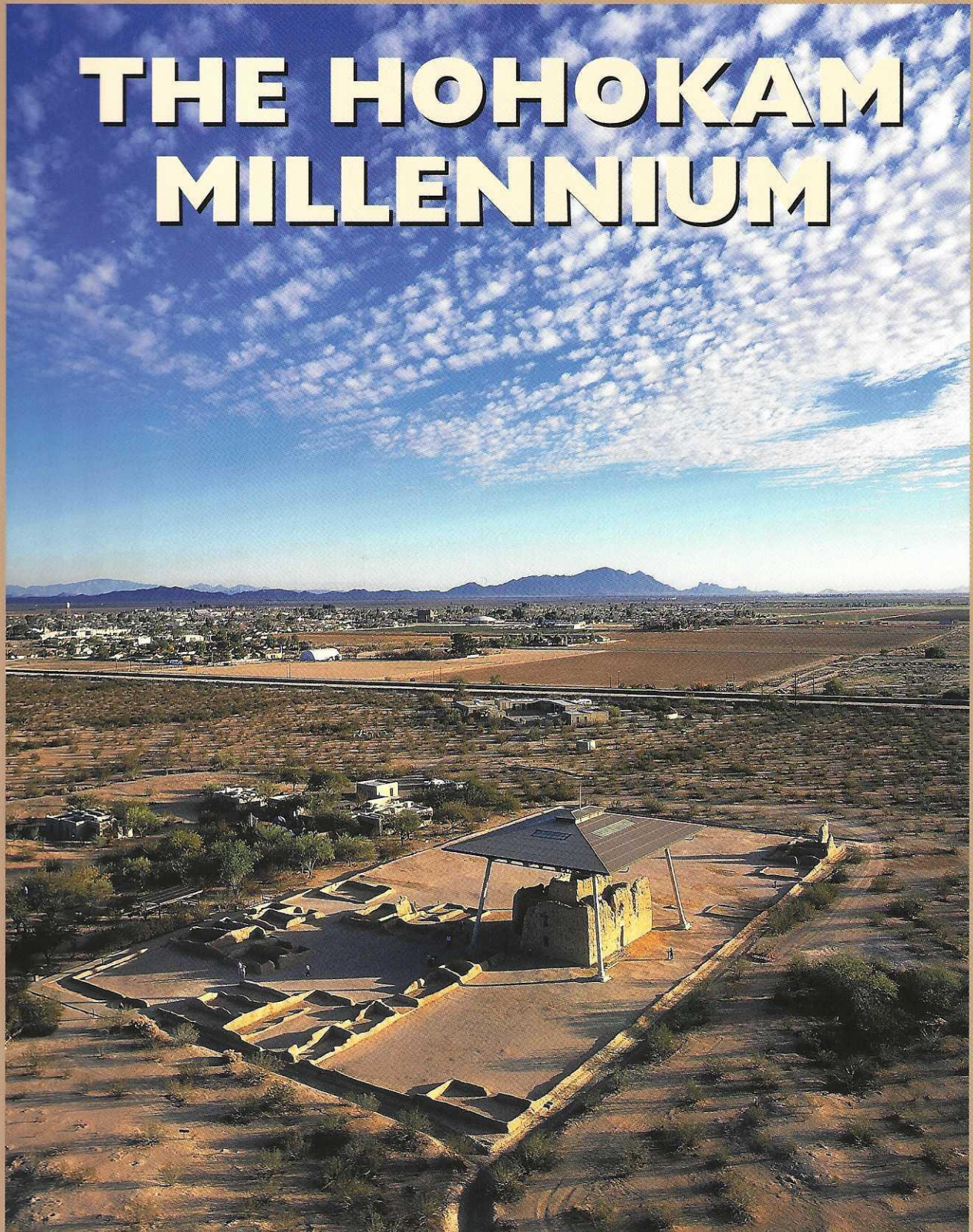


# THE HOHOKAM MILLENNIUM



Edited by Suzanne K. Fish and Paul R. Fish



# The Hohokam



A School for Advanced Research  
Popular Southwestern Archaeology Book

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# Millennium



*Edited by Suzanne K. Fish and Paul R. Fish*



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# Songscaapes and Calendar Sticks

J. Andrew Darling and Barnaby V. Lewis

When was the last time you broke into song? Which song did you sing? Here is an O'odham song about a mountain that stands west of an old Indian trail. Nameless on maps, it is a monument of volcanic and metamorphic rock that is well known in O'odham country:

Zigzag Connected,  
On top I pause.  
Here beside me,  
Black cloud floats zigzags,  
Pleasant for watching.

Or so says a translation by the anthropologist Donald Bahr. It and translations of other songs in this chapter are drawn from the 1997 book *Ants and Orioles: Showing the Art of Pima Poetry*.

The late Vincent Joseph, an O'odham elder who recorded the song in the 1980s, offered his interpretation: "The Oriole bird, the traveler, while resting on top of Zig-Zag Mountain, sees a black cloud floating below. The cloud imitates the zigzag shape of the mountain, and the Oriole is pleased with what he sees."

Twenty years later, Barnaby Lewis shared the same song as we traveled along a historic O'odham trail on land belonging to the Gila River Indian Community. The morning was not unusual. Our jobs for the Tribe had brought us to inspect recent vandalism to rock art sites on the reservation's northern boundary in the Santan Mountains. From the west, Zig-Zag Mountain stood out clearly (fig. 16.1). Barnaby's singing blessed the moment and honored the spirit of the mountain, even through the windshield of a tribal vehicle.

This chapter is about the way in which descendants of the Huhugam (Hohokam) interpret geographical space through song traditions. We examine songscaapes—landscapes remembered through O'odham song—and their relationship to traditional infrastructure for travel and the archaeology of ancient trails. We also consider the dimension of *time*. Time is important for understanding how landscapes, particularly sacred landscapes, exist alongside history. If we wish to appreciate the traditional O'odham's spatial concepts, then we must consider them in the context of O'odham ideas of time and history, specifically the histories told through O'odham calendar sticks.

## Trails

Trails are a major part of traditional infrastructure (fig. 16.2). The arid Southwest offers a unique cultural landscape in which trail segments remain visible for a long time on the desert surface. Some are as old as 10,000 years. The products of regular foot travel, desert trails appear as scars in the natural desert pavement, unlike roads or engineered constructions. Native infrastructure includes both the facilities, such as trails, and the ideas that enable communities to function. Knowledge of trails in the past—not just of where people were but how they got there—is important for archaeologists' understanding of the locations and distribution of sacred sites and settlements.

For the O'odham of central and southern Arizona, traveling means more than going from one place to another. Travel is not random. Traditionally, a person can travel on foot and through dreaming.