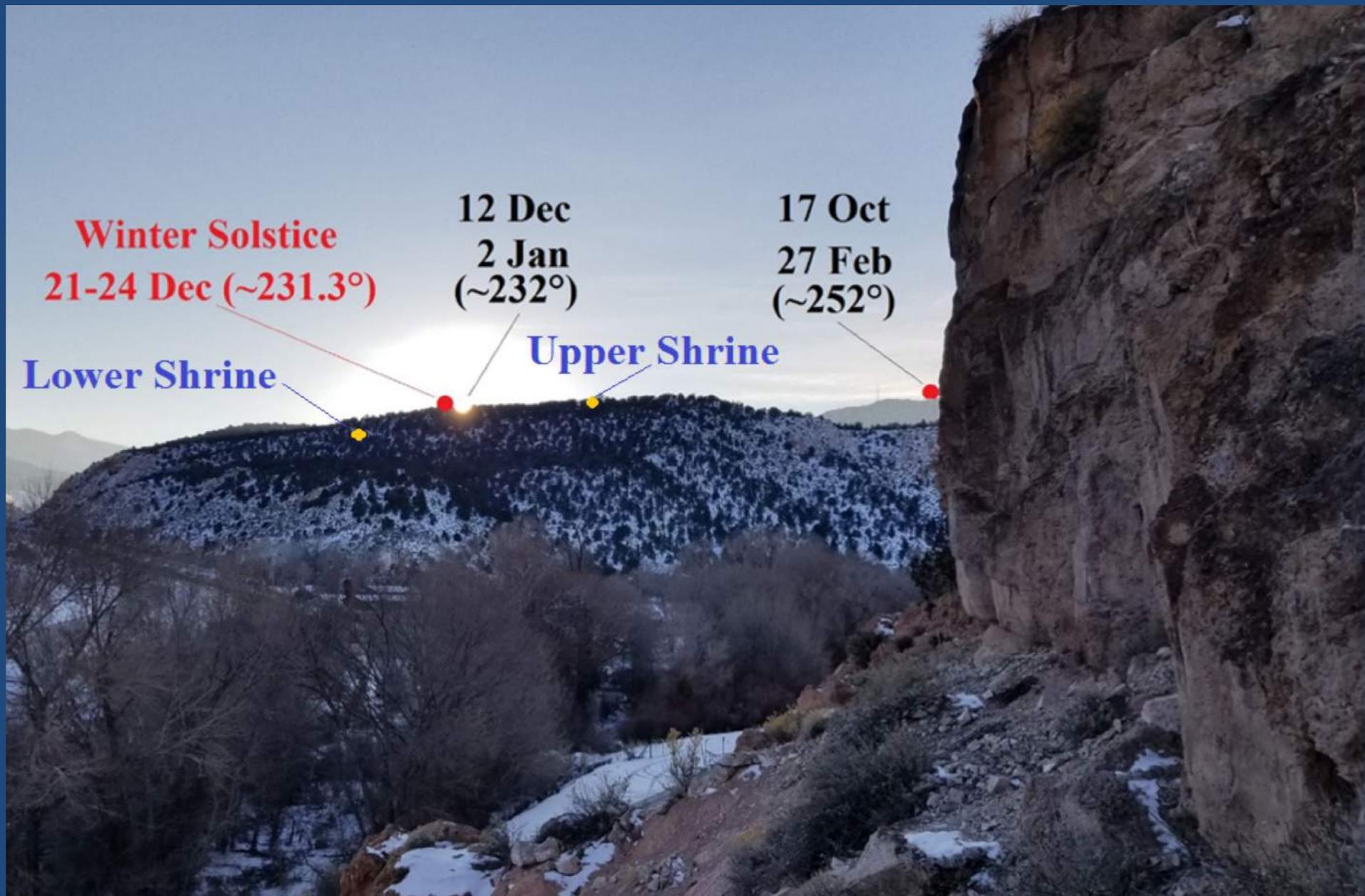
Winter Solstice
21-24 Dec (~231.3°)

12 Dec
2 Jan
(~232°)

17 Oct
27 Feb
(~252°)

Lower Shrine

Upper Shrine



Winter Solstice Sun
stopped at southern
“house”

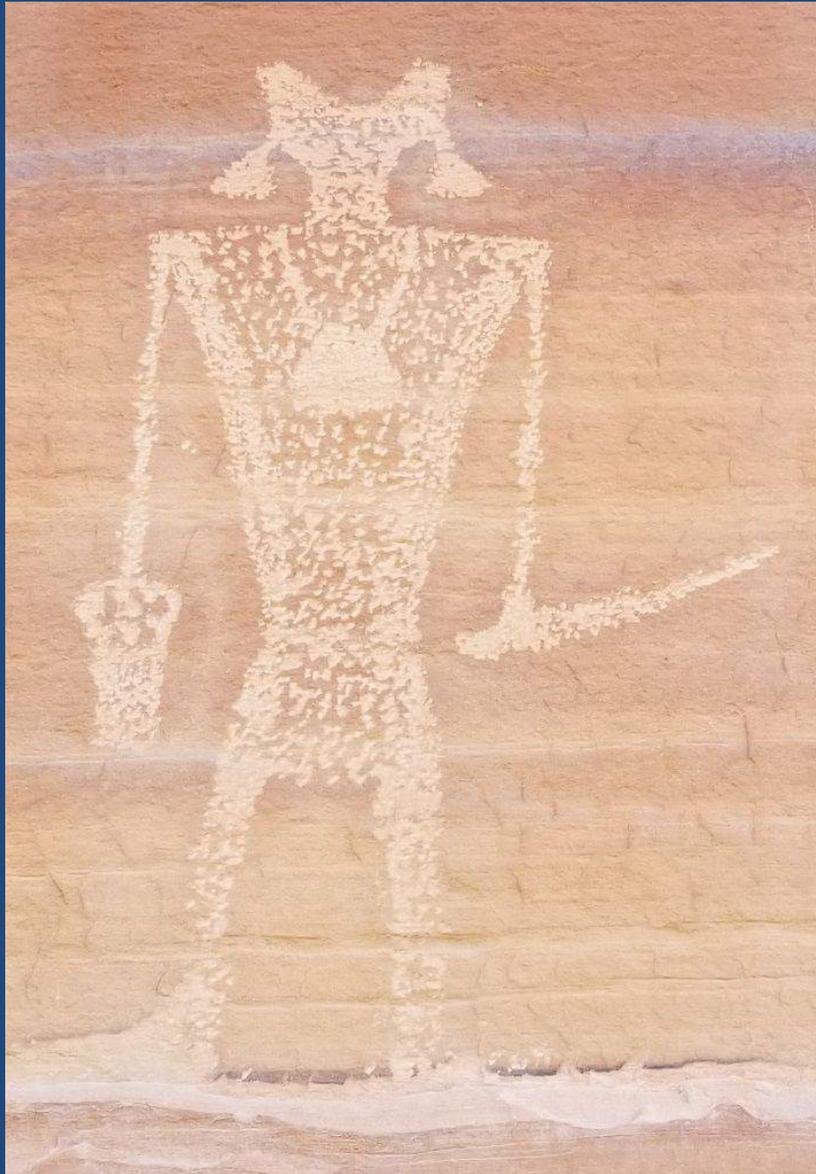


Winter Solstice Sun
leaving southern “house”
to begin the journey
northward



“Dangerous Moon”





Ritual Head-Taking in Puebloan Ethnography

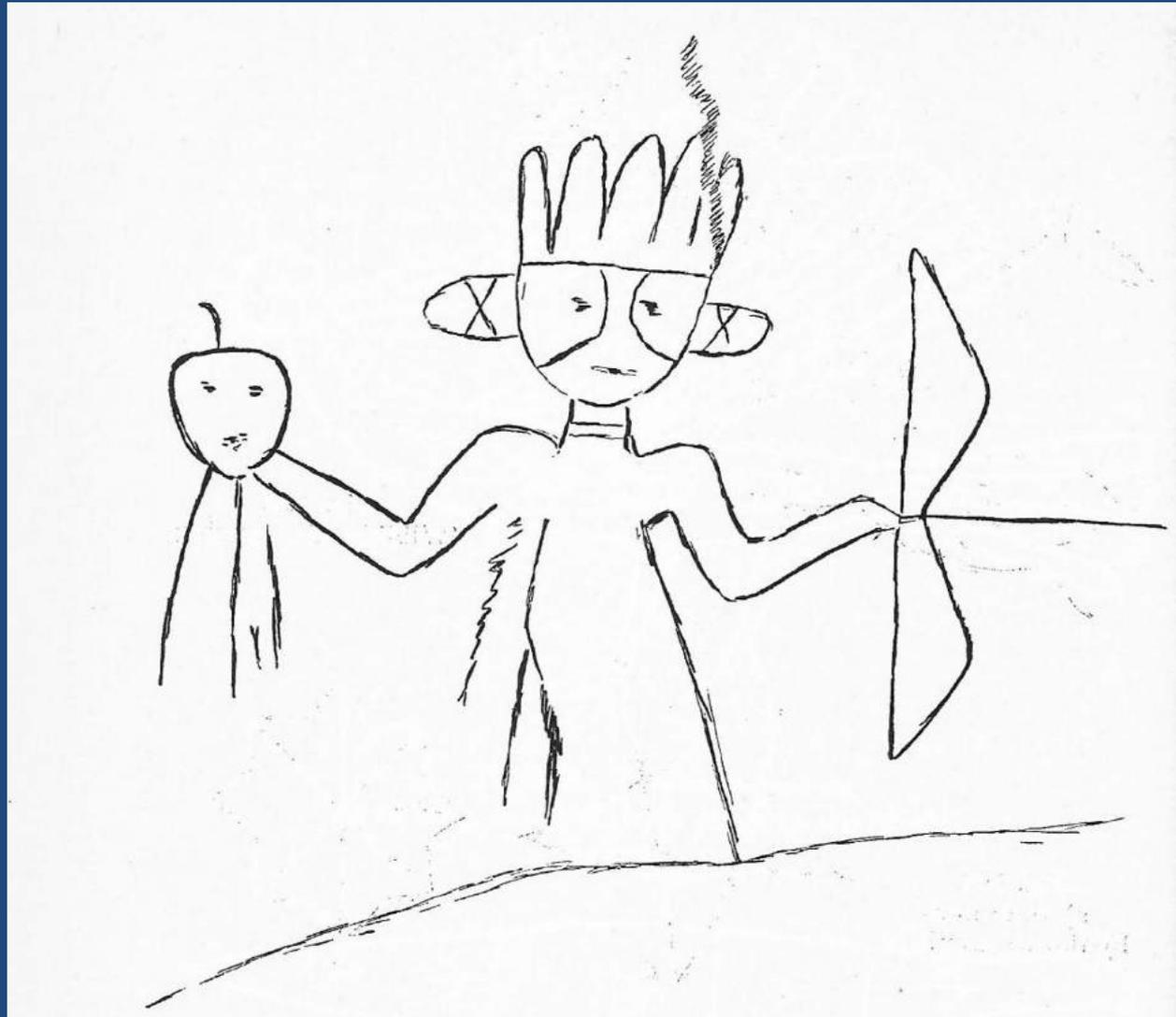
Scalp Pole in
Plaza at Zuni
Pueblo



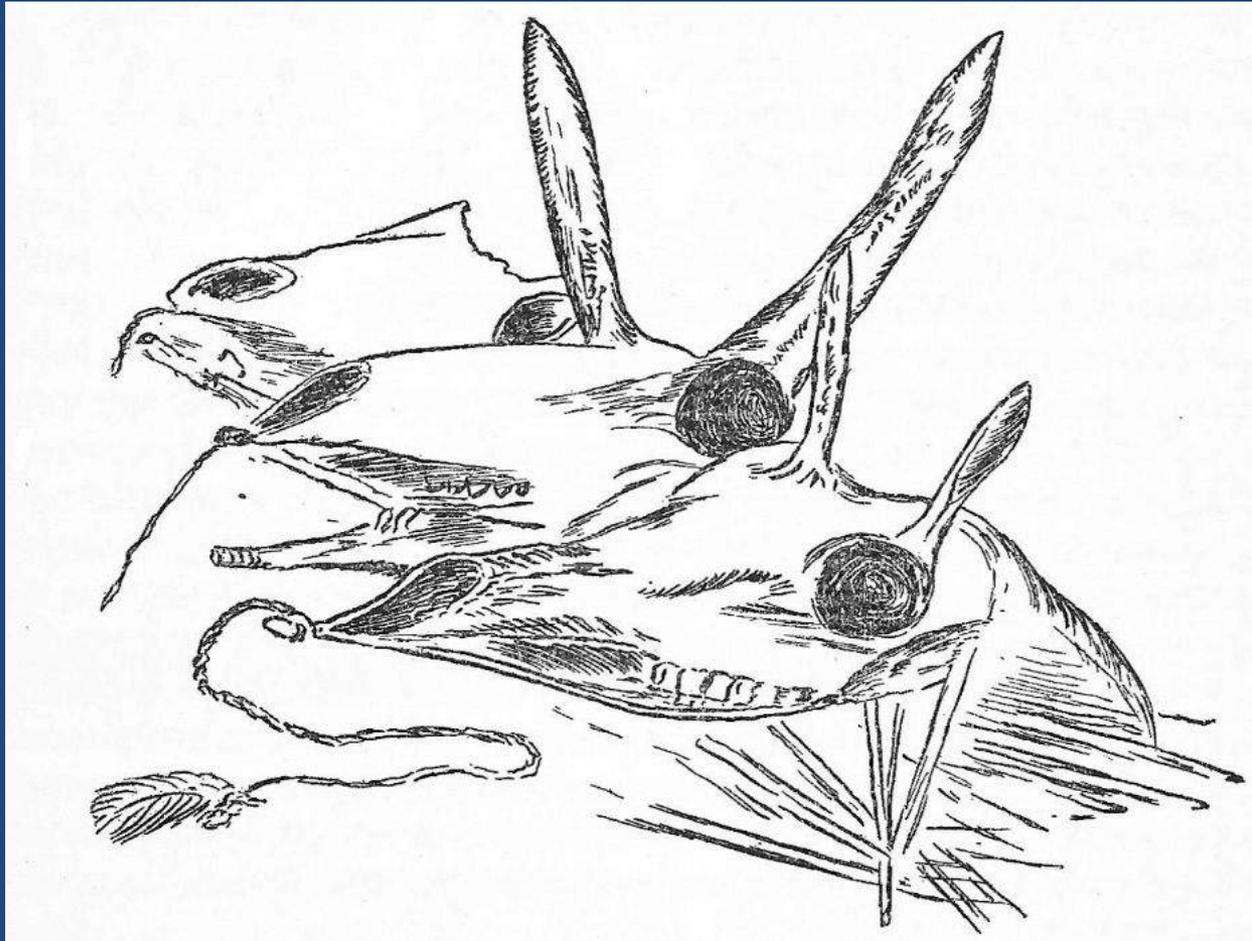
Plumed-Serpent figure decapitating victim



Cha'veyo Kachina with head petroglyph near Hopi village of Sikya'tki (faces Summer Solstice sunrise)



Antelope heads in Goat kiva during winter solstice ceremony



“Throughout Pueblo tales or myths *heads*, not scalps, are referred to in killing or fighting episodes. Inferably scalp-taking is a later trait, an overlay on head-taking.”

Parsons 1939: 352



The
Sun-god
was considered a
head-taker
in Puebloan mythology

“Red Devil” Pictograph

Vernal, UT



6:07 AM (Summer Solstice 2019)



6:15 AM (Summer Solstice 2019)



6:16 AM (Summer Solstice 2019)



6:20 AM (Summer Solstice 2019)





6:21 AM (Summer Solstice 2019)



6:22 AM (Summer Solstice 2019)



6:24 AM (Summer Solstice 2019)



6:27 AM (Summer Solstice 2019)



6:29 AM (Summer Solstice 2019)



6:30 AM (Summer Solstice 2019)



6:33 AM (Summer Solstice 2019)



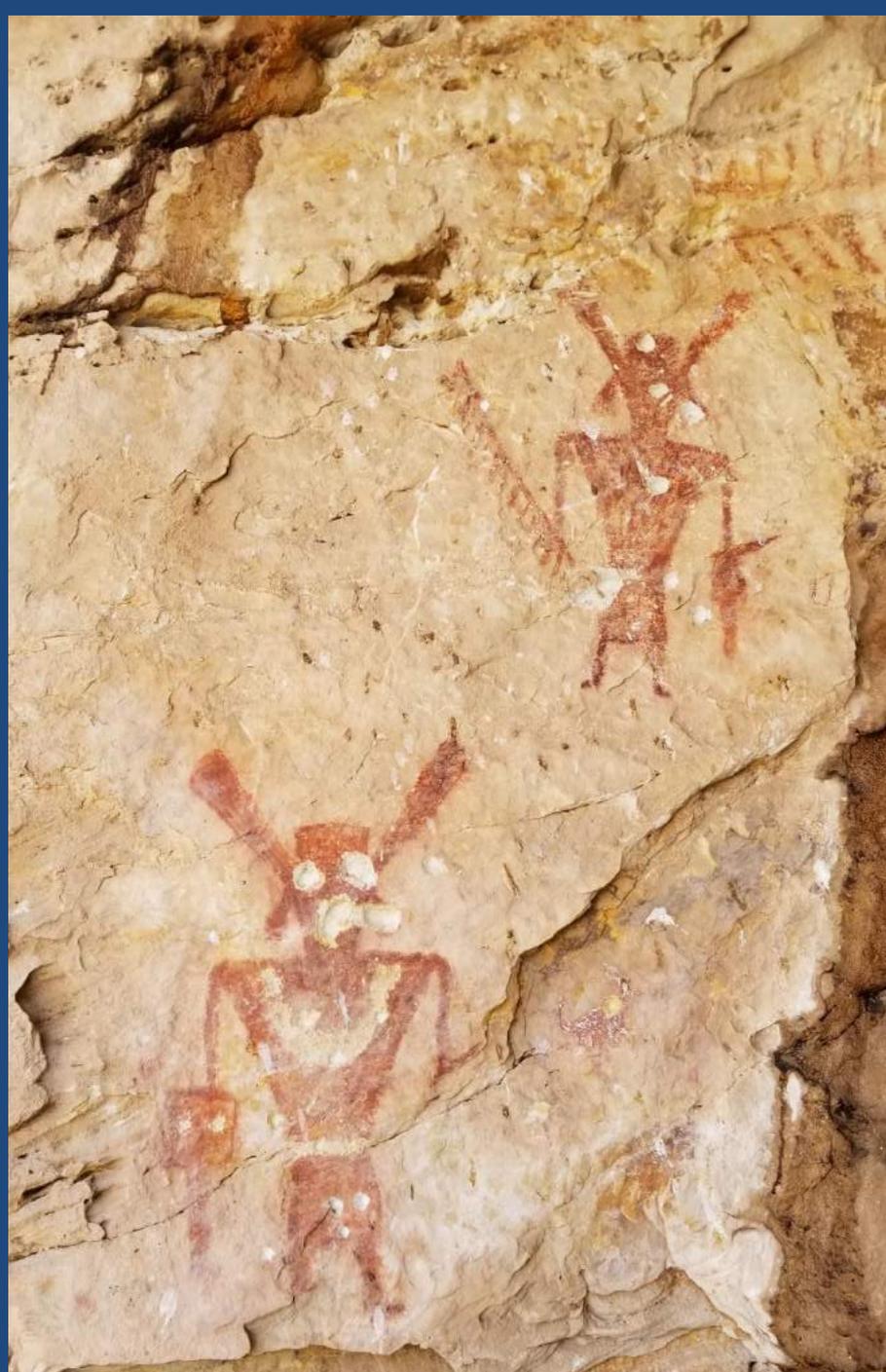
6:39 AM (Summer Solstice 2019)



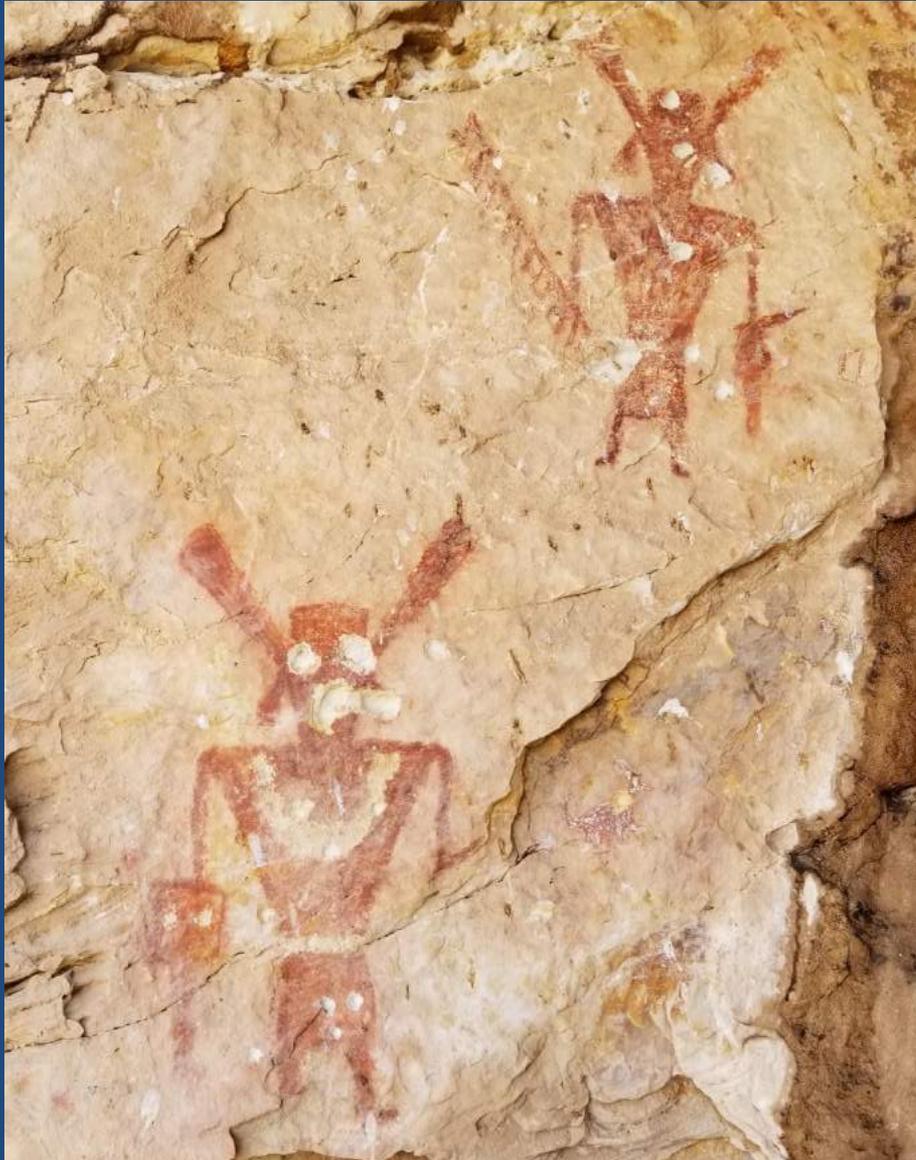
6:41 AM (Summer Solstice 2019)



$\frac{1}{4}$ mile away at the Collett's site...





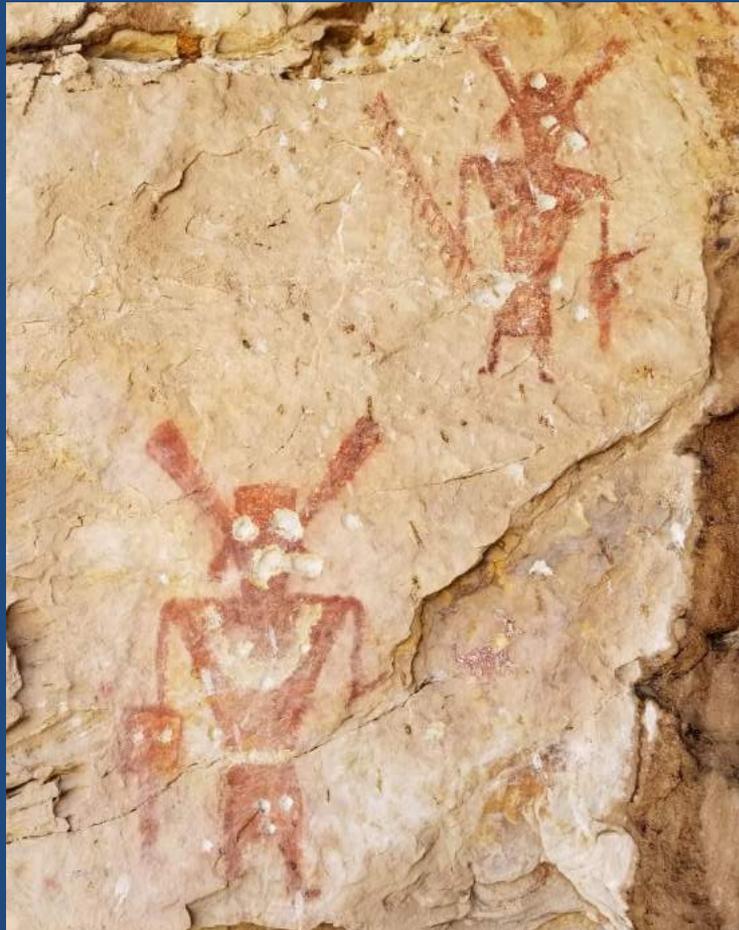


Head-takers
face:
Summer-Solstice
Sunrise

Head-takers' horizon line

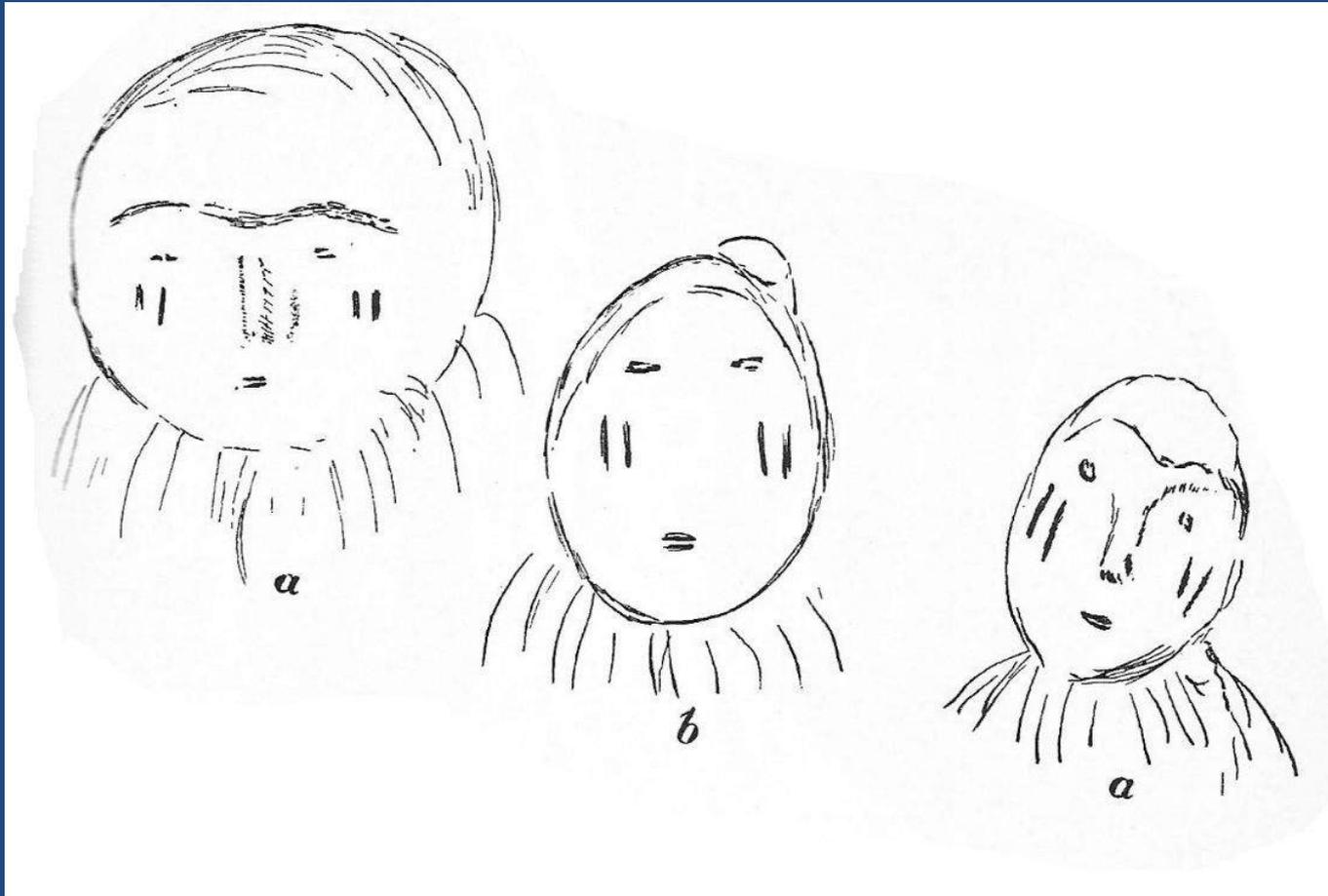


Plausible that the Collett Head-taker panel embodies solar association like the “Red-devil” Solstice pictograph



Warrior-god/Warrior-twins as
aspects of Venus

Warrior-twins on kiva altars

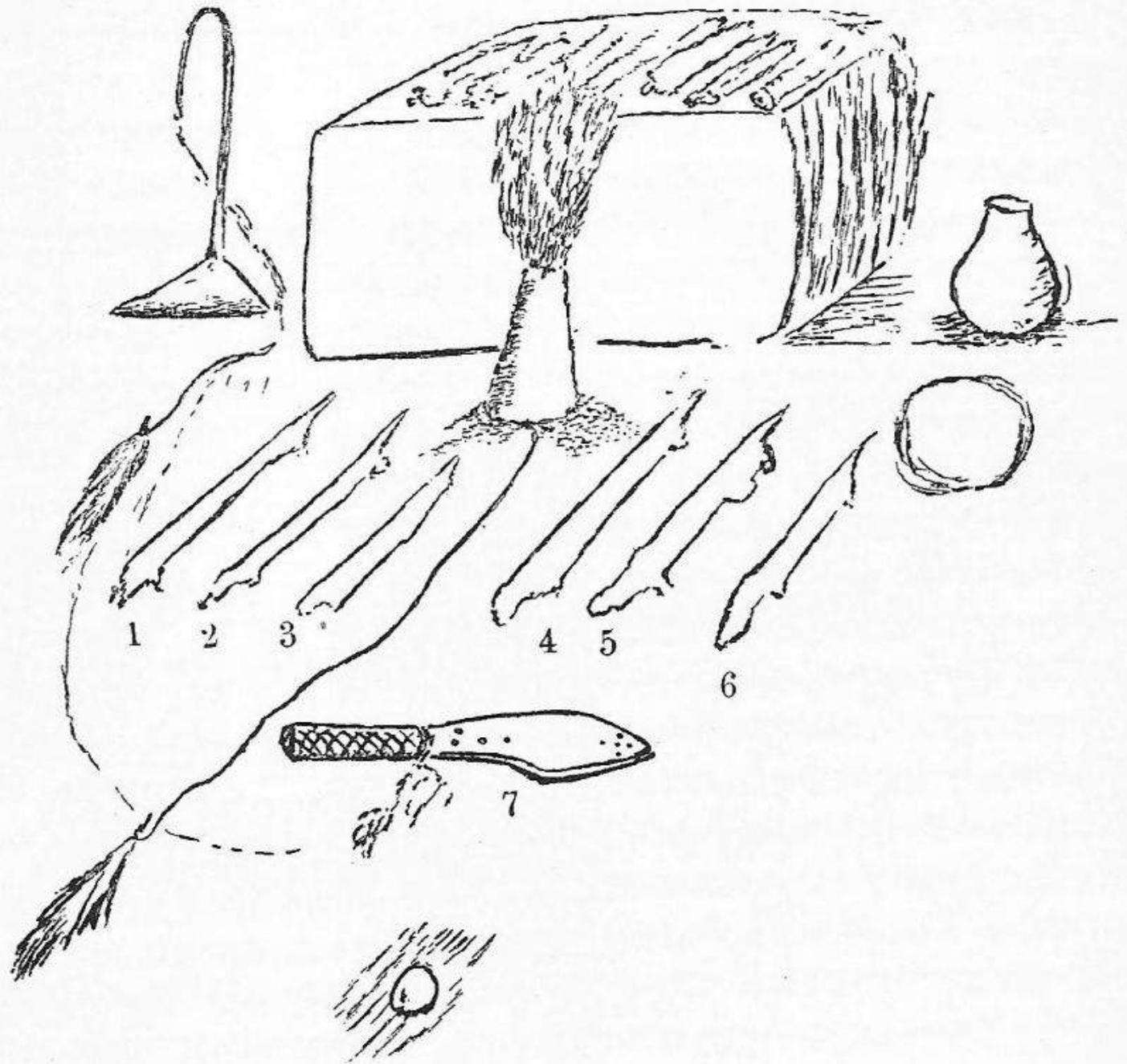


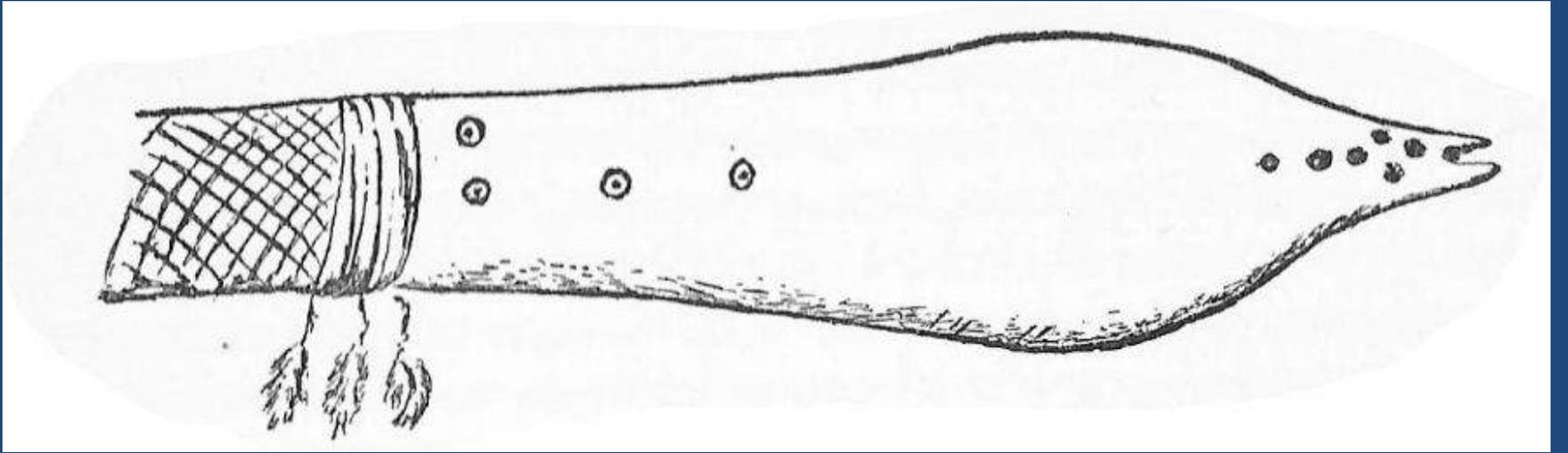
Warrior-twins figurines in kiva



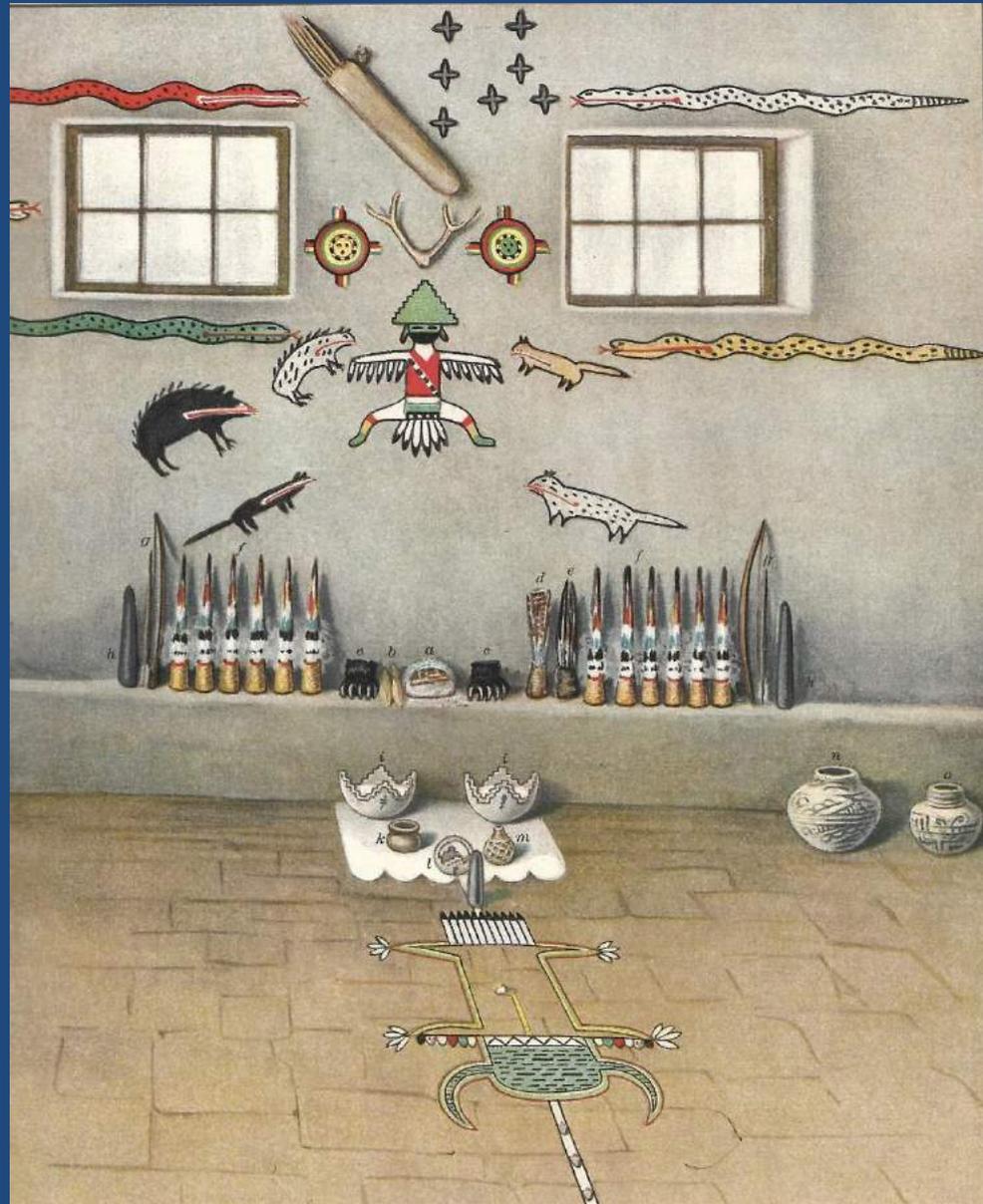


The Big/Little Dipper and Pleiades in Puebloan Religious Iconography





Dipper and
Pleiades on wall
of Zuni
Thle'wekwe
Fraternity



Mastop Kachina



Grey Knoll Site

(Big Dipper?)

(Little Dipper?)

(Pleiades)











Please contact me if you are
interested in assisting in future
URARA archaeoastronomical
research