CHAPTER 2

NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE HISTORY IN THE ORO VALLEY STUDY AREA

Throughout the prehistoric period, the Native American peoples who lived in or visited the Cañada del Oro area participated in cultural traditions documented more fully by archaeologists elsewhere in southern Arizona, most notably in the greater Tucson Basin. An understanding of the prehistory of the Cañada del Oro area is possible only with reference to these wider traditions. In this chapter, we provide a brief overview of Native American culture history in southern Arizona, with an emphasis on the Tucson Basin. We begin with the earliest known evidence for human occupation of the region and end with the period just before the earliest contacts with Europeans (Figure 3). The discussion draws on earlier syntheses of southern Arizona prehistory by Chenault and Tucker (2003), Craig (1989), Ezzo (2007a), O'Mack and others (2004), Whittlesey (2003), and Whittlesey and others (1994). Other sources are cited when the discussion touches on particular aspects of prehistory in the region. At the end of the chapter, we briefly summarize Native American culture history in the period after Europeans settled in southern Arizona.

Paleoindian Period

Archaeologists call the earliest documented Native American occupation of the Americas the Paleoindian period, which began at least as early as 12,000 years ago—many recent studies place its beginning thousands of years earlier—and lasted until around 10,000 years ago (Meltzer 2009). The Paleoindian period was characterized by small, highly mobile bands of people and a hunting-and-gathering way of life adapted to a climate that was generally cooler and wetter than today. Archaeological sites dating to the early part of the Paleoindian period are often associated with the remains of extinct large mammals such as mammoth, bison, and camel, which has long been interpreted as reflecting a heavy reliance on hunting big game (Waguespack and Surovell 2003) using spears tipped with the distinctive fluted Clovis and Folsom stone points found at Paleoindian sites. Little evidence for the Paleoindian period has been found in southern Arizona as a whole (Mabry et al, 1998), but the Naco, Lehner, and Murray Springs sites, all located in the upper San Pedro valley, were particularly important to the definition and formulation of the Clovis culture (Haury 1953; Haury et al. 1959; Haynes and Huckell 2007). Essentially no Paleoindian material has been recovered in the Tucson Basin, including the Cañada del Oro area.

Archaic and Early Agricultural Periods

The Archaic period, which in southern Arizona began around 10,000 years ago and ended about 4,000 years ago, was also characterized by a hunting-and-gathering way of life, but Archaic peoples exploited a much greater diversity of plant and animal species than their Paleoindian predecessors. Little evidence of an Early Archaic occupation (10,000 to 6,800 years ago) has been found in the region, but archaeologists have recently excavated sites in the Santa Cruz River floodplain that have shown an intensive Middle Archaic presence (6,800 to 4,000 years ago) (Gregory 1999).

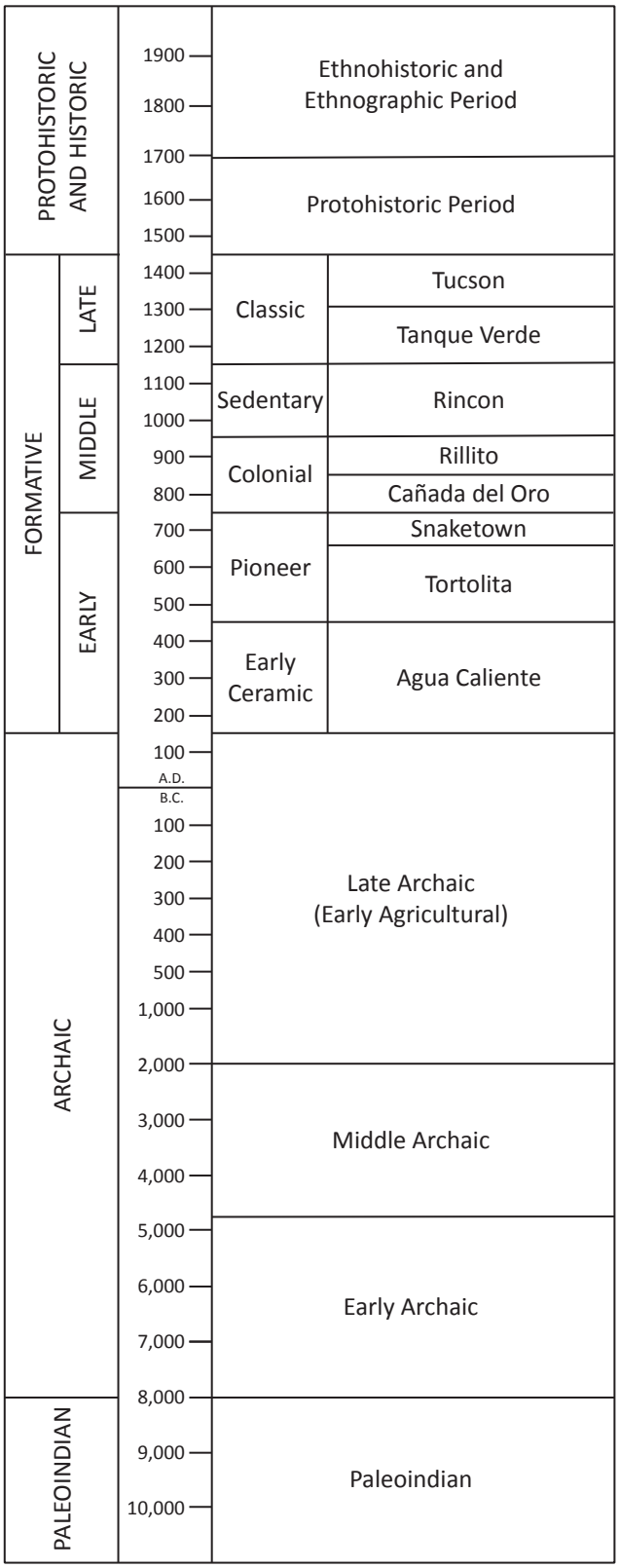

Figure 3. Chronology of Native American culture history in southern Arizona.

Additionally, evidence of domesticated maize has been found in southern Arizona dating to the Middle-to-Late Archaic transition (Ezzo 2007a:35–38; Ezzo and Deaver 1998), and evidence for the practice of agriculture is now abundant for the Late Archaic period, which archaeologists have begun to call the Early Agricultural period (4,000 years ago to A.D. 150). About 4,000 years ago, the Archaic hunting-and-gathering lifestyle began to give way to a more sedentary existence, made possible in no small part by the introduction of maize and other cultigens and the techniques needed to grow these crops in different environments. This period, formerly known as the Late Archaic period, is increasingly referred to as the Early Agricultural period.

Intensive use of the Santa Cruz River floodplain in the Early Agricultural period, from about 4,000 years ago to A.D. 150, is indicated by the recent excavation of surprisingly large settlements, which have included evidence for generally increased sedentism, the repeated use of specific locations, and ritual practices, particularly during the San Pedro phase (3,200 to 2,800 years ago, or 1200 to 800 B.C.) and Cienega phase (2,800 to 1,850 years ago, or 800 B.C. to A.D. 150) (Diehl, ed. 2005; Mabry 2008; Mabry, ed. 2008; Sliva, ed. 2005). The evidence for sedentism includes specialized storage pits, a reliance on maize and other tropical cultigens, and the production and use of pottery for storage (Ezzo 2007a:37; Mabry 1998; Mabry and Clark 1994). Other evidence from the Early Agricultural period points to the beginnings of transitions that are better known for the subsequent Formative period: from informal “houses in pits” to true pit houses, and from round to rectangular and better-made structures. Evidence for long-distance exchange networks in the Early Agricultural period has been discovered at the Santa Cruz Bend site (Mabry 1998; Thiel 1998), and the site of Las Capas has recently yielded evidence for fairly complex agricultural practices during the period, notably irrigation ditches (Hesse and Foster 2005; Mabry 2008). Pit houses at Las Capas were also ahead of their time: large circular and oval structures during the San Pedro phase are like the ones previously known only at Cienega phase sites.

No Archaic or Early Agricultural period sites have been recorded within the limits of the Oro Valley study area, but given the abundance of evidence for these occupations on the Santa Cruz River floodplain, this is probably because a substantial portion of the study area has never been systematically surveyed for archaeological sites. At least one small Archaic site has been documented in Catalina State Park, just outside the study area (Huckell 1980a:36).

Formative Period

In the Formative period, typically defined as the period A.D. 150–1450, many of the important adaptations of the Early Agricultural period continued to develop: increased sedentism, true pit houses, pottery production, and long-distance exchange. The defining characteristic of the Formative period has traditionally been a reliance on maize agriculture as the dominant form of subsistence (Ezzo 2007a:38). A distinction is usually made between the pre-Hohokam cultures of the Early Ceramic period and the Hohokam cultures of the successive Pioneer, Colonial, Sedentary, and Classic periods.

Early Ceramic Period

The Early Ceramic period, comprised entirely by the Agua Caliente phase (A.D. 150–450) in the Tucson Basin, is primarily defined by the presence of an early plain ware horizon and ends with the appearance of a red ware horizon (Wallace 2003). This period witnessed an increase in the diversity of pottery vessel forms and the proficiency of ceramic manufacturing techniques. Seed jars and hemispherical bowls, both used mostly for food storage, were the most common vessel forms in this period, which is similar in this way to the early Mogollon cultures to the north and east of the Tucson Basin (Burton 1991; Whittlesey 1998). Agriculture intensified through the period. The increase in ceramics for storage coincided with a decrease in the number of subsurface storage pits found at Early Ceramic sites. Architecture during the period was more formalized than before: square and rectangular pit structures were the rule, with plastered hearths centered on the entry and the occasional flanking of entries by adobe pillars. The distribution of these structures within communities became increasingly organized through time, as discrete courtyard groups, open plazas, and communal houses appeared, anticipating later developments along these lines (Wilcox et al. 1981). The cultural affiliation for Early Ceramic period sites is unresolved, but three hypotheses exist: Haury's (1978) idea that these groups were, basically, Hohokam; Huckell (1987) and Di Peso's (1956, 1979) proposition of a Mogollon influence; and Deaver and Ciolek-Torrello's (1995) notion that the Hohokam culture emerged from these Early Ceramic period farmers.

Hohokam Culture

By around A.D. 450, the Hohokam culture was taking root in the Tucson Basin, as evidenced by a "consolidation of patterns in artifact styles, architecture, and economics" (Fish and Fish 2007:8). The distribution of red-on-buff ceramics and ball courts (Wilcox 1991) reached its greatest areal extent during the Colonial and Sedentary periods, or A.D. 700–1150. Around the end of the Sedentary period, a major reorganization took place, marked by changes in both domestic and ritual life that would characterize the ensuing Classic period. Archaeological evidence of the Hohokam disappears at about A.D. 1450. Reasons for the sudden decline remain contested, but external environmental changes, internal political changes, and the introduction of Old World diseases all may have played a role. Throughout the "Hohokam Millennium" (Fish and Fish, eds. 2007), the Hohokam were most notable for their abilities as farmers, using a combination of ditch irrigation, dry farming, and storm water runoff diversion, elaborating many of the traditions first established in the Early Agricultural period.

Pioneer Period

The Pioneer period in the Tucson Basin consists of two phases: the Tortolita phase (A.D. 450–700) and the Snaketown phase (A.D. 700–750), recently refined as the result of work at sites like Valencia Vieja along the Santa Cruz River (Wallace ed., 2003). In the Tucson Basin, the Pioneer period is characterized by small, dispersed villages with pit houses and some irrigation ditches. At Snaketown, a major village site in the middle Gila River valley where the Hohokam tradition

was first defined, evidence was found of a developing ceremonial complex, including artificial mounds, cremations, figurines, and ball courts (Doyel 1991; Gladwin et al. 1937; Haury 1976). Regional ceramic diversity began in the Pioneer period, especially during the Snaketown phase, and some archaeologists consider the Pioneer ceramic traditions the beginning of truly decorated pottery, like Snaketown Red-on-buff. Two of the largest prehistoric sites in the study area, Honey Bee Village (Medrano 2008) and Romero Ruin (Elson and Doelle 1987a), were both founded during this period.

Colonial Period

The Colonial period began around A.D. 750 and ended about A.D. 950. It consisted of the Cañada del Oro and Rillito phases, each approximately 100 years in length. In southern Arizona, the Cañada del Oro phase is not as well documented as other phases, but a handful of sites have provided important information, including Hodges Ruin (Kelly 1978), Valencia (Wallace, ed. 2003), Dakota Wash (Craig 1988), and the three largest prehistoric sites in the study area: Honey Bee Village, Romero Ruin, and Sleeping Snake Village (Ezzo, ed. 2007). All of these sites had at least one ball court (Doelle and Wallace 1991). During the subsequent Rillito phase, there was a fourfold increase in the number of sites in the Tucson Basin (Doelle and Wallace 1991). Ezzo (2007a) discusses several of the ball court villages of this phase along the Santa Cruz River, including Sunset Mesa (Lindeman 2000), Los Morteros (Wallace 1995), and Huntington Ruin. The number of primary villages increases throughout the phase and there is a diversity in pit houses, with both true pit houses and the less-formal "houses in pits." In contrast to other changes in Hohokam culture during the period, there is little change in the ceramics apart from some increase in the formalization of wares.

Sedentary Period

More recorded prehistoric sites date to the Sedentary period (A.D. 950–1150) (composed entirely of the Rincon phase) than to any other prehistoric period in the Tucson Basin (Doelle and Wallace 1991), which has made it the best-understood part of the Hohokam chronology in the region. In general, the Sedentary period was a time of relative cultural stability and population growth. Small, dispersed sites were located on the *bajada* (piedmont) slopes and alluvial fans in the basin, while large sites were located along the Santa Cruz River and other major drainages (Whittlesey et al. 1994). Courtyard groups, or several houses oriented around a common courtyard or plaza, were the primary mode of organization within sites, and irrigation systems were expanded during this time. Inhabitants used the *bajada* slopes for rock-pile agave cultivation, in addition to other agricultural and wild resource uses. Ceramics of the Sedentary period show a decrease in the quality of painted line decoration, with an overall bolder style; vessels are also thicker and heavier. Rincon Red ware, a style of pottery coated with a red slip before firing, entered into large-scale production. Rincon Polychrome, a style of pottery with decoration in multiple colors, also became widespread. During the late Sedentary period, people initiated new forms of adobe wall construction and increased their use of dry farming and storm water runoff farming. Toward the end of the period, many villages were abandoned, setting the stage for changes evident in

the succeeding Classic period. Romero Ruin, Honey Bee Village, and Sleeping Snake Village (Ezzo 2007a:43–44) were all still occupied during this time, but not much beyond.

Classic Period

The tumultuous transition from the Sedentary period to the Classic period resulted in numerous changes to the material culture of the Hohokam. In the Classic period (A.D. 1150–1450), semi-subterranean adobe-walled pit houses and aboveground adobe and stone-masonry structures became the principal forms of architecture, and they were typically located inside walled compounds, as at the Marana Platform Mound site (Fish et al., eds. 1992) and the University Indian Ruin (Hayden 1957). Ball courts were replaced by platform mounds as the dominant form of public architecture, and local examples again include the Marana Platform Mound site (Fish et al., eds. 1992), the University Indian Ruin (1957), and the Tom Mix mound, located on the east side of the Picacho Mountains (see Fish and Fish 1992). Red-on-brown ceramics took on a less curvilinear and more rectilinear pattern than in previous periods. Inhumations were added to the burial practices of the Hohokam, and both cremations and inhumations continued through the Classic period. Populations aggregated in larger primary villages, formed along the major drainages throughout the Tucson Basin. The total population of the region may have peaked in the early Classic period (or the Tanque Verde phase, A.D. 1150–1300), but then declined in the late Classic (or the Tucson phase, A.D. 1300–1450). A debate continues regarding the causes of the reorganization that occurred between the Sedentary and Classic periods, and one also continues regarding the disappearance of the Hohokam at the end of the Classic period. It is likely that environmental changes played a role in both events (see Waters and Ravesloot 2001 for one such argument concerning the transition), and the influx of an outside population, particularly from the Tonto Basin may also have played a role (Haury 1945; O'Mack et al. 2004; Sires 1987; Whittlesey 2000). Alternatively, Hill and others (2004) argue that the disappearance of the Hohokam was due less to a catastrophic event than to demographic trends started many years earlier. Future investigations of Classic period sites may help resolve these differing interpretations.

Native Americans of the Protohistoric and Historic Periods

Whatever the full explanation for the demise of the Hohokam and other Classic-period traditions, the period between A.D. 1450 and the European-dominated historic era was a transition from the prehistoric cultures documented by archaeology to the modern Native American cultures documented by historical sources and ethnographic studies. The transition from prehistory to history is often called the Protohistoric period by archaeologists, but in southern Arizona it is defined in various and sometimes contradictory ways (Gilpin and Phillips 1998). Ravesloot and Whittlesey (1987:83) have pointed out that, strictly speaking, protohistory began with the first arrival of Europeans in the New World (A.D. 1492) and ended with the start of sustained contact between Europeans and Native Americans, which means that the end date for the Protohistoric period differs by region. But they suggest that in southern Arizona, where sustained European contact came relatively late, the start of the Protohistoric period is usefully defined as A.D. 1540, the year of the first substantial Spanish expedition to the region, and the end of the period is best

defined by the establishment of the first Spanish presidio along the Santa Cruz River at Tubac in 1752. On the other hand, Officer (1987) has argued that a more appropriate end date would be the 1690s, when the Jesuit priest Eusebio Francisco Kino initiated the Catholic conversion of the region, establishing missions along the Santa Cruz as far north as San Xavier del Bac (see Chapter 4 of this report on the early Spanish presence in southern Arizona).

Despite questions about its precise definition, the Protohistoric period is a convenient way of referring to Native American cultural developments in southern Arizona during a time before Europeans arrived in the region but after European influences—in the form of European crops, livestock, and material culture—were already strongly present. When Kino made his earliest trips along the Santa Cruz River into southern Arizona, the sedentary peoples in the farming villages he visited had long ago added wheat and other European crops to their fields, and the horse had been adopted long ago by the nomadic peoples who frequented the surrounding mountains and canyons. Infectious diseases introduced by Europeans to the New World had undoubtedly also spread into the Southwest by the seventeenth century, though the timing and impacts of these diseases on Native Americans in the region are poorly understood (Sheridan 1988).

Southern Arizona was known by Kino as the Pimería Alta, the upper land of the Piman speakers, in contrast to the Pimería Baja, the lower land of the Piman speakers, now part of the Mexican state of Sonora, where Kino had been a missionary for many years before expanding his work into southern Arizona. There were two major groups of indigenous peoples living in the Pimería Alta when Kino arrived, separated by differences in language and way of life. The more numerous group was the O'odham (the name Piman speakers used for themselves), who relied on agriculture to the extent that a particular local environment would allow. The other major group was the Apache, who spoke an Athapaskan language and who relied on a mix of hunting, gathering, and raiding, and only minimally on farming. The Apache were highly mobile and did not live in permanent villages. Their primary range was the vast, sparsely populated area north and east of the Pimería Alta, but they often entered the Tucson Basin to raid the livestock and food supplies of the sedentary O'odham.

According to Spicer (1962:119), there were as many as 30,000 Piman speakers living in the Pimería Alta in the late 1600s. Early on, the Spanish thought of the O'odham in terms of four major subdivisions—the Pima, the Soba, the Sobaipuri, and the Papago—which may not have corresponded closely with the O'odham's own conceptions. The Pima lived in the southeastern part of the region, extending into modern Sonora; the Soba lived to the southwest along the Altar River; the Sobaipuri lived along the San Pedro and Santa Cruz Rivers as far north as the Gila River; and the Papago, now known as the Tohono O'odham, lived in the desert to the west of the Santa Cruz River. In the course of the eighteenth century, the distribution of all of these groups changed significantly as encroachments by the Spanish and introduced diseases took their toll. The Soba and Sobaipuri lost their distinct identity altogether and were absorbed by other O'odham groups. The Tohono O'odham became the largest component in the mission settlements along the Santa Cruz River.

Ethnohistorians have noted other probable distinctions among the Piman speakers living along the Santa Cruz River. For example, the Kohatk seem to have been a distinct group living along the

lower Santa Cruz as far north as the Picacho Mountains. The Piman speakers living along the Gila River, later known as the Akimel O'odham, were also a discrete group that fared comparatively well in the colonial period, largely because they were beyond the regular reach of Spanish missionaries (Dobyns 1976; Erickson 1994). When modern anthropologists began studying O'odham culture in the twentieth century, the O'odham themselves recognized three distinct groups based on economic practices and residential patterns. The Hia C'ed O'odham, or Sand People, were the most mobile and least agricultural of the O'odham and lived in the arid western desert as far south as the Gulf of California. The Tohono O'odham or Desert People, alternated between summer farming villages and winter hunting-and-gathering camps in the vast area between the Santa Cruz River and the arid western desert. And the Akimel O'odham, or River People, stayed year-round in permanent villages along the Gila River. In Fontana's (1983) terms, these groups are, respectively, the No Villagers, the Two Villagers, and the One Villagers.

The Apache were also labeled many different ways by the Spanish, though the Spanish tendency to call any nomadic people "Apache" whether or not they were Athapaskan speakers makes it difficult to interpret some early sources. In southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico, the Jocome and Suma occupied what was later the territory of the Chiricahua Apache (Spicer 1962:237). Farther to the east were the Jano, Manso, and Jumano, who ranged through what is now Chihuahua as far east as the Río Grande. Schroeder (1974a, 1974b) has suggested that no Apache peoples ranged south of the Gila River before the 1680s, which would mean that the ongoing conflict between O'odham and Apache first described by Kino and other Spaniards late in the seventeenth century had begun only recently. North of the Gila River was a region mostly unexplored by the Spanish but called Apachería, land of the Apache, a loosely applied term describing the area between Pimería Alta and and the pueblos of Hopi and Zuni (Opler 1983:402). Basso (1983:465) has suggested that the inhabitants of this area later became the Western Apache. By 1700, the Western Apache occupied an extensive territory extending south from the Mogollon Rim to the Gila River.

From the founding of the first Spanish presidio at Tubac in 1752 until the surrender of the Apache leader Geronimo in 1886, the history of southern Arizona was dominated by the conflict between the sedentary peoples of the region and various bands of Apache. The successive efforts of the Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. governments to make the region suitable for settlement were focused heavily, often exclusively, on reducing the threat of Apache raids. There were occasional conflicts between Euroamericans and the O'odham in the region, but none compared in duration or ferocity with the conflict between Euroamericans and the Apache, and the O'odham typically sided with the Spanish, Mexican, or U.S. forces in their attempts to drive out or eliminate the Apache. For the Apache, raiding was a cultural tradition and an important element in their economic survival. The villages of the O'odham, the associated small Euroamerican settlements, and any traveling party in the region were easy and regular targets of the Apache. It was only in the 1870s, when the U.S. Army succeeded in driving the Apache east and north out of the Tucson Basin, that Euroamerican settlement was able to expand significantly beyond the narrow confines of the Santa Cruz River valley (Dobyns 1976; Officer 1987; Sheridan 1995).

The Cañada del Oro area was apparently devoid of O'odham settlements in the historic period, probably because it was part of the usual range of various Apache bands. Apart from occasional

references to encounters between Apaches and Euroamericans along the Cañada del Oro, there is little evidence for how the Apache may have used the area for hunting and gathering or how often they may have passed through the area en route to raids. As discussed in Chapter 4, historical references to the conflict between the Apache and the people of the Tucson area often mention the Cañada del Oro crossing, but archaeological evidence for the Apache presence in the area is entirely lacking.

A third group of Native Americans, the Yaqui, had an important presence in the Tucson Basin relatively late in the historic period. The Yaqui speak a dialect of Cahita, a language once spoken in a large area in what are now the Mexican states of Sonora and Sinaloa. The traditional home of the Yaqui is along the Yaqui River in Sonora and in adjacent portions of the Sierra Madre, where they led a primarily agricultural way of life. Because of persecution by the Mexican government in the late nineteenth century, groups of Yaqui abandoned their traditional territory for locations elsewhere in northern Mexico and southern Arizona. In the Tucson area, the Yaqui eventually settled in two principal locations: Pascua Village on the near north side of Tucson and a smaller satellite community in Marana. Although there is no evidence that the Yaqui had a substantial presence in the Oro Valley study area, many Yaqui have worked on farms and ranches all around the Tucson area and it would not be surprising to learn that they also worked at places along the Cañada del Oro (Spicer 1940, 1983).