

a golden eagle; the total number of artifacts recovered from the site exceeds 73,000 (Medrano 2008). Preparation of a final report on the excavations is still in progress, but Honey Bee Village has already become an important example of the wealth of information that prehistoric sites in the Oro Valley area can provide when they are the focus of systematic archaeological investigation. The final treatment of Honey Bee Village is also a landmark in the protection of archaeological resources. In an agreement among the various stakeholders in the project—the developer, the Town of Oro Valley, Pima County, ASM, and the Tohono O’odham Nation (which considers Honey Bee Village an ancestral site)—the developer donated 13 acres at the core of the site to be protected in perpetuity as an archaeological preserve. The protected parcel includes several large mounds, a plaza, a ball court, and various other features, all of which are protected from development (OVHS 2009e).

Romero Ruin (AZ BB:9:1 [ASM])

Romero Ruin is a 15-acre Hohokam site with a later historic component located within present-day Catalina State Park. It sits on a ridge above Sutherland Wash, with an associated field system that extends from the southern edge of the site toward the adjacent Santa Catalina Mountains. Professional archaeologists consider Romero Ruin “one of the most significant sites in the Tucson Basin” (Elson and Doelle 1987a:1). The Romero Ruin is also part of the Sutherland Wash Archaeological District, which was listed on the National Register as an archaeological district in 1987 (Elson and Doelle 1987b).

Elson and Doelle (1987a) provide the most detailed summary of the history of investigations at Romero Ruin, as well as a comprehensive discussion of the site itself; we follow their summary here. Romero Ruin, originally called Pueblo Viejo, was identified as early as 1915 by Robert Forbes, an early president of the University of Arizona and an avid explorer of southern Arizona’s wilderness areas. The earliest scientific investigation of the site was by Ellsworth Huntington (1910), who was interested in human adaptations to arid climates and used the Hohokam as a case study. Huntington recorded the two ball courts at the site as reservoirs, but correctly identified the occupation sequence at the ruin (Elson and Doelle 1987a:6–8).

From 1973 to 1980, archaeologists working with ASM conducted two surveys and an overview of Romero Ruin and the surrounding area. Roubicek and others (1973) resurveyed the area including Romero Ruin for the Ratliff-Miller Development Company, and recommended further intensive survey. Brew (1975) conducted a records search on behalf of Brown and Caldwell Consultant Engineers. Brew was among the first archaeologists to note the importance of the historic component of Romero Ruin in addition to the Hohokam component. Huckell (1980a) assessed the Catalina State Park area for impacts of park development, examined the outlying area, and reassessed all previously known sites to update the ASM files. Huckell recommended Romero Ruin for National Register nomination in addition to more intensive investigations.

In early 1987, Elson and Doelle (1987a) conducted a survey of the Catalina State Park centered on Romero Ruin. They collected diagnostic surface artifacts, then mapped and described all of the surface features. They collected a total of 11,499 artifacts from the site surface and analyzed

a sample, including 1,659 decorated ceramic sherds, 339 flaked stone tools, and 126 pieces of ground stone (Elson and Doelle 1987a:14–18). The same year, the National Register nominations for the Sutherland Wash Archaeological District (Elson and Doelle 1987b) and the adjacent Sutherland Wash Rock Art District (Farrell and Burton n.d.) were prepared and submitted. In the fall of 1990, test excavations were carried out at Romero Ruin (Swartz 1991), providing the largest early red ware assemblage from a stratigraphic context at the time and establishing the Tortolita phase (A.D. 450–650) occupation at Romero. In 1993, additional limited archaeological testing was conducted by the Center for Desert Archaeology at Romero Ruin to make way for an interpretive trail (Swartz 1994).

The archaeological features at Romero Ruin include 17 trash mounds, 12 trash concentrations, two ball courts, three possible cremation areas, a masonry compound, a plaza area, a large field system for agriculture, and 37 other prehistoric cultural features; the site also has the visible remains of four or five masonry rooms from historic times. Romero Ruin was occupied prehistorically from around A.D. 550 through the Tucson phase (A.D. 1300–1450) of the Hohokam Classic period, and likely during some part of the Protohistoric period (A.D. 1450–1692), though the intensity of occupation in the latter period is unknown. The site was reoccupied in the late 1860s as a cattle ranch by Francisco Romero and his family (see the discussion of the Romero family in Chapter 4). The Hohokam occupation of the site led to a series of mound groups at the site, each mound representing a combination of trash, building rubble, and living space surrounded by trash. Elson and Doelle (1987a:47) have argued that the mounds were placed deliberately, in order to define social space at the site; this is supported by the placement of two ball courts, one at either end of the site. There is evidence of continuous occupation of the site as a whole, and periodic reoccupation of individual mound areas.

Sleeping Snake Village (AZ BB:9:104 [ASM])

Sleeping Snake Village is an extensive Hohokam site covering about 99 acres at the eastern foot of the Tortolita Mountains, in the northern portion of the Oro Valley study area. Like Romero Ruin and Honey Bee Village, Sleeping Snake Village is a ball court site with evidence of a long, continuous occupation. The site dates to the middle Sedentary through early Classic periods of the Hohokam chronology, with its most intensive occupation occurring during the Sedentary period (A.D. 950–1150). The site was first recorded in 1980 by archaeologists and field school students from Pima Community College during a survey of the eastern Tortolita Mountains (Ezzo and Euler 2007). This initial survey included the preparation of sketch maps of the site and a limited surface collection of artifacts. The site was revisited in 1986 during the Rancho Vistoso survey carried out by the Institute for American Research (Craig and Wallace 1987). The Rancho Vistoso survey included the first systematic investigation of Sleeping Snake Village: a site grid was established, five mound areas (called site loci) were defined, and more than 100 features were tentatively identified, including the ball court and 30 trash mounds. The ball court was mapped in full cross section (Ezzo 2007b:53).

In 1994, SWCA began test excavations at Locus B for Vistoso Partners. A total of 380 linear meters of backhoe trenches exposed 24 features, and diagnostic artifacts were collected from the site

surface, the trenches, and a hand-excavated test unit. In the SWCA report (Roberts et al. 1995), the archaeologists recommended data recovery excavation under eight research themes: site structure, household economy, socioeconomic relations, chronology, subsistence and resource exploitation, mortuary practices, paleoenvironment, and settlement patterns (Ezzo 2007b:53). In 1995, 1996, and 2000, SWCA carried out additional test excavations and then phased data recovery excavations at all five original loci (A–E), identifying another mound area (Locus F). Additional trenching (3,481 linear meters), feature mapping, excavation, and sampling allowed SWCA to identify a total of 520 previously unrecorded features. Of these, 267 were more intensively investigated (Ezzo 2007b:53–70).

The results of the work at Sleeping Snake Village, combined with the results from Los Venados (AZ BB:9:186 [ASM]), a nearby site of the same age also investigated by SWCA, has provided valuable information about community structure, settlement patterns, and other aspects of the Hohokam culture of the northern Tucson Basin. Ezzo (2007c:779) has concluded that households at Sleeping Snake Village were tightly linked in courtyard groups, in contrast to the more loosely connected households at Los Venados. This suggests a difference in social organization at the two sites even though many inhabitants of the area likely used both sites. Sleeping Snake Village held little evidence for the manufacture of goods beyond items relating to the basic activities of hunting, gathering, and growing maize and other foods. Instead, the people who lived at the site seem to have imported the pottery, obsidian projectile points, and shell ornaments that they used (Ezzo 2007c:779).

The layout of Sleeping Snake Village matches the dispersed *ranchería* plan typical of Hohokam sites in the Tucson Basin: a nucleated center surrounded by numerous smaller clusters of features, all of it distributed across a large open space (Ezzo 2007d:795; Fish and Fish 1994). The smaller clusters represent multiple site types—procurement areas, food-processing loci, individual pit houses, and hamlets. Rock art, which is common in the area, may have played an integrative role for the site center and the outlying clusters. Ezzo (2007e:805) has suggested that rock art in the area “layered the landscape with ritualistic, shamanic, territorial, cosmological, and informational meaning.” There is some evidence that the vicinity of Sleeping Snake Village, including Los Venados and Honey Bee Village, was occupied by two distinct cultural traditions in succession: the Pioneer-period Cochise tradition, then the Sedentary-period Hohokam tradition, which became the primary cultural presence in the region. There is little to no evidence of a Classic period occupation at Sleeping Snake Village, which suggests Classic-period resettlement to larger aggregated settlements such as the Marana Community near the Santa Cruz River (Ezzo 2007e:805–806).

Historic Archaeological Sites in the Study Area

As Table 2 indicates, far fewer historic archaeological sites have been recorded in the Oro Valley study area than prehistoric sites. This circumstance relates in part to the relatively brief period of settlement in the historic period—150 years or so—compared to the relatively long period of settlement in the prehistoric period—2,000 years or more. But it also relates to a bias toward prehistoric sites on the part of archaeologists during the past 35 years of systematic surveys in