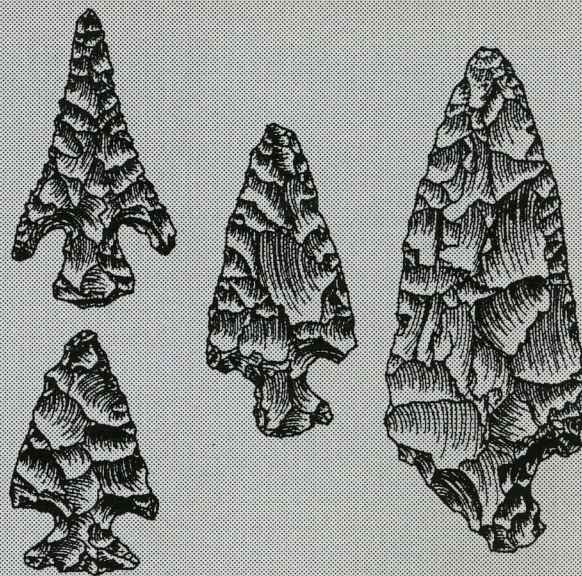
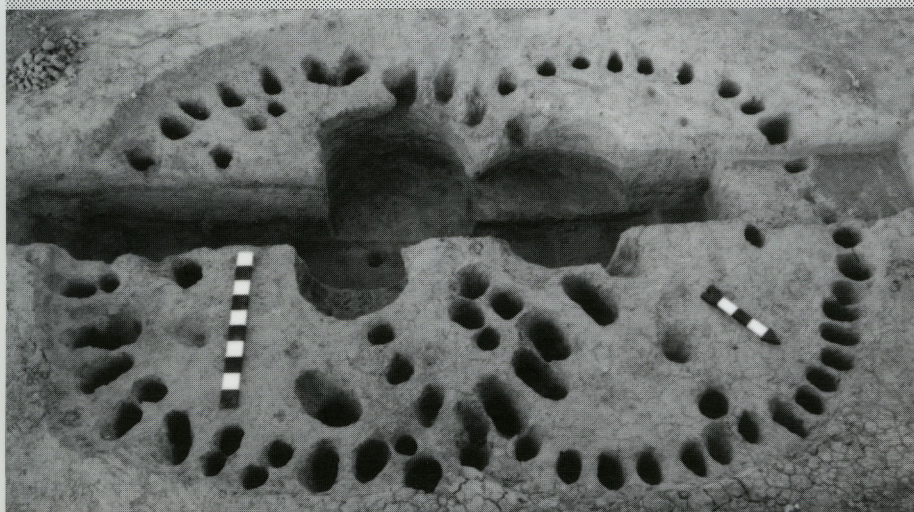


Excavations in the Santa Cruz River Floodplain: The Early Agricultural Period Component at Los Pozos



Edited by
David A. Gregory

Contributions by
Jenny L. Adams
Michael W. Diehl
Alan Ferg
David A. Gregory
James M. Heidke
Lorrie Lincoln-Babb
Penny Dufoe Minturn
M. Steven Shackley
R. Jane Sliva
Arthur W. Vokes
Jennifer A. Waters
Helga Wöcherl

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David A. Gregory

One floor assemblage stands apart from all others. This remarkable array of artifacts was found on the floor of Feature 819 and provides an unprecedented glimpse into the ritual life and belief systems of Early Agricultural populations in southern Arizona. Positioned near the west wall of the structure, this array was composed of 33 objects, including both artifacts and unusual natural items, purposefully and specifically arranged. Figure B.1 illustrates the array, and its relationship to the floor of Feature 819, with each item numbered, while Figures B.2 and B.3 provide more detailed illustrations of the items included. Table B.1 provides a listing of the items corresponding to the numbers in Figure B.1.

The objects themselves attest to the special nature of this deposit: 13 projectile points (5-11, 14, 21, 26-27, 30, 33); two large pieces of basalt, one larger (1) and one smaller (4), both minimally shaped but apparently not designed for any other use; a fossil horse tooth (13) and an unfossilized mammoth or mastodon vertebra (12); a beautifully made football-shaped object of translucent red-orange chalcedony (?) (2); six round pebbles or stone balls (2-3, 16, 24, 31-32); a number of other unmodified natural rocks, including an Apache tear (28), a hematite (?) concretion (29), and three geode fragments (15, 17, 19).

Three other objects were recovered from the fill of the structure immediately above and around the floor array before its presence was discerned. These include a gastropod fossil that has the appearance of an animal head; a minimally worked, oblong piece of red siltstone/mudstone (an atlatl weight?); a large fragment of quartz crystal; and one of the unusual artiodactyl femur heads discussed previously as a possible votive deposit (see also Chapter 7). It is possible these items also belonged to the array and had been moved from their original location by rodent activity or other agents. A figurine fragment was also recovered from the floor of the structure approximately 1 m east of the array (see Chapter 8).

A number of the items in the array came from distant sources. X-ray fluorescence analyses of the two obsidian projectile points and the Apache tear reveal one of the points was made of material from Superior, Arizona, the other point of material from Cow Canyon in western New Mexico, and the Apache tear originated in the Saucedo Mountains of southwestern Arizona (see Appendix E). Another of the points (10) has been identified as an Andice point, an Archaic type common in west Texas (Shum and Jelks 1962), and the chert from which this point was made appears to be nonlocal (see Chapter 4). Thus, this point may well have been manufactured in Texas and carried to the Tucson Basin.

The manner in which these objects were arranged with respect to one another also attests to the special character of the array. Eight of the projectile points form a size-graded series, stacked upon one another in a formal arrangement. Although two of the points appear to have slipped somewhat from their original position, each level in the stack was originally oriented in the opposite direction of the underlying points. Four of the stone balls were positioned in two pairs of two, located opposite each other and on either side of the larger piece of basalt (2 and 3) and the deeply notched, broken lanceolate projectile point (31 and 32).

The interpretation of this array offered here springs from a somewhat unexpected source—rock art. It is argued that the content and structure of the Los Pozos floor array show similarities to the content and structure of petroglyphs and pictographs widely distributed across the American Southwest, many of them dated to approximately the same time period. These include: wide-shouldered anthropomorphic figures, often shown with a larger figure paired with or attached to a smaller one (Cole 1992:Figures 5-6; Davenport et al. 1992:Figures 2, 5; Warner 1994:Figures 4, 7, 13-14); round objects held by or attached at the ends of the arms of such figures, which have been interpreted as trophy heads or medicine pouches (Davenport et al. 1992:Figure 5; Schaafsma 1980; Warner 1994); atlatls held by figures or shown unattached but nearby (Heizer and Baumhoff 1962:34-35; Schaafsma 1980:55-56); and projectile points, which occur as separate elements or variably attached to the heads, shoulders, or hands of anthropomorphic figures (Grant et al. 1968:48-56; Heizer and Baumhoff 1962:37; Jackson 1938; Schaafsma 1980:55-56, 119, Figures 34-35; Sutherland and Steed 1974; Warner 1994:Figure 13).

Based on comparisons with these rock art elements and motifs, the Los Pozos array may be interpreted as a construction designed to represent two wide-shouldered anthropomorphic figures, a larger one in the form of the large piece of basalt (2) and a smaller one indicated by the lanceolate, deeply side-notched projectile point with the tip broken off (30). Each of the figures is flanked by two round objects (round pebbles/stone balls: 2 and 3, and 31 and 32), one on each side; these objects may have been attached directly to the figures by means of arms made of perishable material (see Chapter 5). The placement of these round pebbles shows formal asymmetry, with the larger of the two being to the left of the larger figure (3) and to the right of the smaller (31). The smaller figure may be interpreted as being upside down, since the wider end of the broken point is down. The other piece of basalt (25) appears to be an extension of the larger figure (1), and could represent an atlatl held by the figure, with

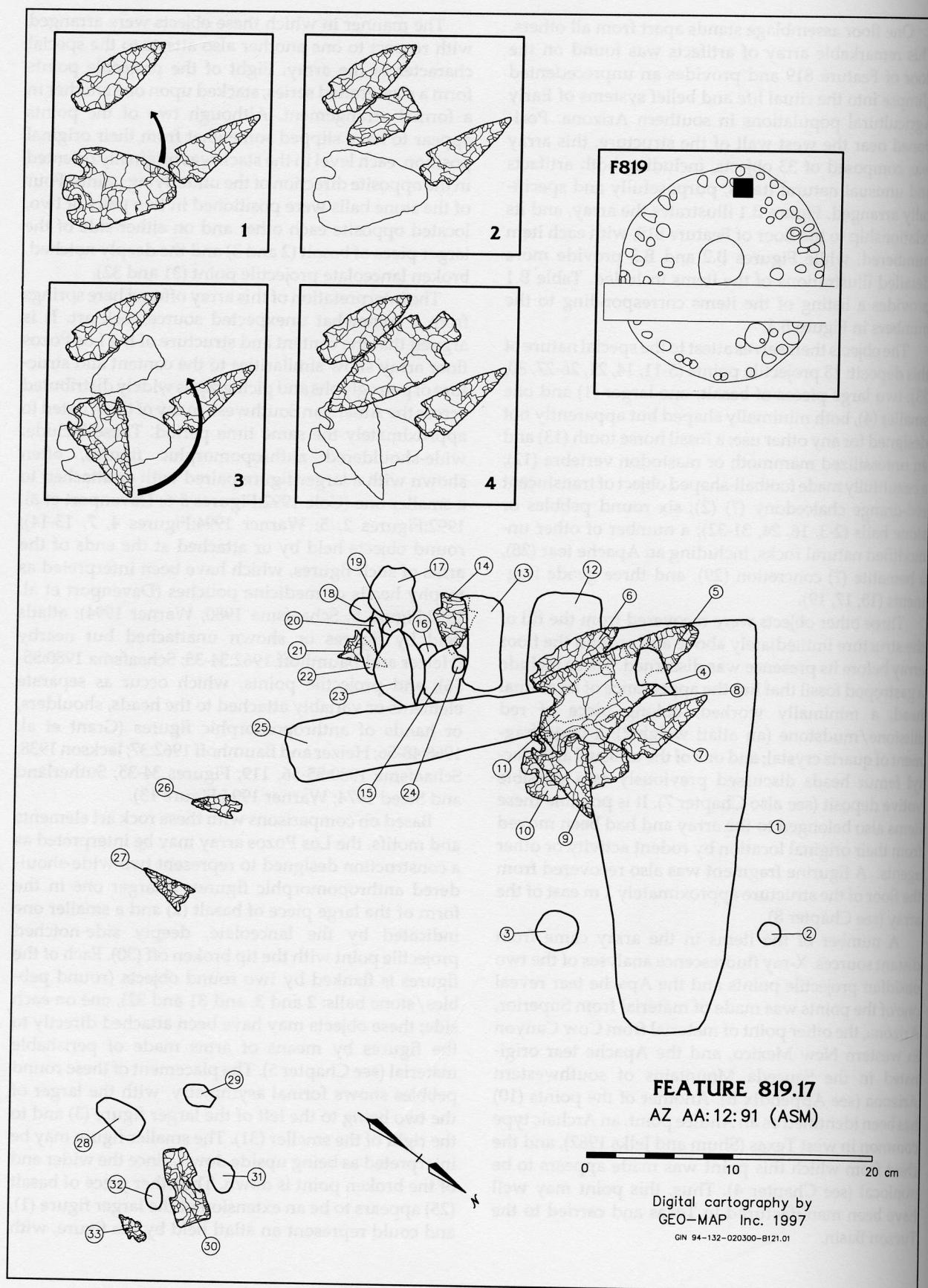


Figure B.1. Floor array from Feature 819.

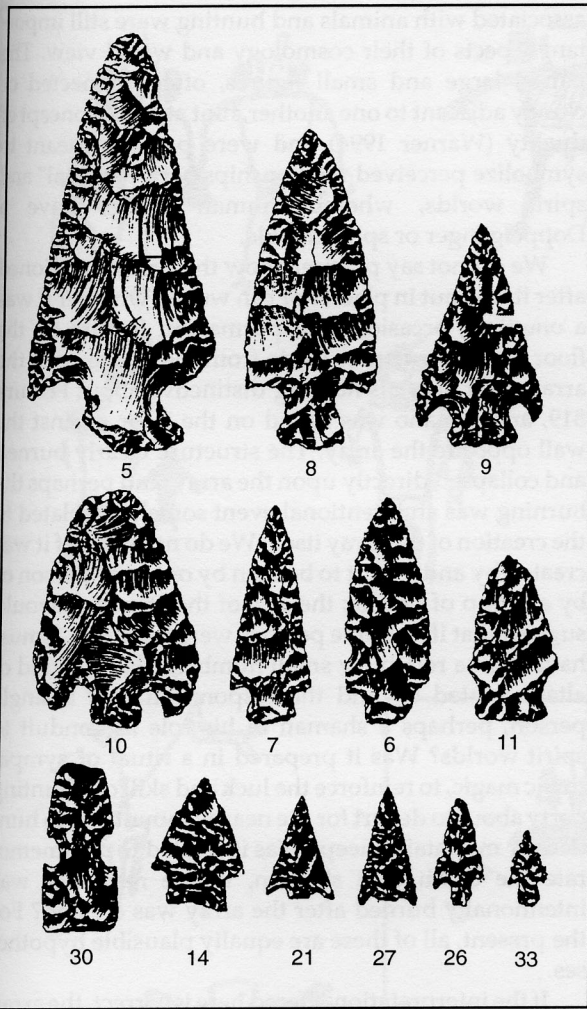


Figure B.2. Projectile points from the Feature 819 floor array (numbers correspond to Table B.1 and Figure B.1). (Length of point at top left is 13.5 cm).

the stack of seven projectile points positioned at one end. Each of the two proposed figures has a cluster of items positioned above and to the left, in each case including projectile points and unusual natural items. Examples of rock art analogs for individual items represented in the array and their interrelationships are illustrated in Figure B.4, where the pieces of basalt, the notched projectile point, and the stone balls are also shown and shaded to highlight the elements of shape and composition which underlie the interpretation offered here.

As noted above, the rock art motifs referred to here are found widely across the American Southwest and into even California, Sonora, and Chihuahua, with illustrated examples being from the Big Bend area of Texas, the northern Rio Grande, the San Juan Basin, the Colorado Plateau, central Utah, and southern California. However, these same elements are largely or

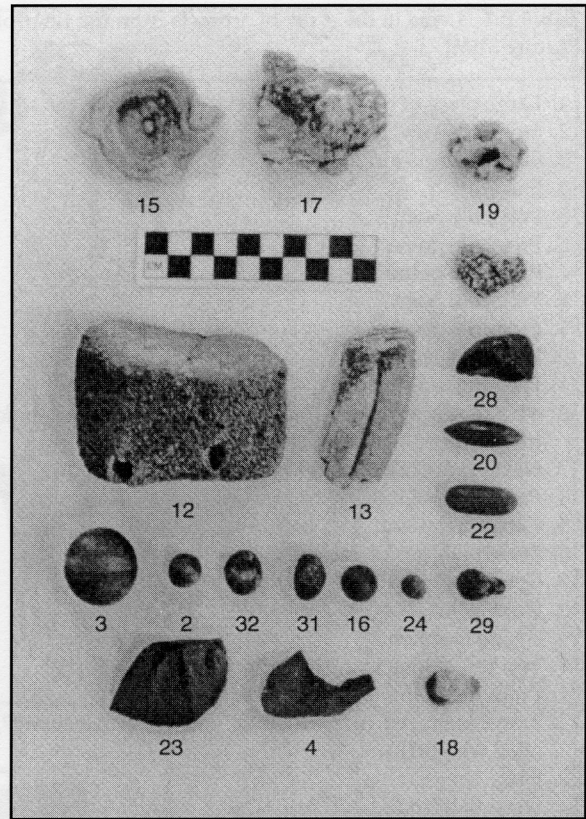


Figure B.3. Other artifacts from the Feature 819 floor array (numbers correspond to Table B.1 and Figure B.1; unnumbered geode fragment from fill above feature).

completely lacking in the Archaic rock art of southern Arizona (Burton and Farrell 1990; Kolber 1992; Thiel 1995; Wallace and Holmlund 1986; Wallace et al. 1995).

The closest known rock art site with possibly related motifs is on the eastern side of the Chiricahua Mountains in southeastern Arizona and includes projectile points and possible atlatls but no wide-shouldered anthropomorphs (Henry Wallace, personal communication 1997). The projectile points represented in these panels are morphologically similar to the five largest points in the Los Pozos array. Why rock art motifs similar to those invoked here are largely absent from southern Arizona remains an interesting aspect of the interpretation offered here. This aspect of the problem is made even more interesting by Matson's hypothesis that the Western or San Juan variant of Basketmaker II represents a San Pedro Cochise migration onto the Colorado Plateau before A.D. 200 (Matson 1991, 1994). A number of the rock art elements and motifs cited above are from this general area.

It has been suggested that some of the rock art figures referred to here represent shamans with special powers associated with hunting, and some panels with projectile points, atlatls, and animal figures have been

Table B.1. Items in the array of artifacts from the floor of Feature 819.

1. Large piece of basalt
2. Stone ball (round pebble)
3. Stone ball (round pebble)
4. Flake
5. Projectile point
6. Projectile point
7. Projectile point
8. Projectile point
9. Projectile point
10. Projectile point
11. Projectile point
12. Mammoth/mastodon (<i>Mammuthus/Mammut</i>) vertebrae (unfossilized)
13. Horse tooth (<i>Equus</i> sp.) (fossilized)
14. Projectile point
15. Geode fragment
16. Stone ball (round pebble)
17. Geode fragment
18. Flake
19. Geode fragment
20. Worked oblong stone (quartzite?; atlatl weight?)
21. Projectile point
22. Translucent red rock, "football" shaped (chalcedony?; atlatl weight?)
23. Flake
24. Stone ball (round pebble)
25. Piece of basalt
26. Projectile point
27. Projectile point
28. Apache tear
29. Concretion
30. Projectile point (deeply side-notched, broken tip)
31. Stone ball (round pebble)
32. Stone ball (round pebble)
33. Projectile point

interpreted as hunting shrines (Furst 1974; Heizer and Baumhoff 1962; Schaafsma 1980:71, Warner 1994). Several of the items included in the Los Pozos array or recovered nearby clearly suggest hunting or animal imagery: the projectile points, the fossil horse tooth, the mammoth/mastodon vertebra, the gastropod fossil cast that has the appearance of an animal head; and possibly a representation of an atlatl attached to or included as an extension of the larger figure. Faunal remains from the site show that hunting, especially of deer and rabbits, remained an important subsistence pursuit for these early farmers (see Chapter 10). Similarly, the floor array suggests that rituals and beliefs

associated with animals and hunting were still important aspects of their cosmology and world view. The paired large and small figures, often connected or closely adjacent to one another, hint at some concept of duality (Warner 1994) and were perhaps meant to symbolize perceived relationships between "real" and spirit worlds, wherein human beings have a Doppelgänger or spirit double.

We cannot say precisely how this array functioned after it was put in place, nor can we say whether it was a one-time, occasional, or permanent feature on the floor of this structure. Aside from the presence of the array itself, there is nothing distinctive about Feature 819, and a mano was found on the floor against the wall opposite the array. The structure clearly burned and collapsed directly upon the array, and perhaps the burning was an intentional event somehow related to the creation of the array itself. We do not know if it was created by and meant to be seen by only one person or by a group of people; the size of the structure would suggest that if multiple persons were involved, it must have been a relatively small number. Was it a kind of altar, created by and the responsibility of a single person, perhaps a shaman in his role as conduit to spirit worlds? Was it prepared in a ritual of sympathetic magic, to reinforce the luck and skill of a hunting party about to depart for the nearby mountains to hunt deer or mountain sheep? Was it created to commemorate the death of a shaman, whose residence was intentionally burned after the array was created? For the present, all of these are equally plausible hypotheses.

If the interpretation offered here is correct, the array combines elements or motifs that occur over an extremely large geographic area, suggesting a certain degree of continuity in cosmology and world view during the first millennium B.C. This general conclusion is perhaps supported by an approximately contemporaneous feature including large projectile points manufactured specifically for inclusion with a cremation-related deposit, reported from the site of La Playa in northern Sonora (J. Holmlund and J. Carpenter, personal communication 1996); these points are morphologically similar to those recovered from the Los Pozos array.

Whatever the specific purpose and meaning, it is clear that this array represents an intentionally constructed ritual composition, rich in symbolism. It demonstrates that interior space was sometimes devoted to esoteric purposes as well as the mundane.

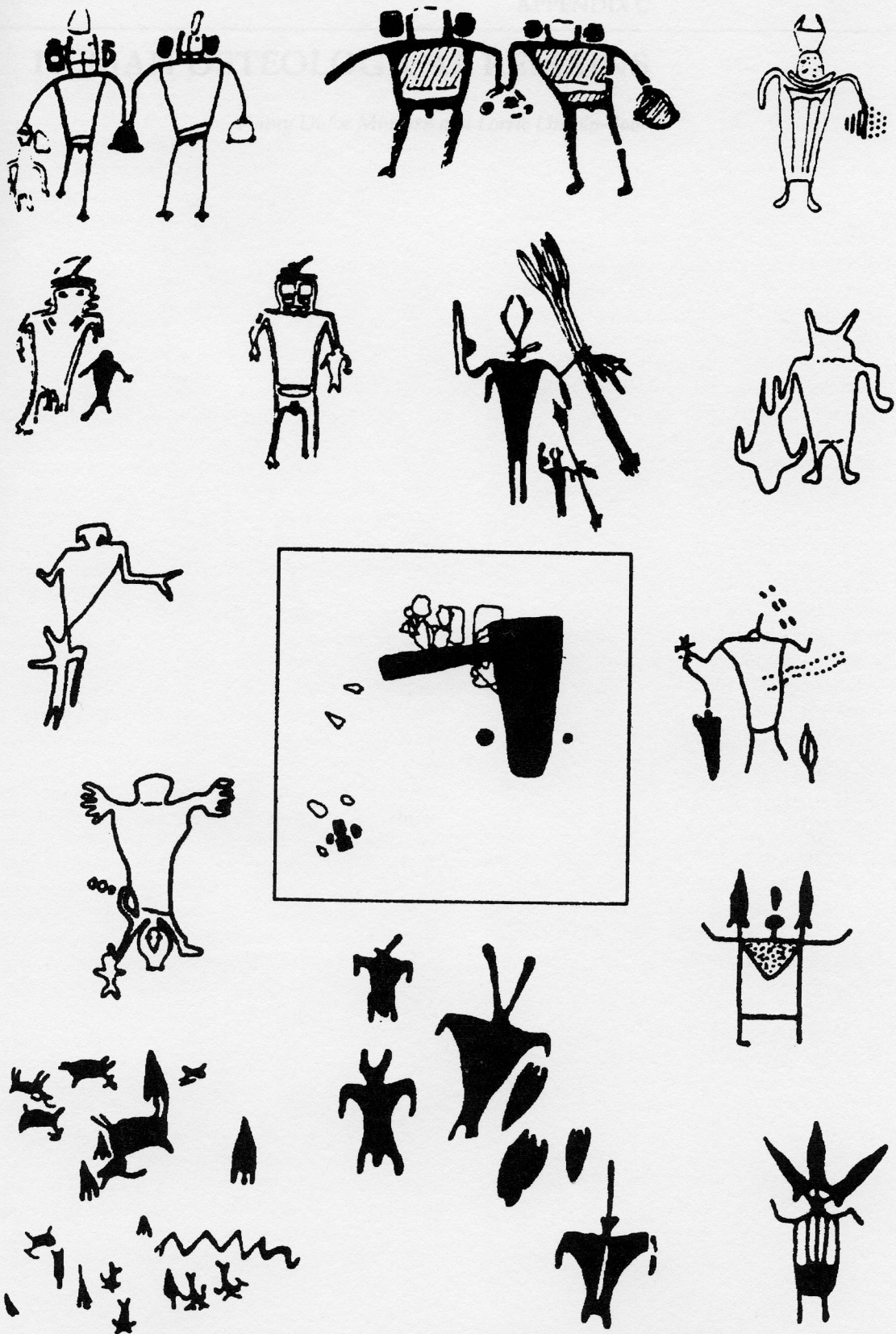


Figure B.4. Rock art figures used in interpretation of the Feature 819 floor array.