

*Where the Earth and Sky are Sewn
Together: Sobaipuri-O'odham
Contexts of Contact and Colonialism*

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For the past 25 years or so, Dr. Deni Seymour has spent a great deal of time in the field, primarily along the San Pedro River valley of southern Arizona; surveying, mapping, excavating, and otherwise documenting many Sobaipuri sites that were previously unknown or not thoroughly documented. At the same time she has been reviewing extensive Spanish-period documents from the 16th to the 18th centuries, prepared by such varied personages as Francisco Vazquez de Coronado, Marcos de Niza, Eusebio Francisco Kino, and Juan Mateo Manje. She has been integrating the documentary and archaeological record in a series of papers published in various journals over the past 20 years.

As she says in her dedication, Emil Haury started modern archaeological investigations into the O'odham, and Charles DiPeso laid the foundation for Sobaipuri archaeological studies. Dr. Seymour has taken this earlier work and greatly expanded on it through many years of field work and publications. In this new book from the University of Utah Press, Dr. Seymour has prepared a synthesis that makes a strong effort to bring her thoughts and ideas from nearly 25 years of Sobaipuri research together in one volume. Dr. Seymour has worked closely with the members of the O'odham community at San Xavier, south of Tucson, who are the closest descendants of the Sobaipuri.

In this well-documented, written, and illustrated volume, Dr. Seymour brings her unique perspective together on the interrelationships of the Sobaipuri, the O'odham, and the Hohokam who resided in the river valleys of southern Arizona. She attempts to untangle discrepancies in the Spanish-period documentary record through new information from archaeological survey and excavation work that also clarifies and in some cases

corrects earlier archaeological work at Sobaipuri sites, conducted in the 1950s–1970s.

Starting with reassessments of Charles DiPeso's 1950s archaeological work at the historically referenced sites of Santa Cruz de Gaybaniptea and later Quiburi, the author makes a strong effort to review the documentary voice that she feels has dominated Sobaipuri research for many decades and bring to bear new interpretations based on her archaeological fieldwork. This volume presents an archaeology of the Sobaipuri that actually enhances the documentary record.

This book is divided into 13 chapters that explain in detail the results of the author's many years of fieldwork in the San Pedro Valley. In chapter 1 ("The Fertile Fields of the Sobaipuri-O'odham") the author reviews the cultural landscape of the Sobaipuri-O'odham and discusses the importance of Spanish contact and influence on the Sobaipuri before Fr. Kino. The influence of archaeology on the documentary record is reviewed.

Chapter 2 ("Background and Basis") presents an historiography of research and ideas about the Sobaipuri since the first work by Emil Haury in the 1930s and the major work completed by Charles DiPeso of the Amerind Foundation in the 1950s–1960s. The author also discusses resistance to new ideas, particularly regarding the new archaeological data from her work and the relationship to the long-established interpretations of the documentary record.

The interrelationship between long-accepted documentary sources and new data from the archaeological record is discussed in chapter 3 ("Integrating Sources"). In the process of trying to identify historically referenced locations of Sobaipuri settlements, Dr. Seymour argues that the combination of period maps, documentary text, and archaeological data results in a significant revision of settlement placement on the ground.

In chapter 4 ("Distinguishing the Sobaipuri"), an effort is made to describe and define Sobaipuri material culture, distinguishing between different groups living in the same areas. The Cerro Rojo Complex, regarded by the author as Proto-Apache; the Canutillo Complex (Jano and Jocomé), and the Cayetano Complex (Sobaipuri) are described and discussed. Significant aspects

of material culture such as ceramics (Whetstone plain and Sobaipuri plain) and Sobaipuri and other projectile-point types are described and reviewed. Dr. Seymour presents her thesis that there is no discernable hiatus in indigenous occupation in the San Pedro and Santa Cruz River valleys from the Hohokam late classic period to the historical period.

In chapter 5 (“O’odham Housing”), the author describes two major types of architecture used to construct houses in the terminal-prehistoric and early historical periods. The dome or barrel-shaped semisubterranean house is described, compared, and contrasted with the adobe-walled structures found at some sites. The accounts of housing by Cabeza de Vaca, Fr. Marcos de Niza, Coronado, Fr. Kino, Manje, Fr. Pfefferkorn, Fr. Och, and Frank Russell are described. The author feels that along with archaeological evidence they support a unbroken continuum of occupation from the late-prehistoric into the early historical period. The discussion of housing types focuses also on activity patterns reflected in house-structure design and the placement of auxiliary features.

In chapter 6 (“O’odham Domestic Space”), the discussion focuses on detailed description and analysis of the use of space in Sobaipuri houses. The perspective from recent archaeological data is compared and contrasted with descriptions from the documentary records. The author describes the common practice of Sobaipuri houses being in pairs. This chapter also describes the use of household space, extramural household space, settlement clusters, and population densities at first contact with the Spanish, utilizing archaeological data, the ethnographic record, documentary sources, and O’odham oral traditions.

The author in chapter 7 (“Sobaipuri Foodways and Hearth-Related Practices”) focuses on Sobaipuri hearth-related practices, food-production technologies, and cooking techniques. In addition, there is a discussion of how such practices may provide clues to social practices.

In chapter 8 (“Sobaipuri Land Use”), utilizing archaeological data from recent surveys and excavation projects, there is a discussion of how the Sobaipuri used portions of the terrain for domestic and community use. Settlement placement, settlement change, irrigation agriculture, and landscape use are all described.

Different types of chronometric dating are reviewed in chapter 9 (“Dating Sites”). The

author raises a major question in this chapter as to what is actually being dated. Specific archaeological techniques used in the testing and excavation of Sobaipuri sites are examined. This chapter also discusses issues relating to the Hohokam-O’odham continuum. Archaeological surveys have revealed the presence of many more Sobaipuri sites than described by Fr. Kino. The multicomponent use of many sites is described as reuse by more recent groups. Assessments of historically referenced places are made based on new archaeological field data.

The author argues in chapter 10 (“Rancheria and Community”) that new archaeological data can be used for evaluating the structural layouts of Sobaipuri sites in terms of communities, villages, and *rancherias*. This chapter also reviews specific archaeological excavation techniques needed when working with Sobaipuri sites. The use of hand tools is emphasized. Mechanical stripping is not recommended for Sobaipuri sites.

The duration of Sobaipuri occupation is reviewed in chapter 11 (“Sobaipuri Occupational Duration”). The author discusses social and subsistence conditions required for planned settlements that expanded or contracted through time. Dating of these Sobaipuri sites confers a new and greater temporal depth.

Chapter 12 (“Contrarian Perspectives on Sobaipuri Transformation”) examines aspects of change through time. It provides alternative explanations and perspectives on Sobaipuri life. Dating of Sobaipuri arrival in the river valleys of southern Arizona is discussed. The author suggests that more fieldwork on Sobaipuri sites that provides a perspective less “tarnished” by European influence is needed.

In the final chapter (“A Relation to Sobaipuri Past”) the author reviews the impacts of her 25 years of working on Sobaipuri sites. Dr. Seymour argues that the use of archaeological data can clarify and sometimes correct European documentary sources and provide new and unique perspectives on the Sobaipuri, other O’odham groups, and the Hohokam.

Dr. Seymour, in this expansive and detailed new study of Sobaipuri archaeology, describes the Sobaipuri-O’odham who occupied the San Pedro and Santa Cruz valleys from the early 1400s. She has worked closely with the Wa:k O’odham who reside at San Xavier and are the descendants of the Sobaipuri. This book provides

new perspectives on the Hohokam-O'odham continuum. Extensive new archaeological fieldwork carried out by the author provides new insights on Spanish documentary sources, sometimes supporting, sometimes correcting, and most often expanding our knowledge base.

This well-thought-out and extensively documented book represents a significant new

contribution to our understanding of the Sobai-puri-O'odham.

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