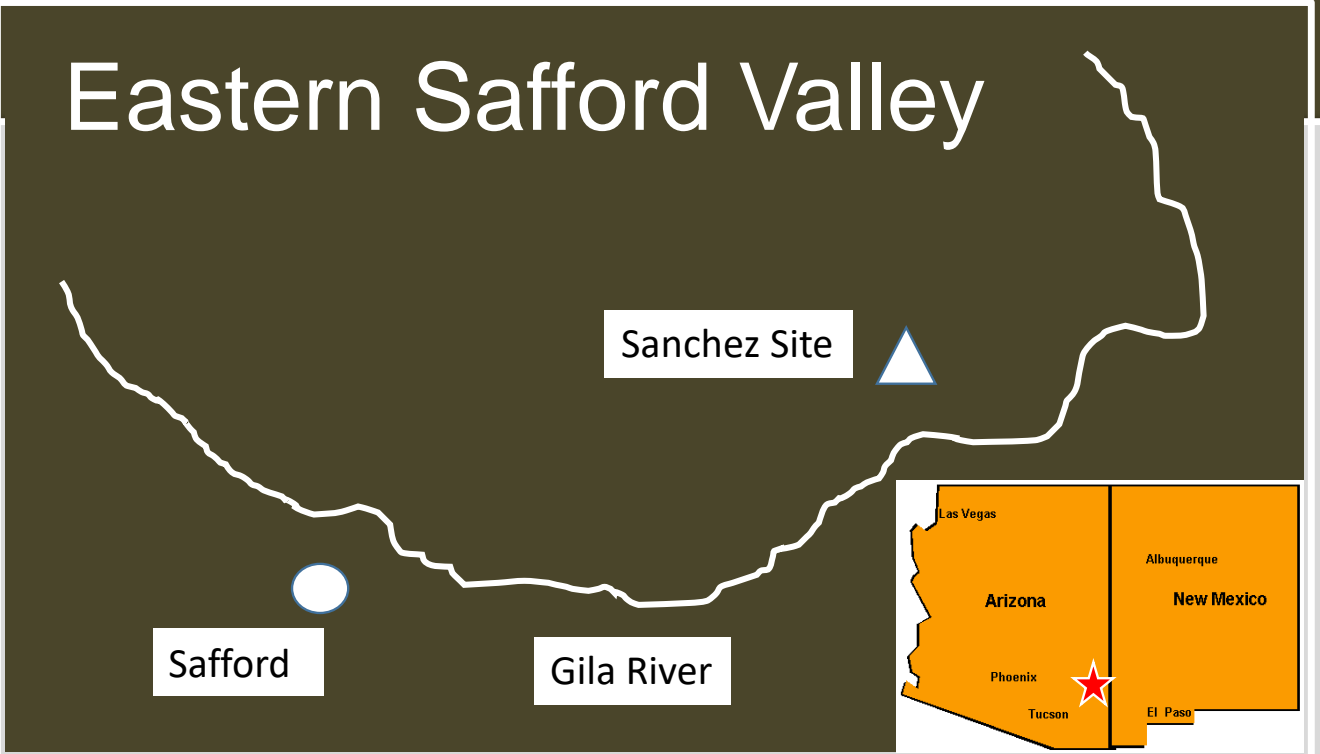


The Sanchez Site: An Early Agricultural & Early Pithouse Period Cerro de Trincheras on the Upper Gila River, Arizona

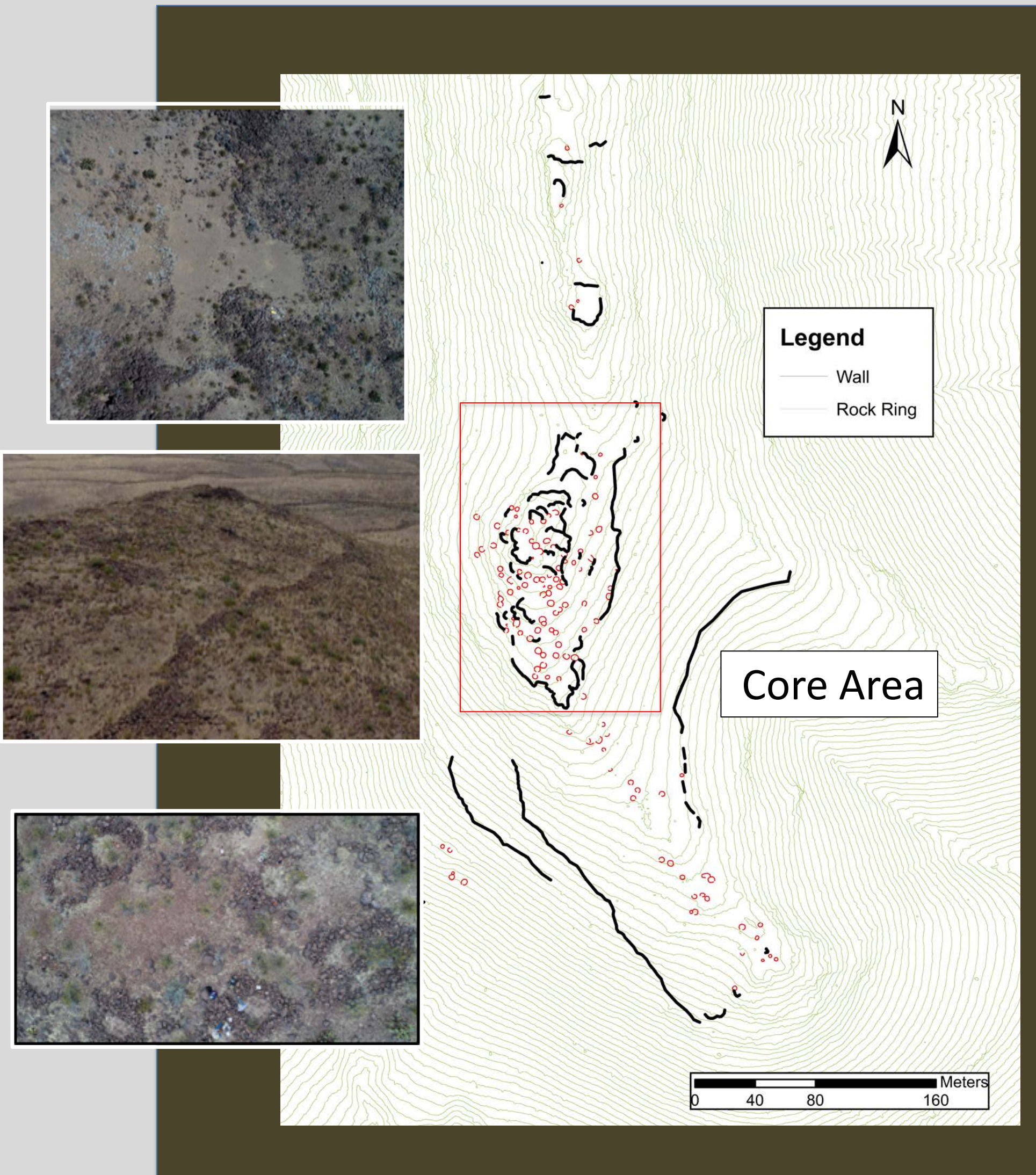
Robert J. Hard, John Roney, A. C. MacWilliams, Mary Whisenhunt and Karen R. Adams

Overview

- ❖ Sanchez site (AZ CC:2:452 (ASM)) pilot project sponsored by the National Geographic Society
- ❖ Sanchez is a cerro de trincheras overlooking upper Gila River in Arizona's eastern Safford Valley
- ❖ Cerros de trincheras are hilltop sites dating from the Early Agricultural period (2000 BC-100 AD) to late Ceramic periods, with rock ring habitations and extensive wall and terrace systems
- ❖ Project involved drone remote sensing and preliminary archaeological excavations to evaluate the site
- ❖ We sought to address key questions related to village formation, the role of warfare, and the importance of agriculture. 2018 work focused on answering basic questions concerning site's age, subsistence, and function



Scale of Site



- ❖ Sanchez located on steep ridge 650 feet above Gila River, with wide floodplains below suitable for farming
- ❖ Massive in scale, site includes 143 rock rings, 1.5 km of walls and terraces, and a unique plaza found in a saddle (570m²)
- ❖ 130 X 40 meter core area includes house clusters, areas cleared of rock, perimeter walls and the plaza
- ❖ Surface artifact density in the core area is low: 519 brownware sherds, 312 chipped stone artifacts, and 33 metates

Sanchez Flotation

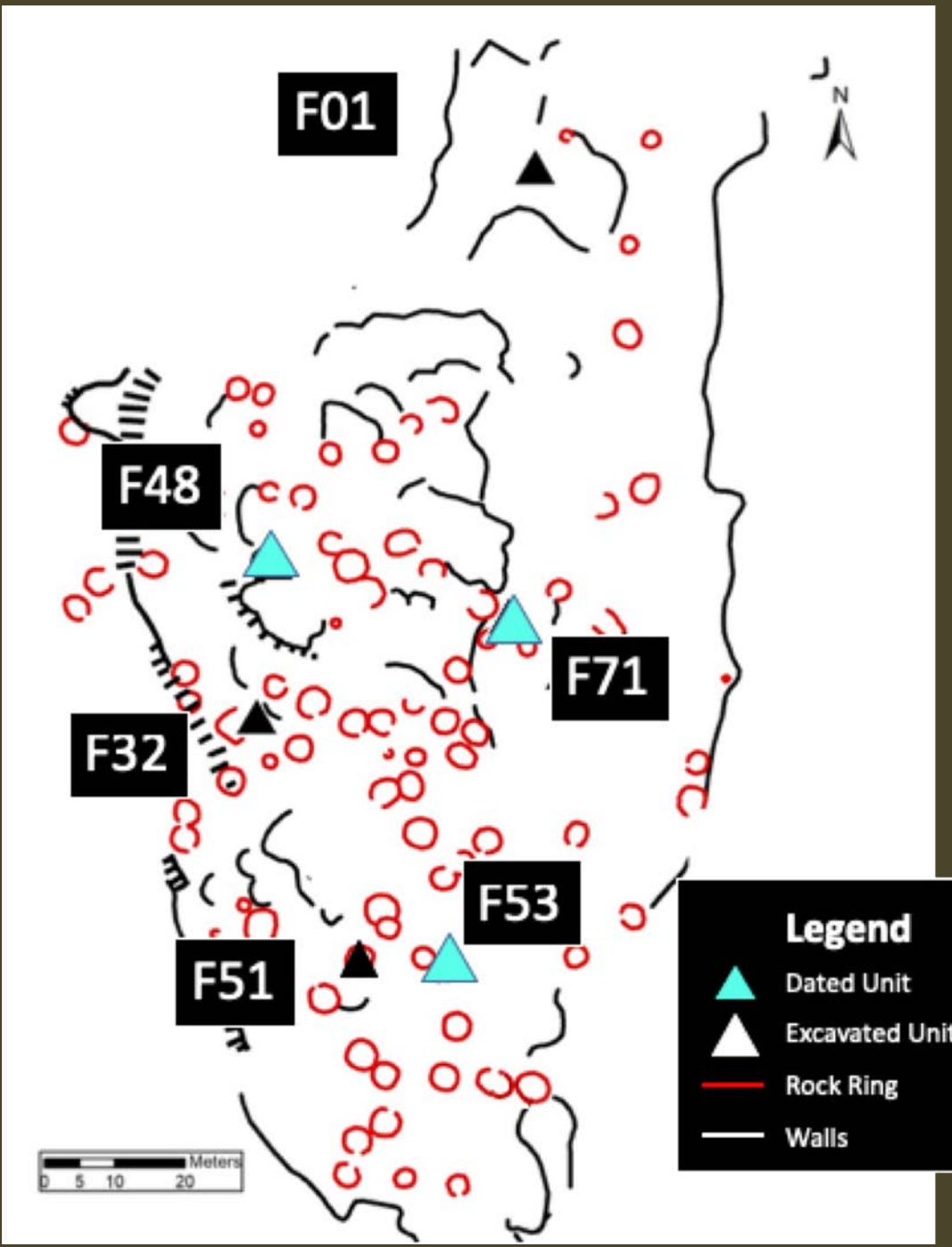


Possible *Zea mays* cupule

n=20 samples with charred remains

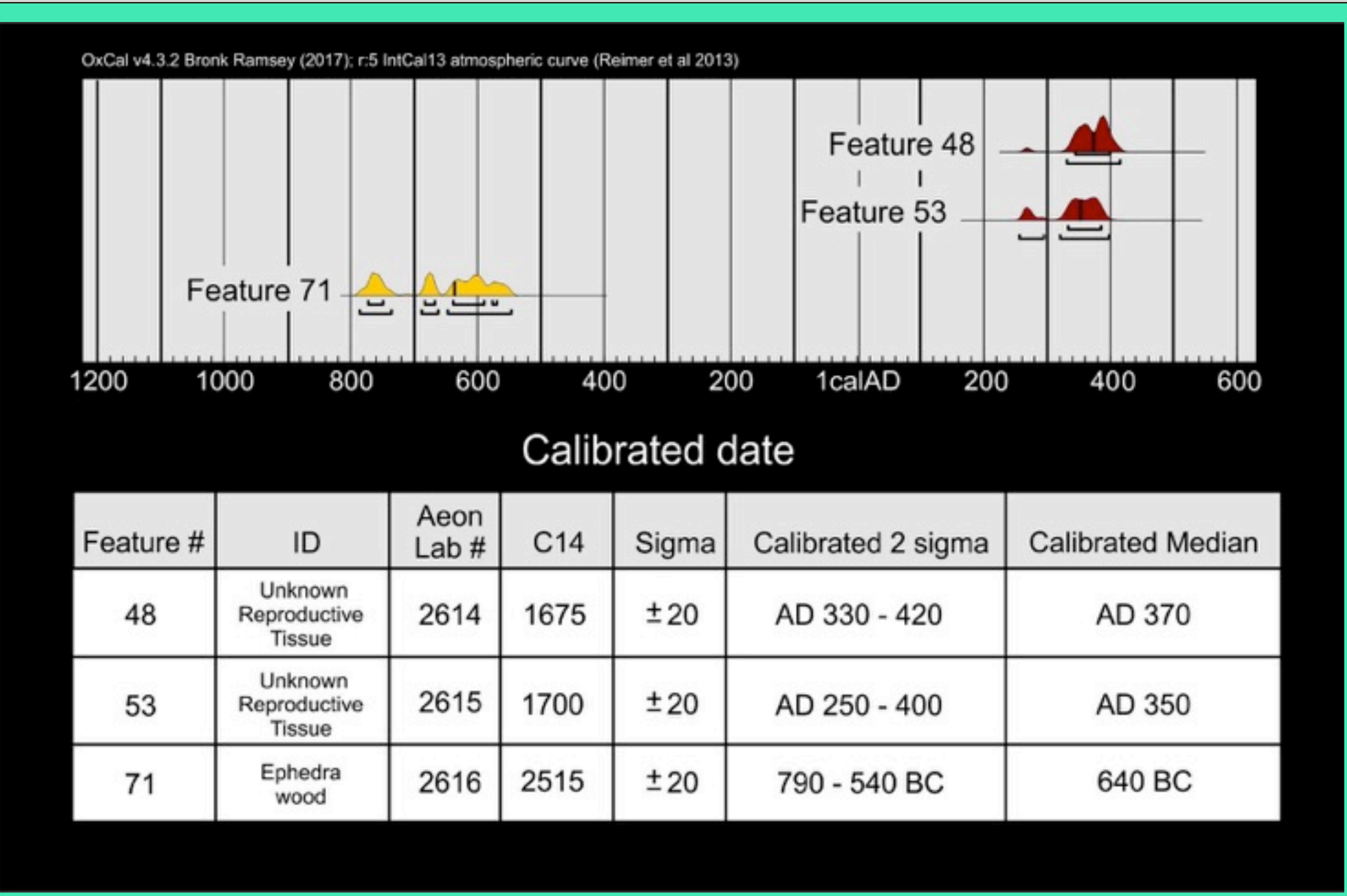
- ❖ Charred wood: creosote bush (ubiquity = 65%). Mesquite, Juniper, Ephedra, Cottonwood/willow (5-15%).
- ❖ Charred seeds: Cheno-am (15%) & *Zea mays*-tentative id (5%)

Dating Sanchez



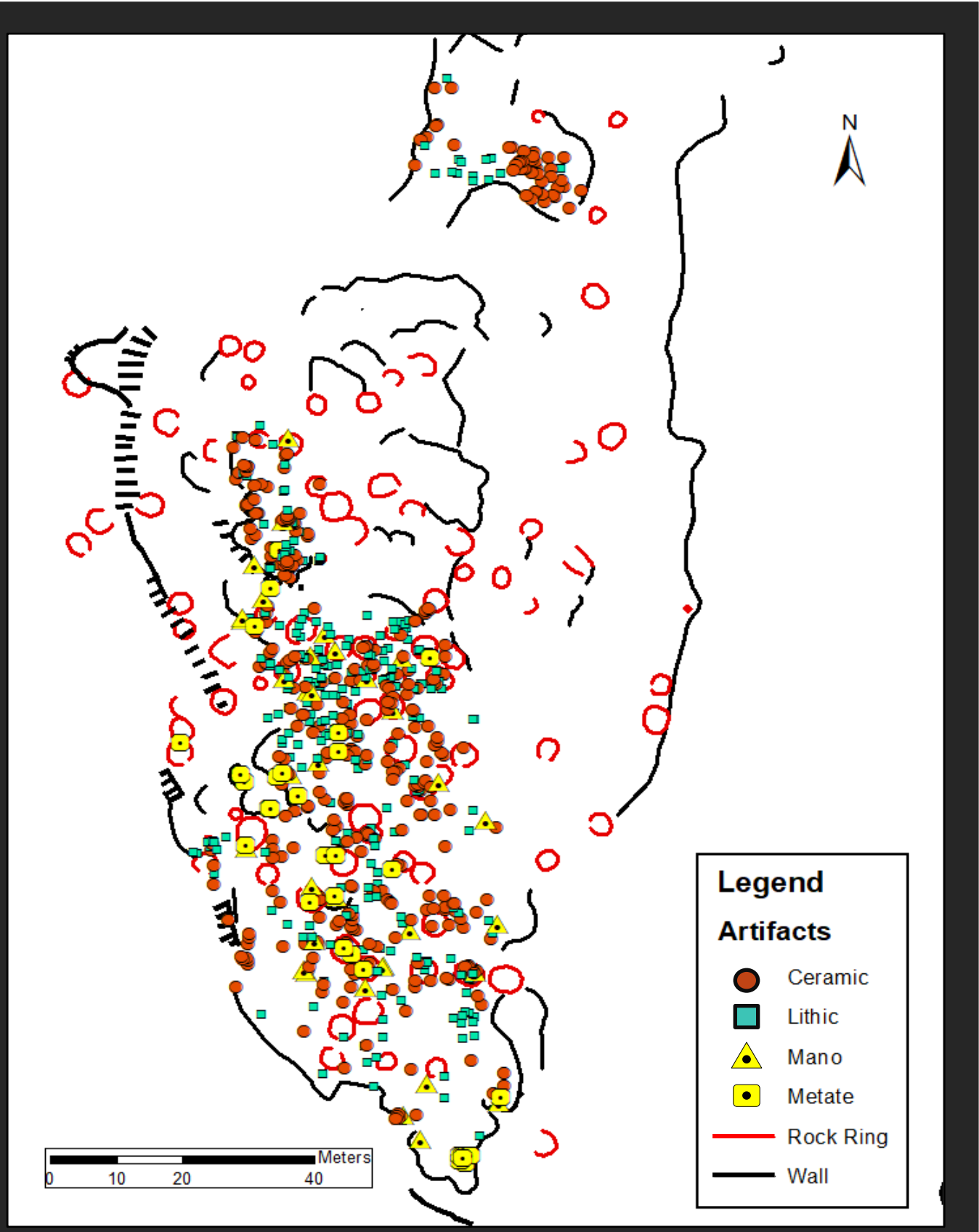
Tularosa Corner-notched projectile point

- ❖ Initially thought to date only from Early Pithouse period (AD 200-550)
- ❖ ¹⁴C dating suggests Early Agricultural period component
- ❖ ¹⁴C date from rock ring Feature 71 calibrated to 640 BC
- ❖ Two others (Features 48 and 53) calibrated to AD 350 and AD 370
- ❖ Sanchez's ceramics almost exclusively brownware (Alma Plain). None found in Feature 71 excavations, consistent with its 640 BC date



Tularosa Basal-notched Projectile Point

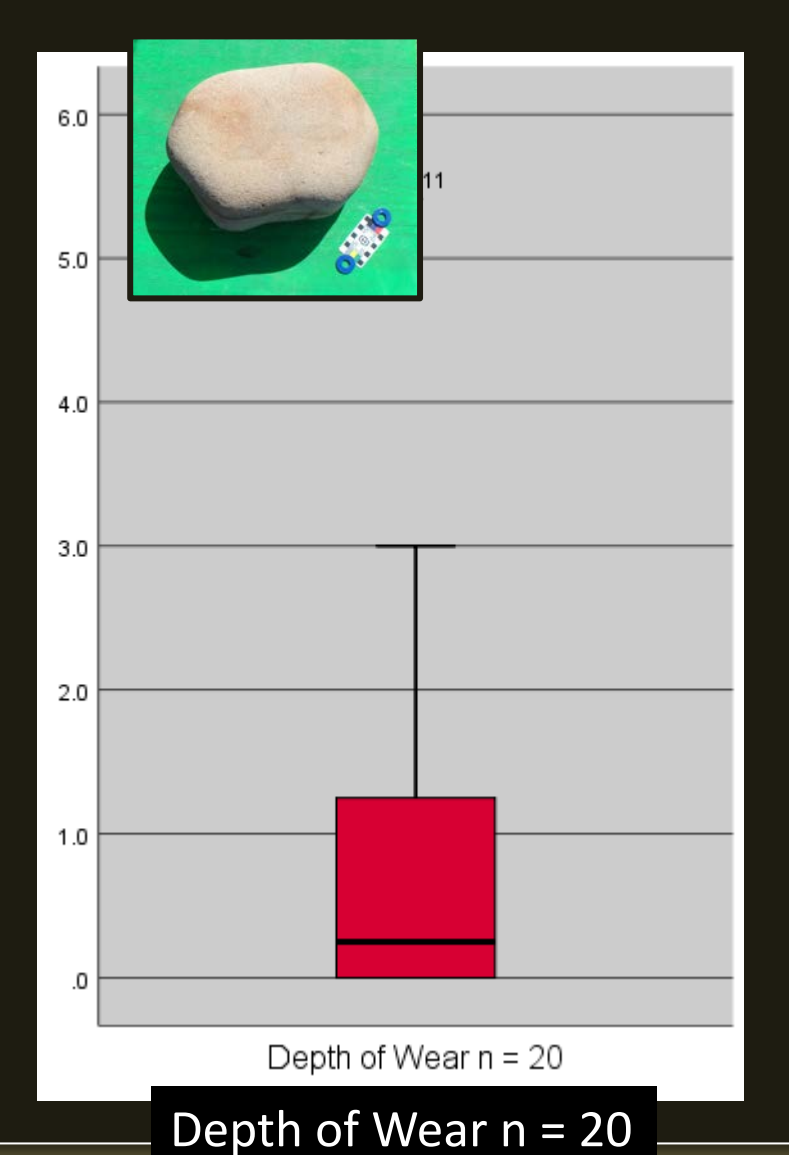
Feature 48 yielded 3 Tularosa Corner and Basal Notched points which have Early Agricultural period to AD 700-900 ages, consistent with the ¹⁴C dates (Justice 2002, Silva 2015).



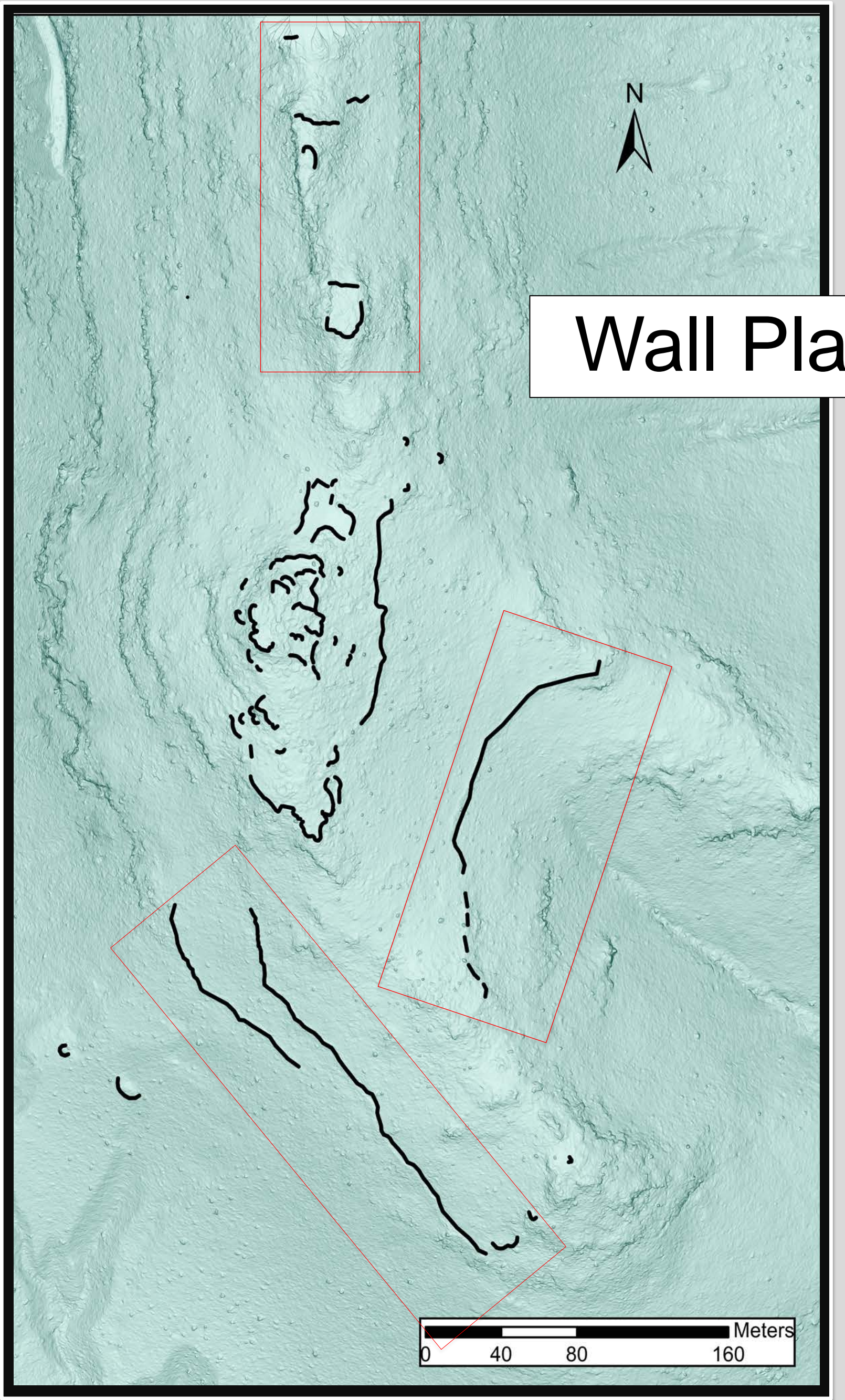
- ❖ Debates concerning the role of cerros de trincheras include:
 - Defense
 - Village formation
 - Suprahousehold organization
- ❖ Extensive Sanchez wall complex and defensive position suggest defense may have been factor in placement and construction
- ❖ Walls, plaza and large number of rock rings, and cleared areas reflect communal labor
- ❖ Plaza feature suggests social integration



- ❖ Depth of metate use wear has median of .25 cm (0 to 5.4 cm, n=20)
- ❖ Indicates little accumulated use
- ❖ Slight metate wear, low artifact density, internal site organization, the plaza, and number of rock rings suggest brief occupation by a substantial number of people



Wall Placement



Wall placement at most vulnerable approaches consistent with a defensive role for Sanchez; plaza is consistent with a social role.

Acknowledgments

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