FORTIFYING DEFENSES, DELINEATING COMMUNITIES

INVESTIGATING THE SOCIOPOLITICAL ASPECTS OF COAST SALISH FORTIFICATIONS

BILL ANGELBECK & COLIN GRIER

Douglas College
New Westminster, BC, Canada

Washington State U
Pullman, WA, US

OUTLOOK

- **Assess sociopolitical complexity** of Coast Salish groups through defensive sites and practices

- Aim is to show **how fortifications materially exhibit the tensions** of Coast Salish sociopolitical organization, revealing a fluidity and flexibility of sociopolitical forms

NORTHWEST
COAST

COAST
SALISH

COAST SALISH AREA

- **LOCATION**

  - SW British Columbia, Canada

  - NW Washington State, US

- **PEOPLES**

  - Multiple language groups

  - Multiple politically independent bands
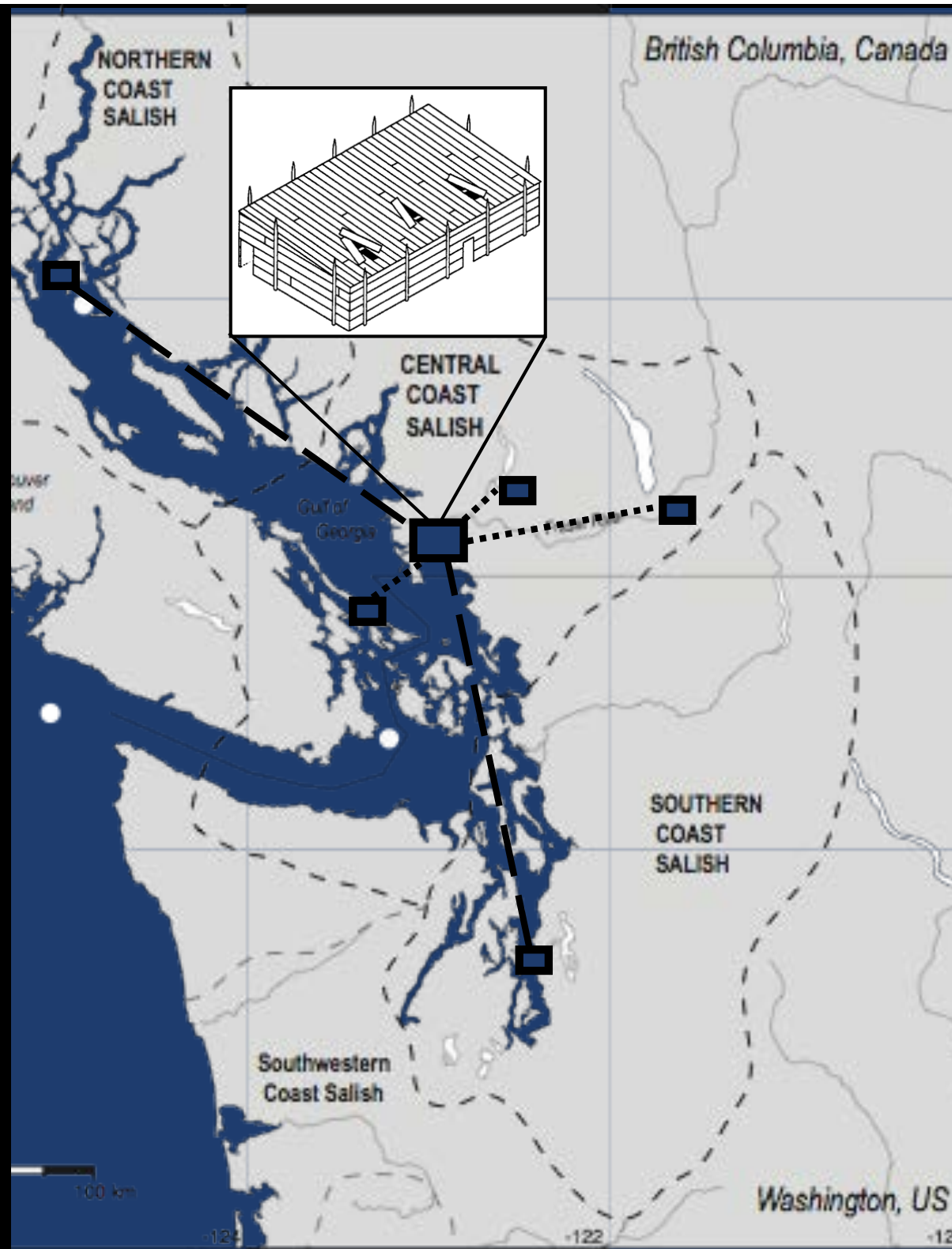
COAST SALISH
ART STYLES

COAST SALISH SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- **Not Egalitarian**
  [ranked or sometimes stratified]

- **Household as primary sociopolitical unit**
  [autonomous economically; locally hierarchical]

- **Villages as clusters of households**
  [not a coherent polity; decentralized in hierarchy]

- **Affinal alliances with other households**
  [social networks with adjacent or distant households]

AFFINAL ALLIANCES

- ALLIANCES: Households intermarry with other households; potlatches held to highlight alliance.

- EXCHANGE: Sharing of resources & practices

- ALLIES IN DEFENSE: Protect shared resources and kin

CHARACTERIZATIONS OF COAST SALISH LOCAL GROUP AUTONOMY

Category	Characterization
Regional Group / Tribe	"**clusters** of villages" (Kennedy 2000:3)
Village	"house **clusters**" (Barnett 1955:253)
Household	Bilateral Kinship options; flexible membership; "**clusters** of families"
Individual	"**atomistic**" (Mitchell 1992); strong "individualism" (Suttles 1987; Amoss 1978)

Afghani Proverb

It is me against my brothers;
It is my brothers and me against our cousins;
And it is our cousins, my brothers and me against the world.
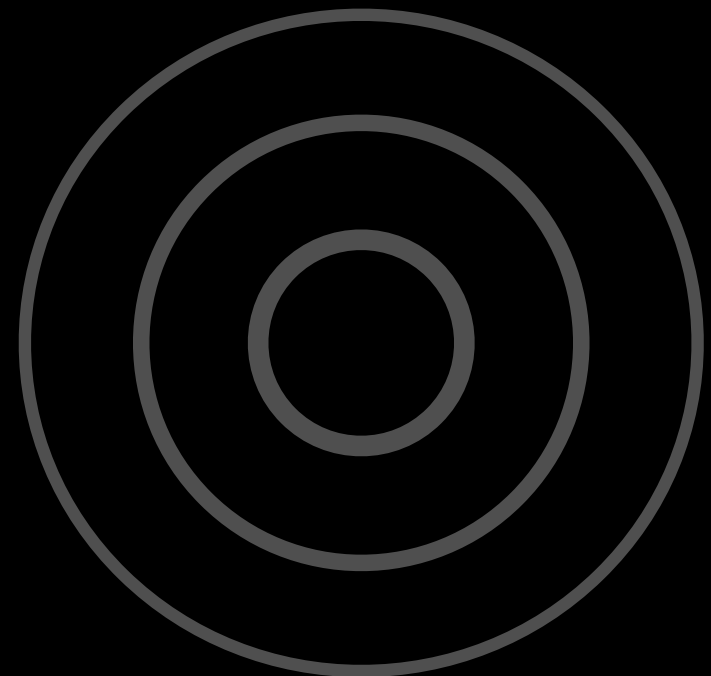
Barfield, Thomas J.
2004 **Problems in Establishing Legitimacy in Afghanistan.**
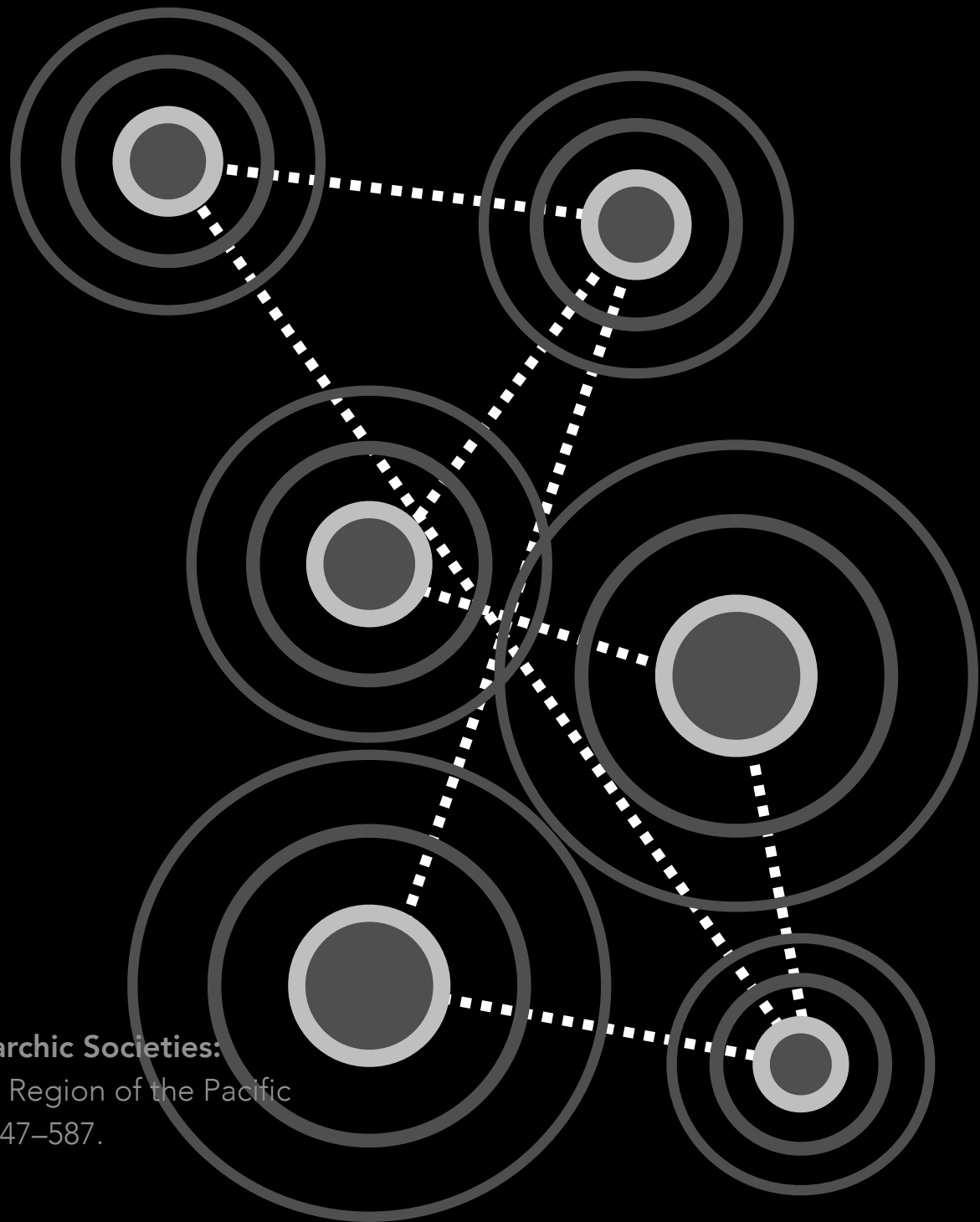*Iranian Studies* 37: 263-93.

SUMMARY OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- **Autonomy**: Strong emphasis on individual & local group independence

- **Heterarchical:** Decentralized and networked relations

- **Bottom-Up Organization:** anchored in the local
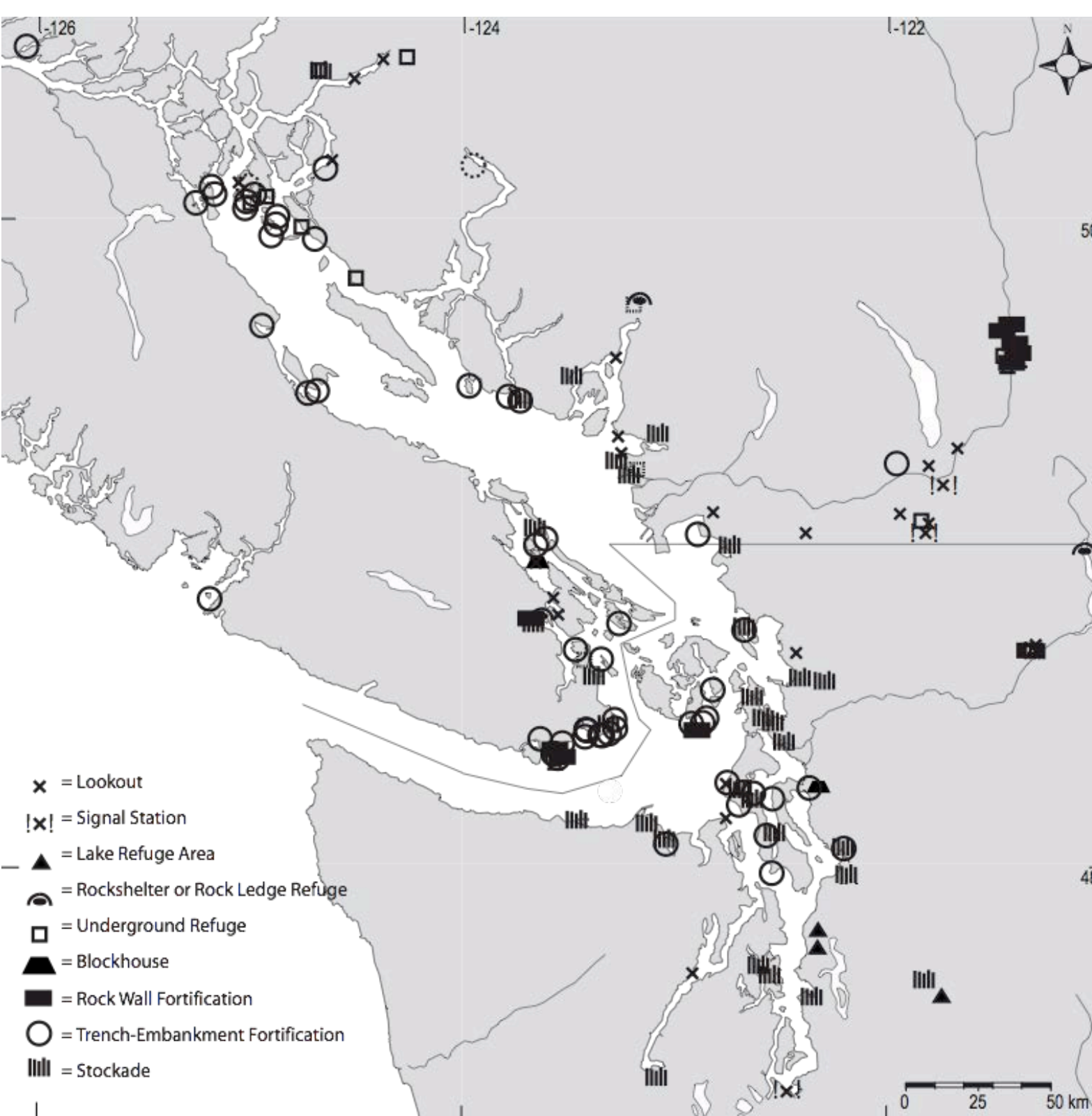
Angelbeck, Bill, and Colin Grier
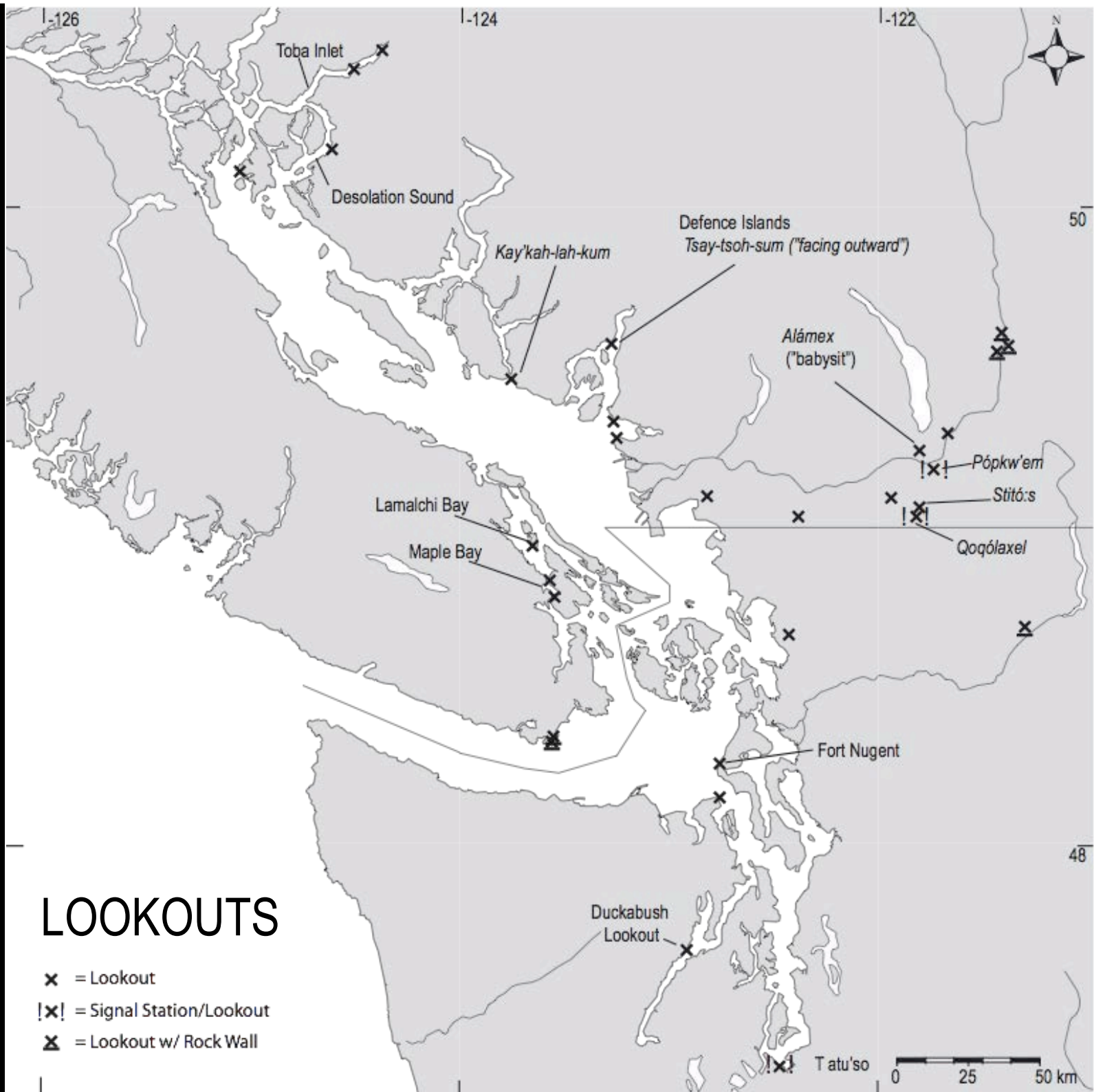2012 **Anarchism and the Archaeology of Anarchic Societies:**
Resistance to Centralization in the Coast Salish Region of the Pacific
Northwest Coast. **Current Anthropology** 53: 547–587.
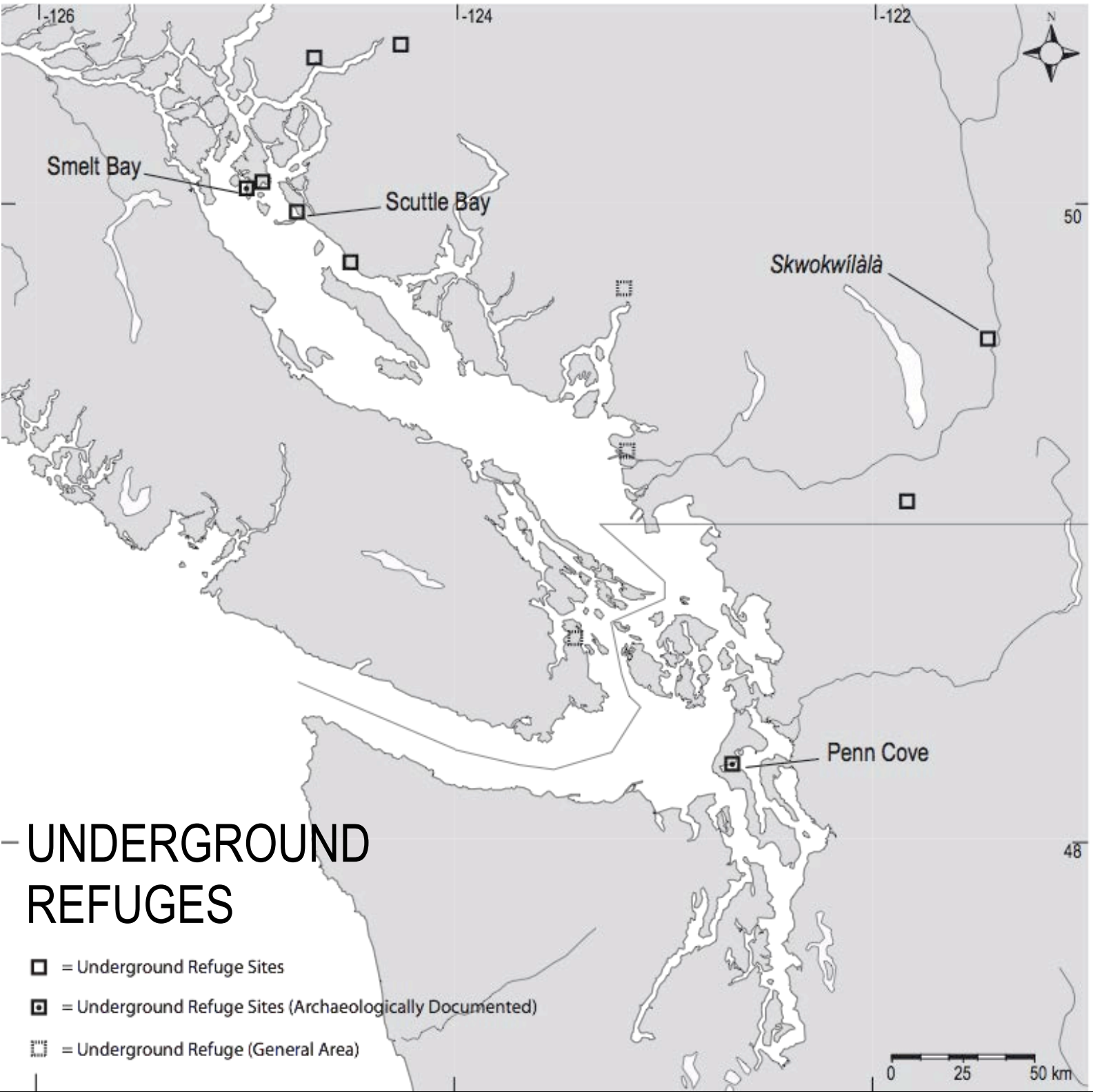
DEFENSIVE SITE TYPES

- Lookouts
- Refuge Areas
- Underground Refuges
- Rock-Wall Defenses
- Trench-Embankment Fortications
- Stockades

Legend:

- ✕ = Lookout
- !✕! = Signal Station
- ▲ = Lake Refuge Area
- ⌒ = Rockshelter or Rock Ledge Refuge
- ☐ = Underground Refuge
- ◣ = Blockhouse
- ■ = Rock Wall Fortification
- ○ = Trench-Embankment Fortification
- ᎥᎥᎥᎥ = Stockade

Toba Inlet

Desolation Sound

Kay'kah-lah-kum

Defence Islands
Tsay-tsoh-sum ("facing outward")

Alámex
("babysit")

Pópkw'em

Stitó:s

Lamalchi Bay

Qoqólaxel

Maple Bay

Fort Nugent

Duckabush
Lookout

T atu'so

LOOKOUTS

✖ = Lookout

!✖! = Signal Station/Lookout

✖ = Lookout w/ Rock Wall

-126   -124   -122

50

48

0   25   50 km
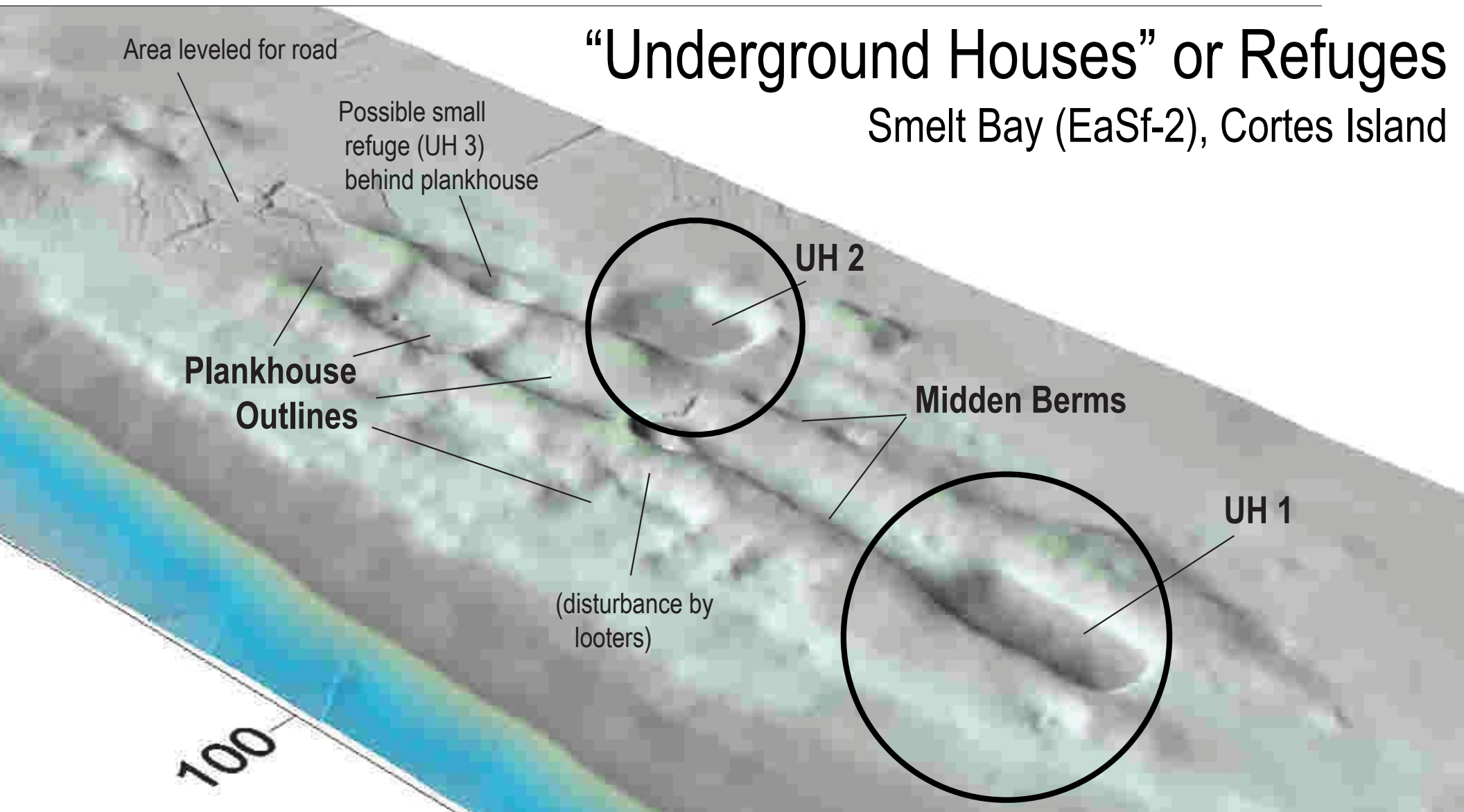
Smelt Bay

Scuttle Bay

Skwokwílàlà

Penn Cove

UNDERGROUND
REFUGES

☐ = Underground Refuge Sites

◉ = Underground Refuge Sites (Archaeologically Documented)

⬚ = Underground Refuge (General Area)

0   25   50 km

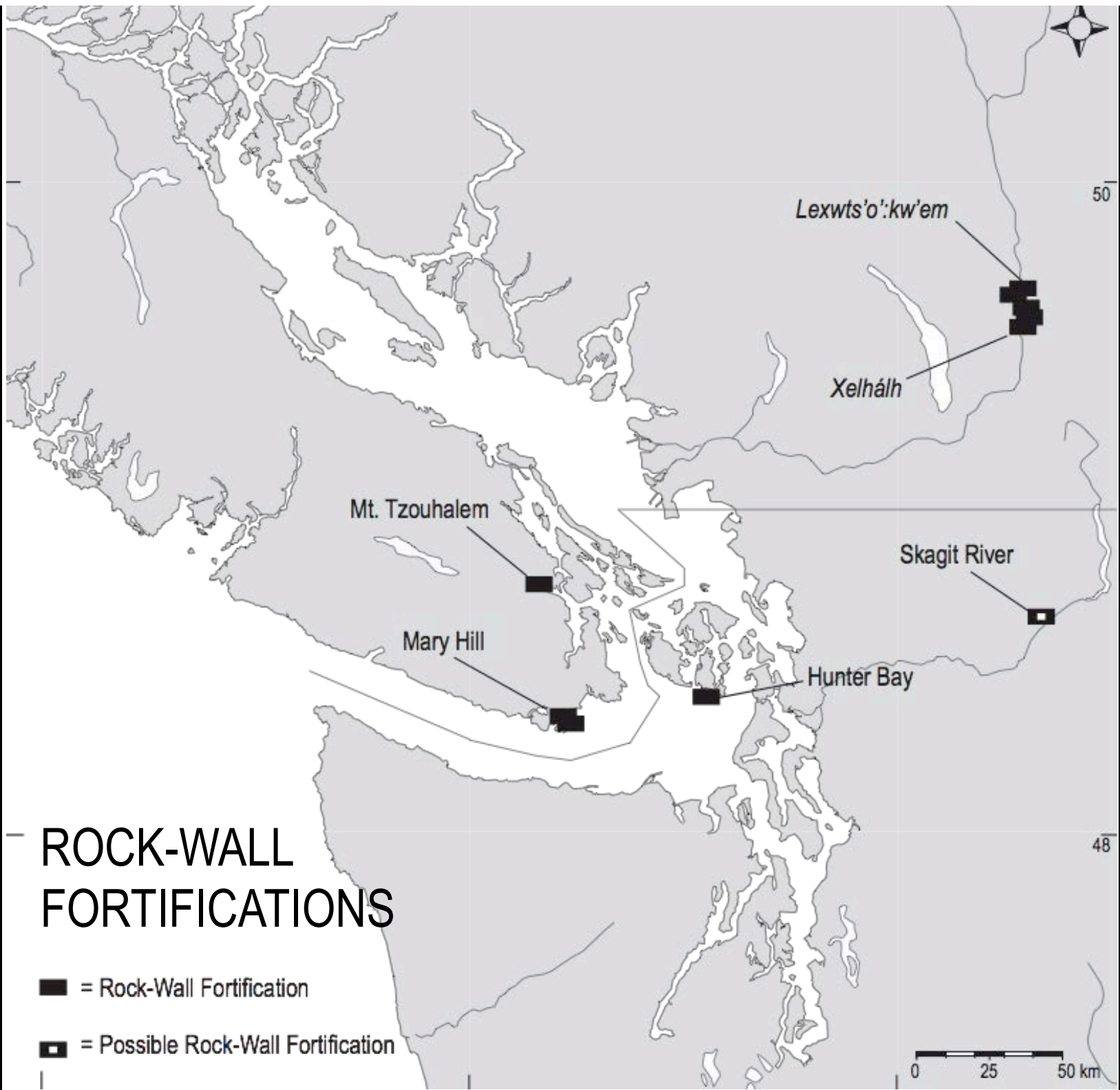# "Underground Houses" or Refuges
Smelt Bay (EaSf-2), Cortes Island

Area leveled for road

Possible small refuge (UH 3) behind plankhouse

UH 2

Plankhouse Outlines

Midden Berms

(disturbance by looters)

UH 1

100

ROCK-WALL
FORTIFICATIONS

■ = Rock-Wall Fortification

▣ = Possible Rock-Wall Fortification

Lexwts'o':kw'em

Xelhálh

Mt. Tzouhalem

Skagit River

Mary Hill

Hunter Bay

50

48

0   25   50 km

Left map legend

LEGEND
- Pathways of attacking *sxemá:l* (enemies)
- Area of slingshot projectile coverage

Pit house settlement

Canoe landing

Rock wall section A (probable)

Rock wall section B

Rock wall section C

Rock wall section D

Slick, pock-marked water-worn bedrock

Canoe landing

Stó:lō

Line-of-sight communication to Saddle Rock area

5 meters

Right map legend

LEGEND
- Contact-era settlement
- Rock wall fortification site
- Line of sight

KILOMETRES
0   1
0   0.5   1   1.5
MILES

Lahíts

Stó:lō

Lexwts'ó:kw'em — Canoe landing

Saddle Rock — Canoe landing

Íyem

Aseláw — Probable lookout / fortification site

Probable lookout / fortification site

Probable lookout / fortification site (railway disturbance)

Rock wall in 1887 photo

Q'aleliktel — Canoe landing

Entrance to the Fraser Canyon

Xwoxwela:lhp

Skowkwílálá

Stó:lō

Lady Franklin Rock

Xelhálh

Canoe landing

Manson's Landing

Desolation Sound fort

Rebecca Spit

Cardale Point

Indian Fort Site

Towner Bay

Albert Head

Hunter Bay

Manor Point

Cadboro Bay

TRENCH-
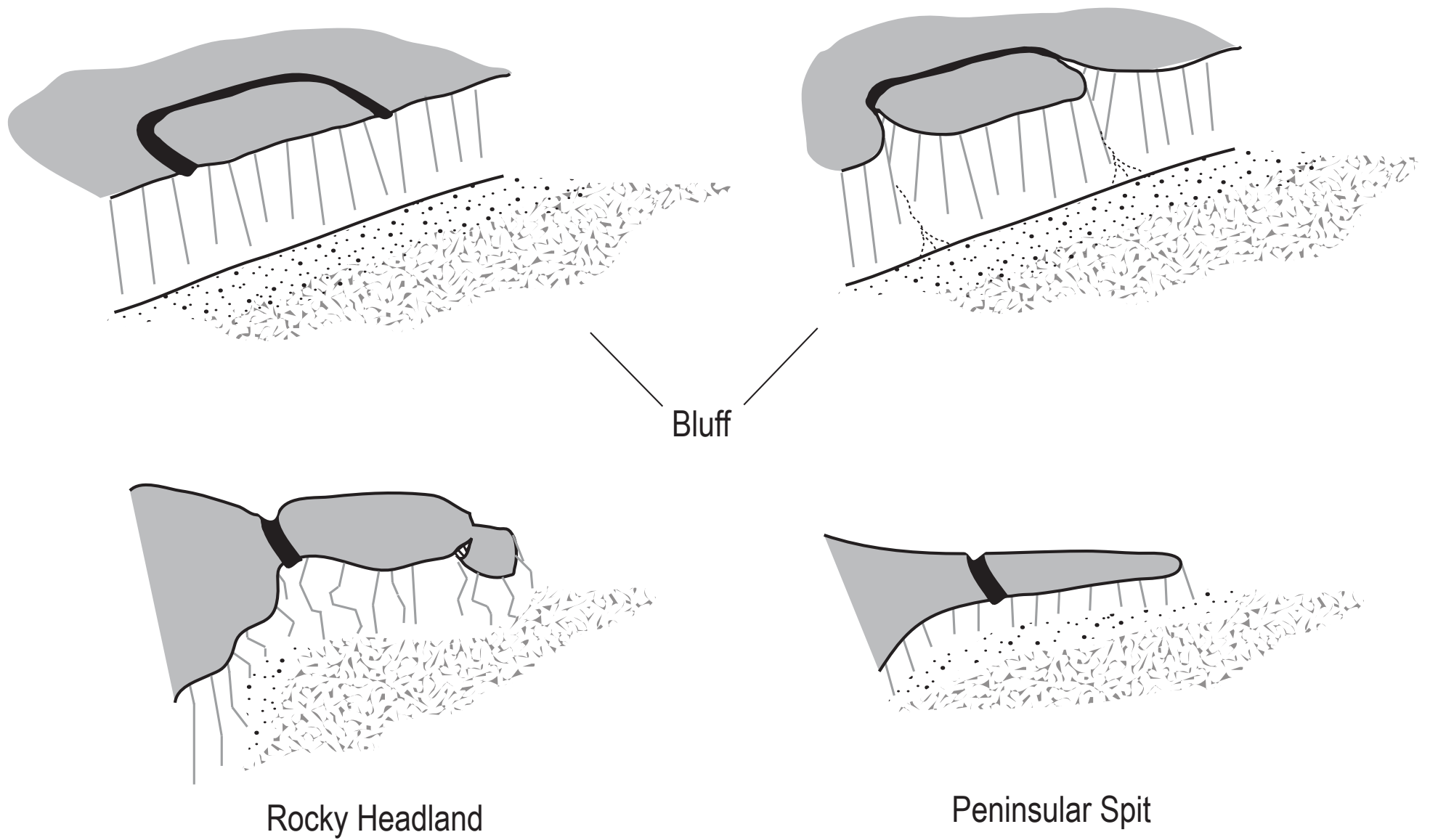EMBANKMENT
FORTIFICATIONS

O = Trench-Embankment Fortification

◌ = Possible Trench-Embankment Fortification

0   25   50 km
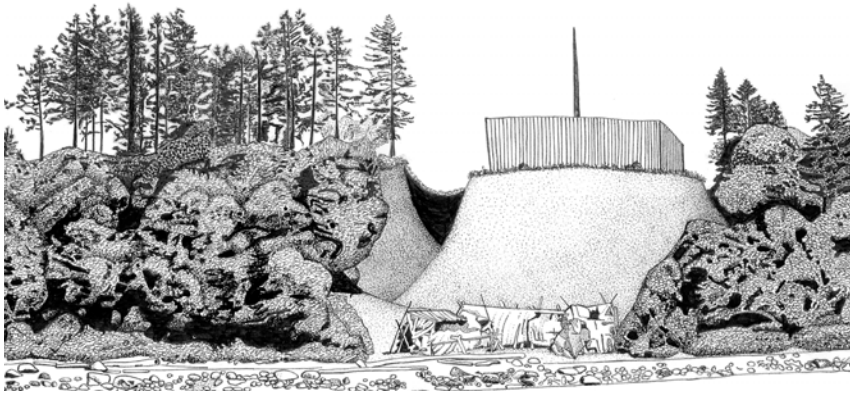
Artist's depiction of Indian Fort Site (Site DgRr-5), by Don Welsh

Drawing of a Songhees trench-embankment fortification near Victoria, BC, by Grant Keddie

Bluff

Rocky Headland

Peninsular Spit

Angelbeck, Bill 2016 The balance of autonomy and alliance in anarchic societies: the organization of defences in the Coast Salish past. *World Archaeology* 48(1):51-69.

Trench-embankment: Rocky Headland setting
Manor Point, Vancouver Island (DbRv-13)
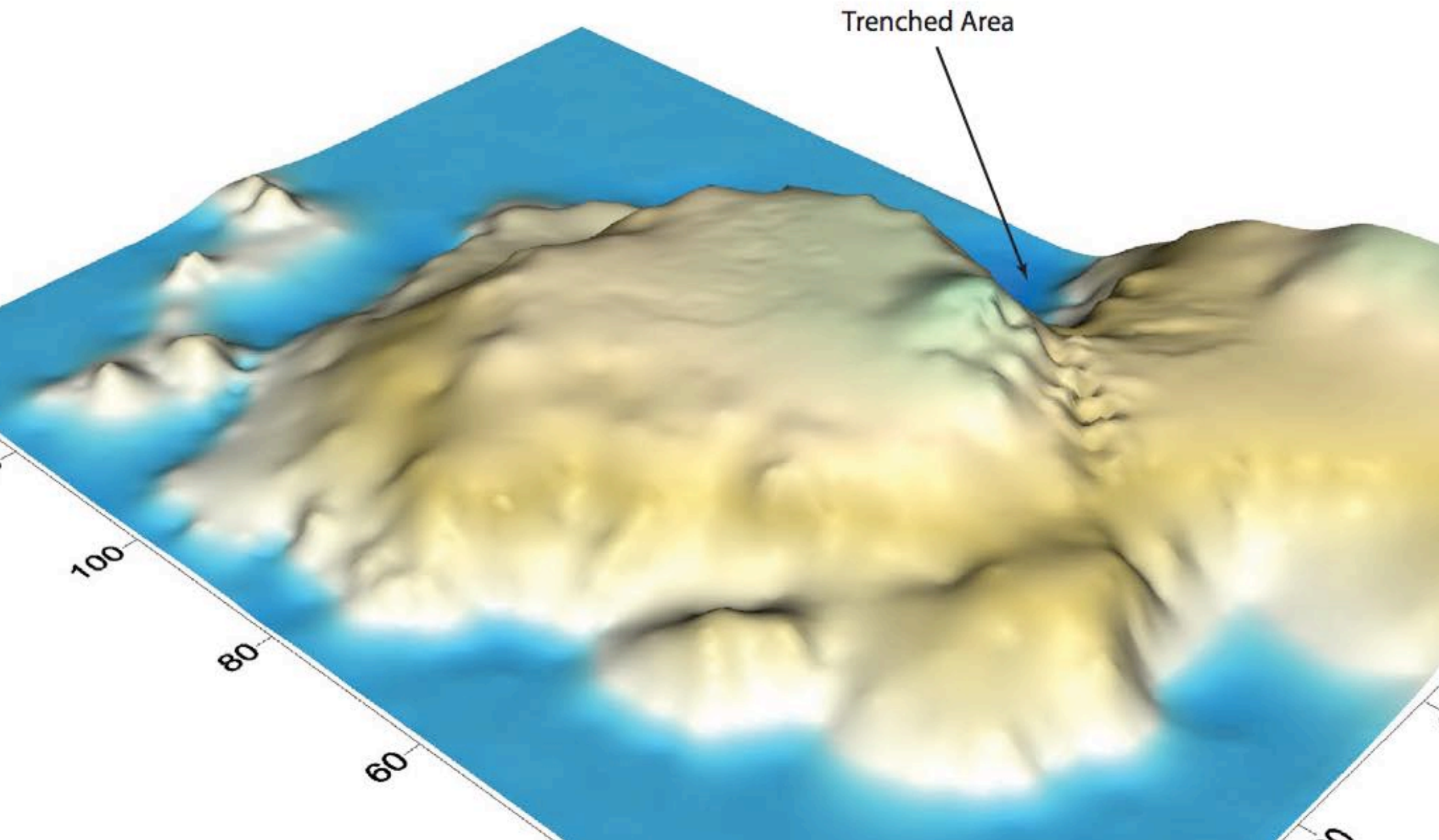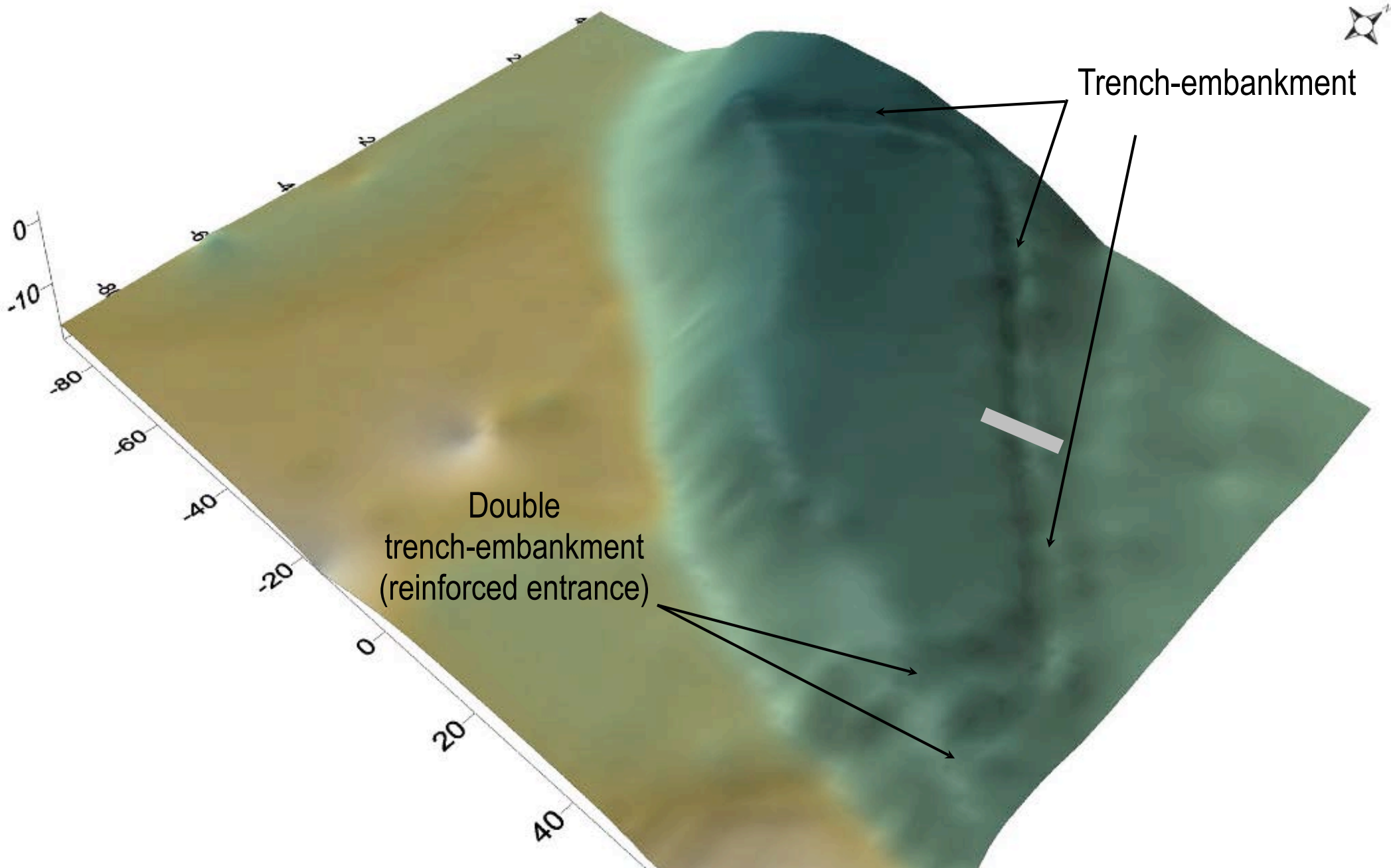
Trench-embankment: Rocky Headland setting
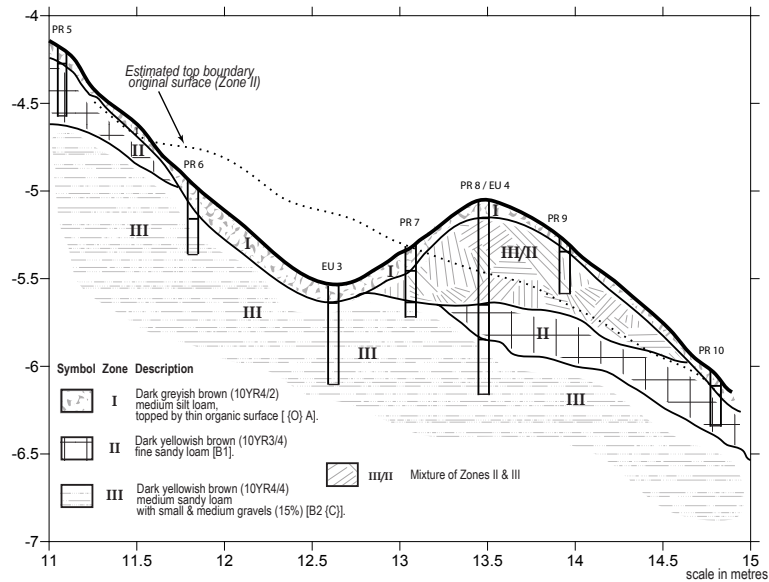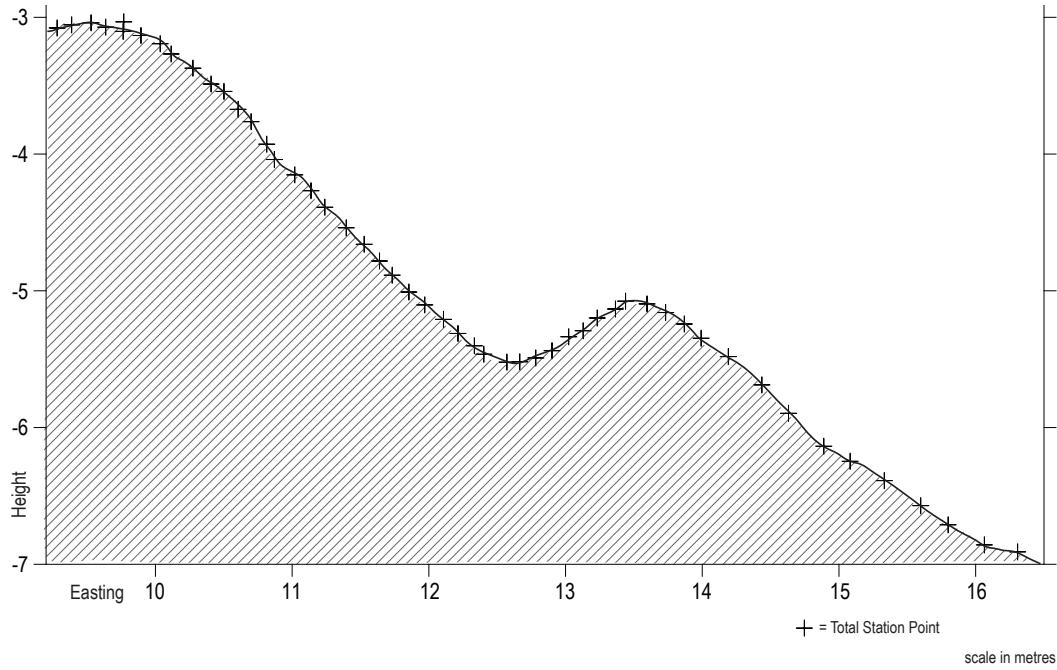## Manor Point (DbRv-13)

Photo by Darcy Mathews

Trench-embankment: Bluff setting
Cardale Point, Valdes Island (DgRv-1)

Trench-embankment

Double trench-embankment (reinforced entrance)

CARDALE POINT, SURFACE PROFILE, TRENCH 1

Easting

Height

+ = Total Station Point

scale in metres

Estimated top boundary
original surface (Zone II)

PR 5

PR 6

PR 7

PR 8 / EU 4

PR 9

EU 3

PR 10

II

III

I

I

III

III

III/II

II

III

Symbol	Zone	Description
	I	Dark greyish brown (10YR4/2) medium silt loam, topped by thin organic surface [{O} A].
	II	Dark yellowish brown (10YR3/4) fine sandy loam [B1].
	III	Dark yellowish brown (10YR4/4) medium sandy loam with small & medium gravels (15%) [B2 {C}].
	III/II	Mixture of Zones II & III

scale in metres

Network of Trench-Embankment Sites

Legend:
- ● = Large Village (Smelt Bay)
- ○ = Trench-Embankment Fortification
- ⊂⊃ = Probable Trench-Embankment Site
- ▢ = Underground House
- ⬚ = Underground House (ethnographic)
- × = Lookout (ethnographic)

Map labels: Rebecca Spit, Quadra Island, Marina Island, Cortes Island, DESOLATION SOUND, Gorge Harbour, Manson's Landing, Cortes Bay, Smelt Bay, Hernando Island, STRAIT OF GEORGIA, Boulder Point

Scale: 0 – 2 – 4 km

STOCKADES

||||| = Stockade

Salmon Bay

Kay-kah-key-ahm

Homulchesum

Kay'kah-lah-kum

Keekullukhun

Kullukhun

Shingle Point

Blaine

Khenipsen

Gooseberry Point

Tlkotas

S.báliuqʷ

Saanichton

Guemes

Squaw Bay

Cadboro Bay

Swinomish Fort

Qiqəlaxad

Penn Cove

Qəlaxad

I-eh-nus

Quilceda Creek

Dungeness Spit

Hebolb

Suxtcikwi'iñ

tutúhLaqs

Hócbale

Káxtyo

Lil'p'las

N

50

48

1-126   1-124   1-122

0   25   50 km

The Battle at I-eh-nus, by Paul Kane (1847)

PALISADED VILLAGE
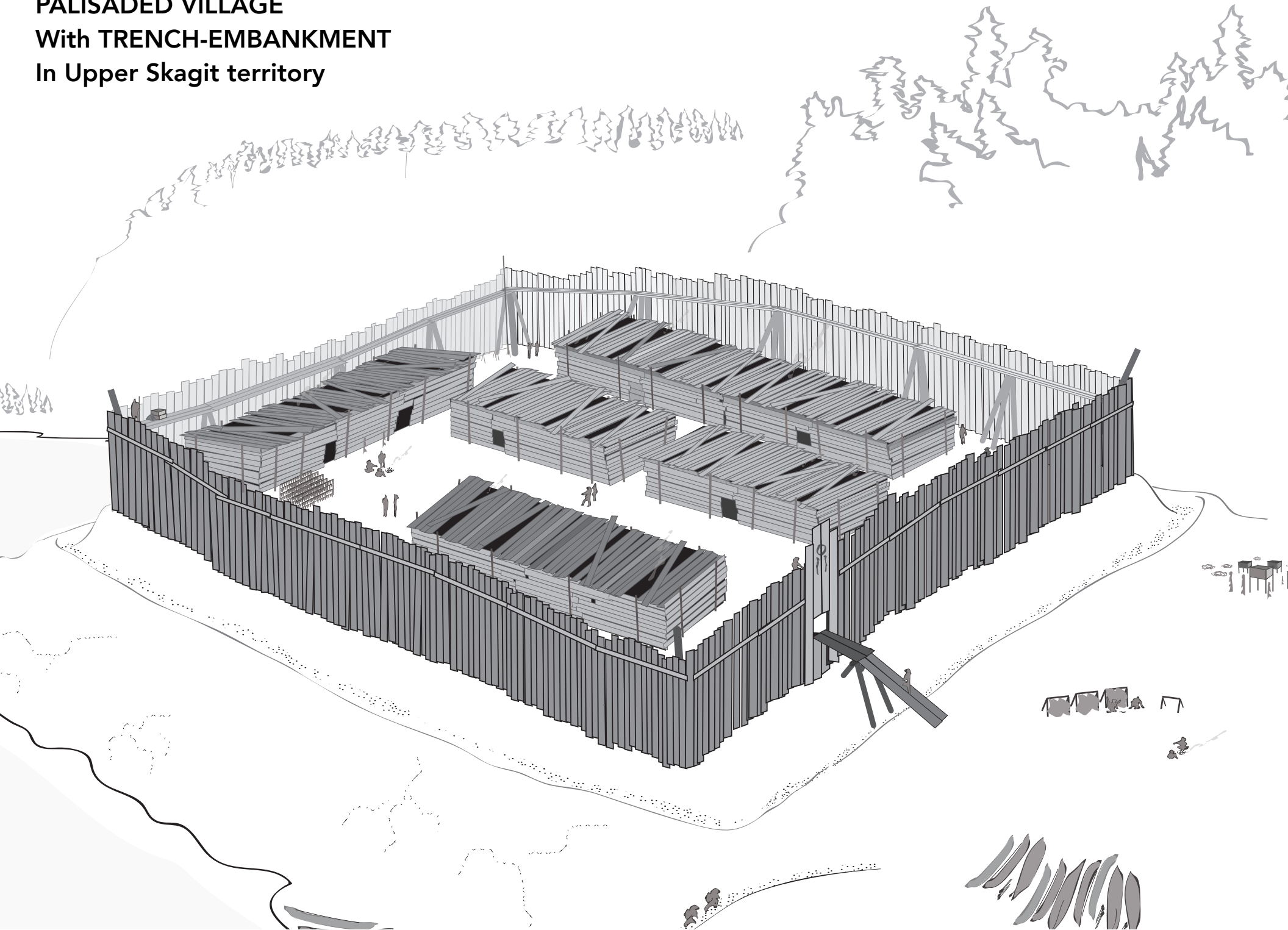## With TRENCH-EMBANKMENT
In Upper Skagit territory

Table 4. Dates for postcontact defensive sites documented historically and ethnographically

Palisaded fortification	Year(s)	Source(s)[a]
Suxtcikwí'iñ	1860–1880s	Gunther 1927:183–184
Cowichan area	1850s	Grant 1857:300
Shingle Point	1853	Gordon 1853
Keekullukhun	1850s	MacDonald 1990; Suttles 2004
Kullukhun	1850s	MacDonald 1990; Suttles 2004
Swinomish fort	1800–1850s	Sampson 1972
I-eh-nus	1847	Kane 1971
Cadboro Bay	1844	Bolduc 1843–1845; Newcombe n.d.
Dungeness Spit	1841	Pickering 1854:15–16
Penn Cove	1838–1842	Wilkes 1845
Rocky Point	1838–1842	Wilkes 1844
Blaine Fort	1820–1858	Suttles 1951:322–323
Guemes fort	1820–1830	Suttles 1951:43, 322–323
Gooseberry Point	1820–1830	Stern 1934:101–102; Suttles 1951:37–38, 322–323
Salmon Bay	1800–1820s	Barnett 1944:266–267
S.báliuqʷ	1800–1840	Collins 1974:13, 1980:6
South Vancouver Island	1792	Galiano and Valdes (Gunther 1927:63)

[a] Details on sources are provided in Angelbeck (2009).

Palisaded Residential Villages from 1792 to 1880.

Traits of Late Period Trench-Embankment Sites vs. Postcontact Stockaded Villages

| TRAIT	LATE PERIOD TRENCH-EMBANKMENT SITES	POSTCONTACT STOCKADED VILLAGES
USE	TEMPORARY REFUGE	RESIDENTIAL
MIDDEN DEPTH	THIN (CA. 30 CM)	THICK (> 2M)
LANDFORMS	BLUFF-TOPS, ROCKY HEADLANDS, HIGH PENINSULAR SPITS	BEACHES, RIVER BANKS AT CONFLUENCES
SIZE	SMALL TO MODERATE	MODERATE TO LARGE
HOUSE FEATURES	LESS PROMINENT	MORE PROMINENT
TRENCH FEATURES	SINGLE OR DOUBLE TRENCH EMBANKMENTS	LESS COMMON
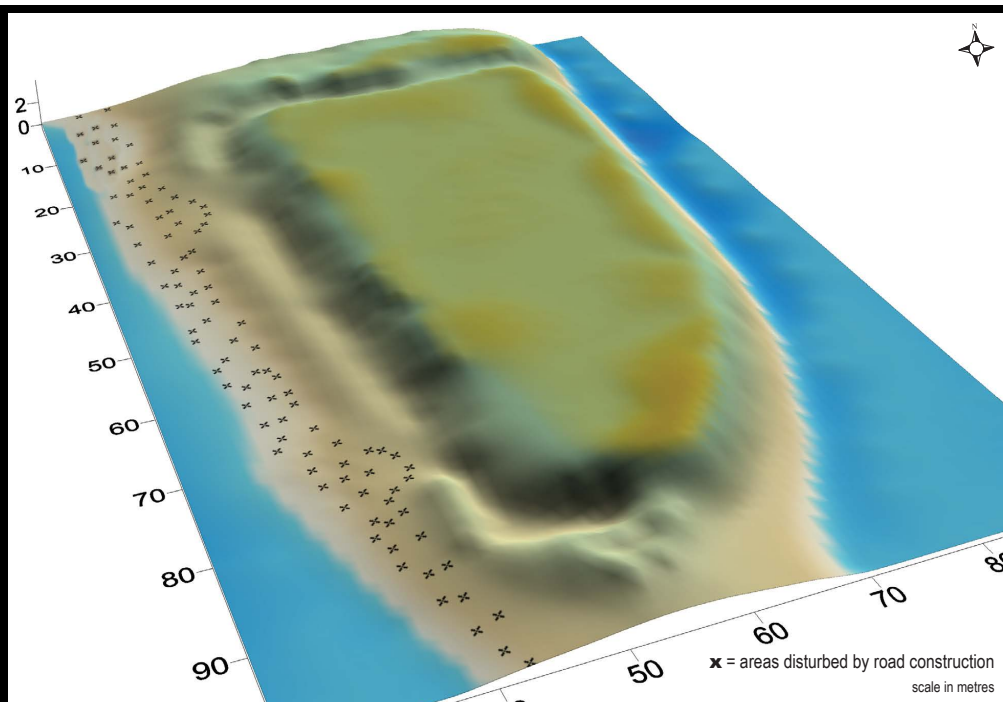
STRONGHOLD AS
DEFENSIVE REFUGE
sought in times of known threat

PALISADED RESIDENTIAL VILLAGE
to counter near-constant threats

SIZE OF DEFENSIVE STRUCTURES

Area of Defensive Structure

The Battle at Hwtl'upnets Maple Bay
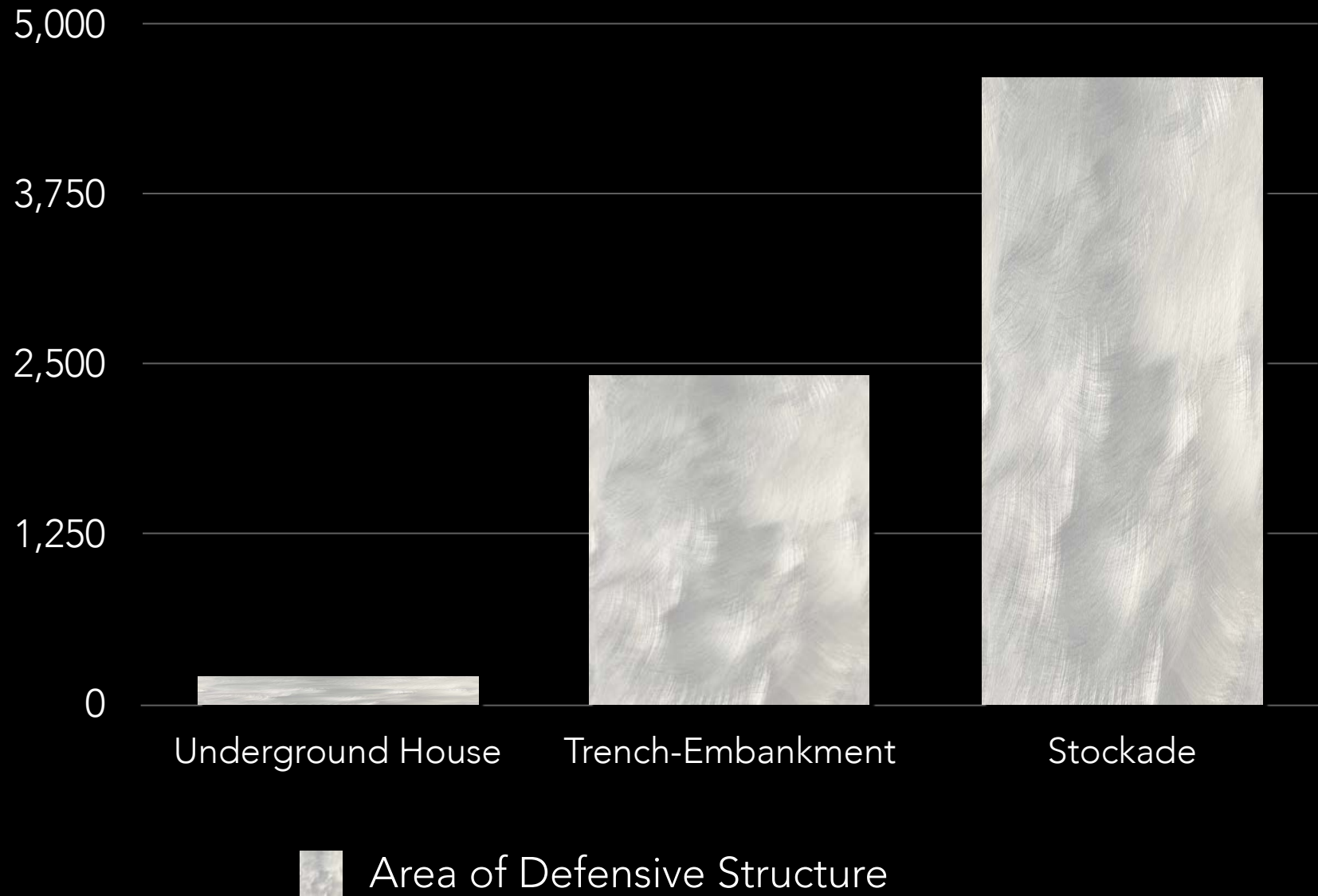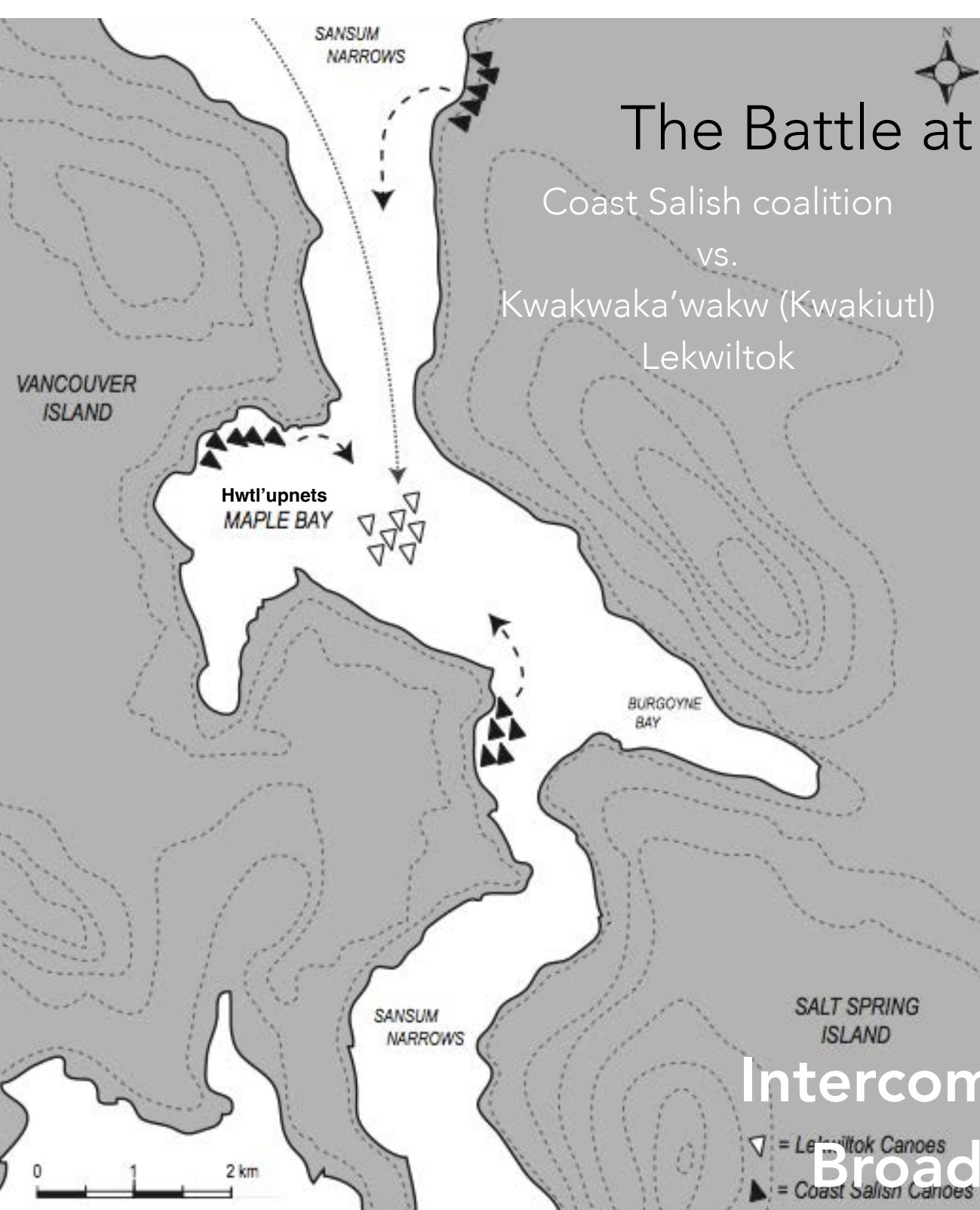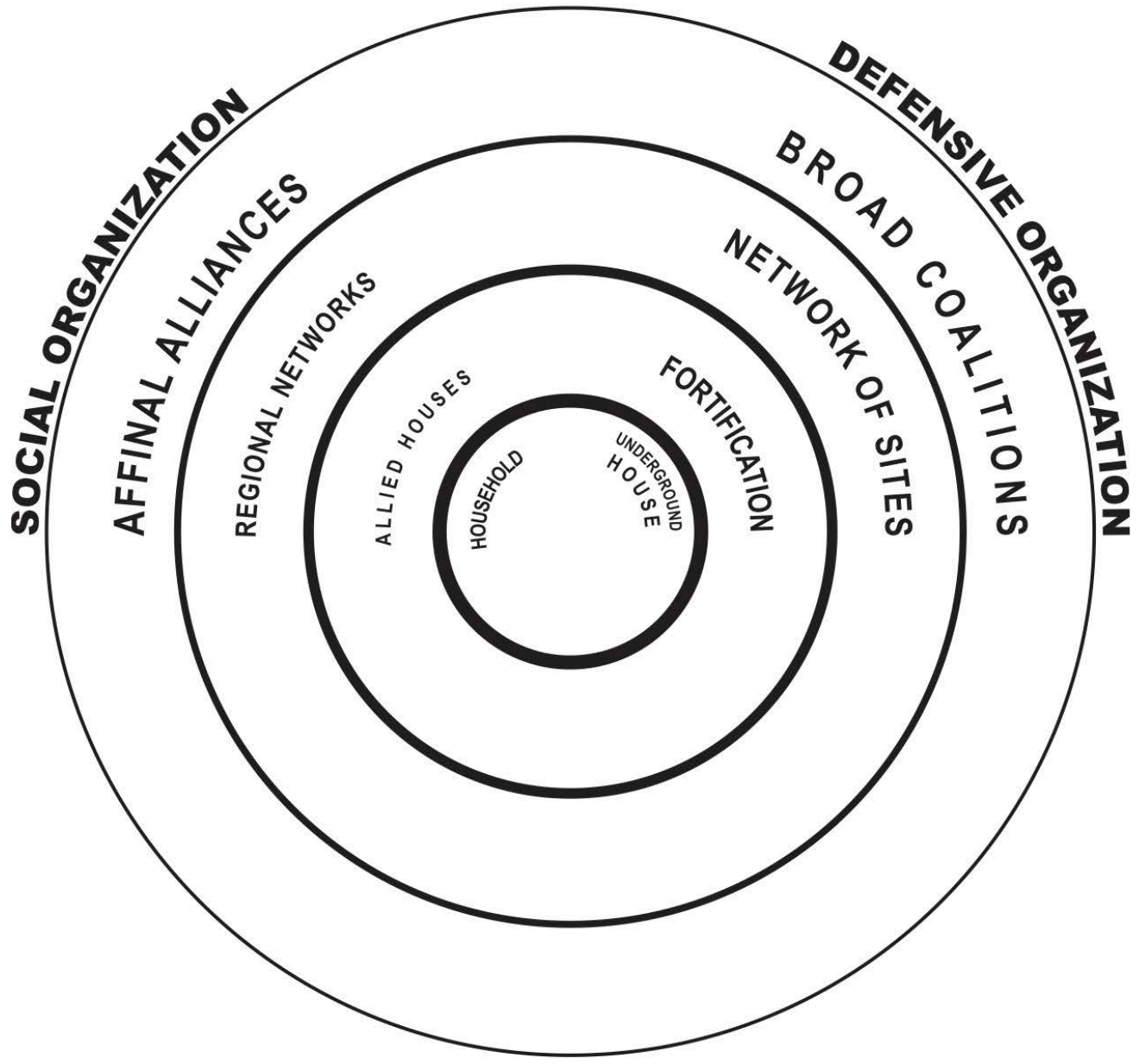
Coast Salish coalition
vs.
Kwakwaka'wakw (Kwakiutl)
Lekwiltok

COAST SALISH ALLIANCE

- Cowichan
- Klallam
- Snuneymuwx
- Saanich
- Sechelt
- Musqueam
- "Fraser River groups"
- Twana
- Lummi
- Songhees
- Nisqually
- Puyallup
- Duwamish
- and others . . . .

60+ groups

Intercommunity Network for Broad Military Coalition

SANSUM NARROWS

VANCOUVER ISLAND

Hwtl'upnets
MAPLE BAY

BURGOYNE BAY

SANSUM NARROWS

SALT SPRING ISLAND

0   1   2 km

▽ = Lekwiltok Canoes
▲ = Coast Salish Canoes

Concentric circle diagram. From innermost to outermost:

HOUSEHOLD / **UNDERGROUND HOUSE**

ALLIED HOUSES / **FORTIFICATION**

REGIONAL NETWORKS / **NETWORK OF SITES**

AFFINAL ALLIANCES / **BROAD COALITIONS**

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION (left half) / **DEFENSIVE ORGANIZATION** (right half)

CONCLUDING POINTS

- Defensive sites exhibit the flexibility and fluidity of Coast Salish sociopolitics

  - **Multiple scales of defensive sites**

    - underground refuges, T-E forts, stockaded villages

  - **Multiple scales of defensive networks**

    - Intervisibility of rock wall sites, of T-E forts, and inter-village military coalitions
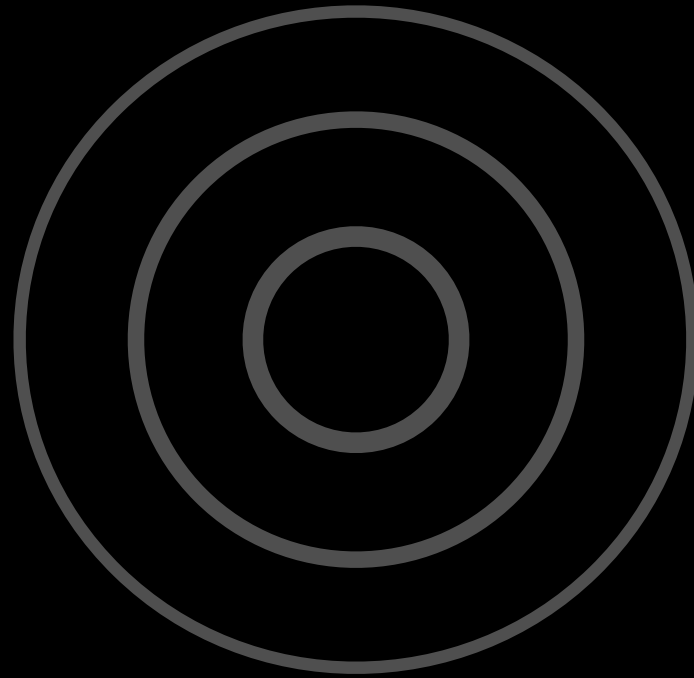
BILL ANGELBECK & COLIN GRIER

angelbeckw@douglascollege.ca   cgrier@wsu.edu