

Chapter 3

SOBAIPURI SITES IN THE ROSEMONT AREA

Bruce B. Huckell

During the survey of the ANAMAX-Rosemont land exchange area in late 1975, archaeologists encountered two sites that displayed distinctive oval rock alignments on their surfaces. It was quickly recognized that these alignments were identical in size and shape to those reported from protohistoric or early historic Sobaipuri or Upper Pima sites in the San Pedro (Di Peso 1953; Hammack 1971) and Santa Cruz (Doyel 1977) river valleys. Both of the newly discovered sites lay along Barrel Canyon in the northeastern quarter of the proposed exchange area (Fig. 3.1). At one of these sites, AZ EE:2:80, the Sobaipuri house rings clearly overlay the remains of a prehistoric Hohokam settlement, but at the other site, AZ EE:2:83, the Sobaipuri occupation appeared to be the only component. The presence of Sobaipuri settlements in the mountainous portion of the northern Santa Rita Mountains was surprising, for previously known sites occupied by these people were all along the major river valleys. That they must have used the resources offered by the mountains was not unexpected, but that actual settlements were present had not been considered. Both sites, despite relatively impoverished surface artifact assemblages, were thus deemed to be potentially significant sources of information about Sobaipuri subsistence and settlement activities in upland environments.

Plans were made to test these two sites and three others that lacked house rings but were thought to have Piman brown ware ceramics. Prior to the 1979 testing phase all these sites were revisited, and it was found that the three sites without house rings were not of Sobaipuri or Upper Pima affiliation, but were instead very minor prehistoric artifact scatters. However, immediately north of AZ EE:2:80 a third separate locus with a few house rings was discovered; it was designated AZ EE:2:95 (Fig. 3.1). While its surface artifact assemblage was as poor as those of its previously discovered counterparts, a large purple glass bead was located just outside one of the house rings. This was the first indication that the Sobaipuri had occupied the Rosemont area after Spanish contact, and so AZ EE:2:95 was added to the list of sites to be tested.

Accordingly, all three sites were investigated in August of 1979. Each site was mapped, some surface collections were made, and a

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