

# Shared Ideology in Precontact Central Arizona: Reflections from the Hilltops

Tri-National Symposium  
Ajo, AZ 2024



Thank you to Scott Wood for  
valuable knowledge shared and  
many enjoyable conversations.



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Justin Mortenson

**Golio  
Endeavors**

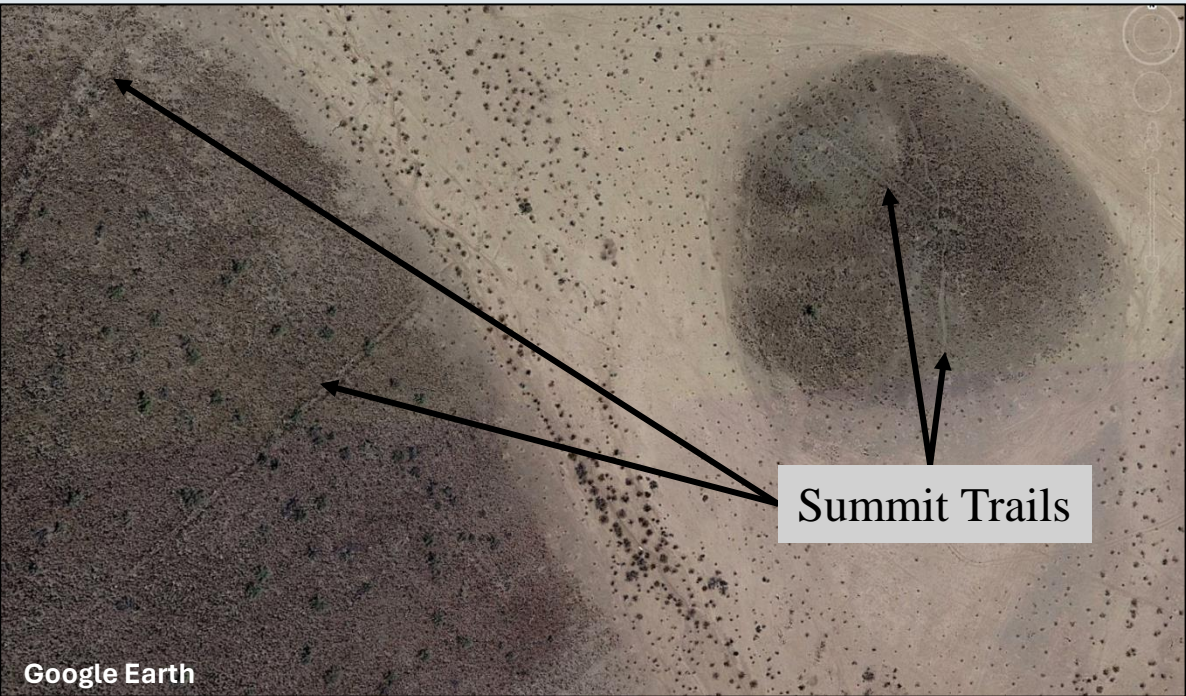
JJ Golio  
Mike Golio



Teresa Rodrigues

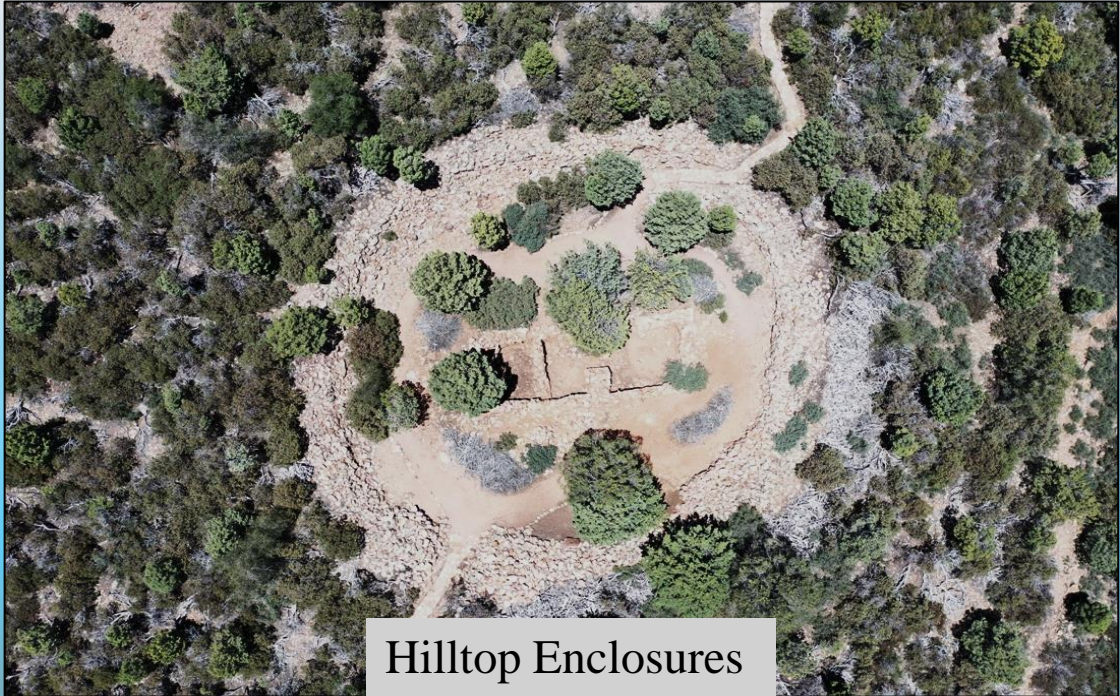
All Photos by Golio Endeavors unless otherwise noted



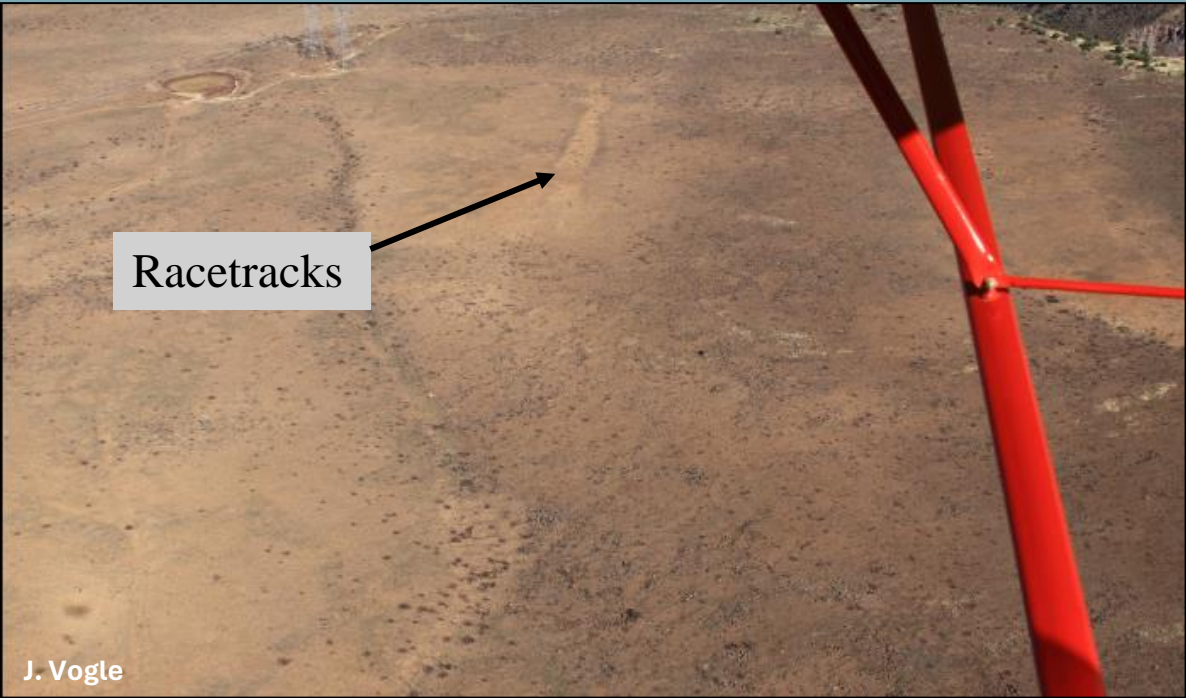


Google Earth

Summit Trails



Hilltop Enclosures



Racetracks

J. Vogle



Hilltop Enclosures





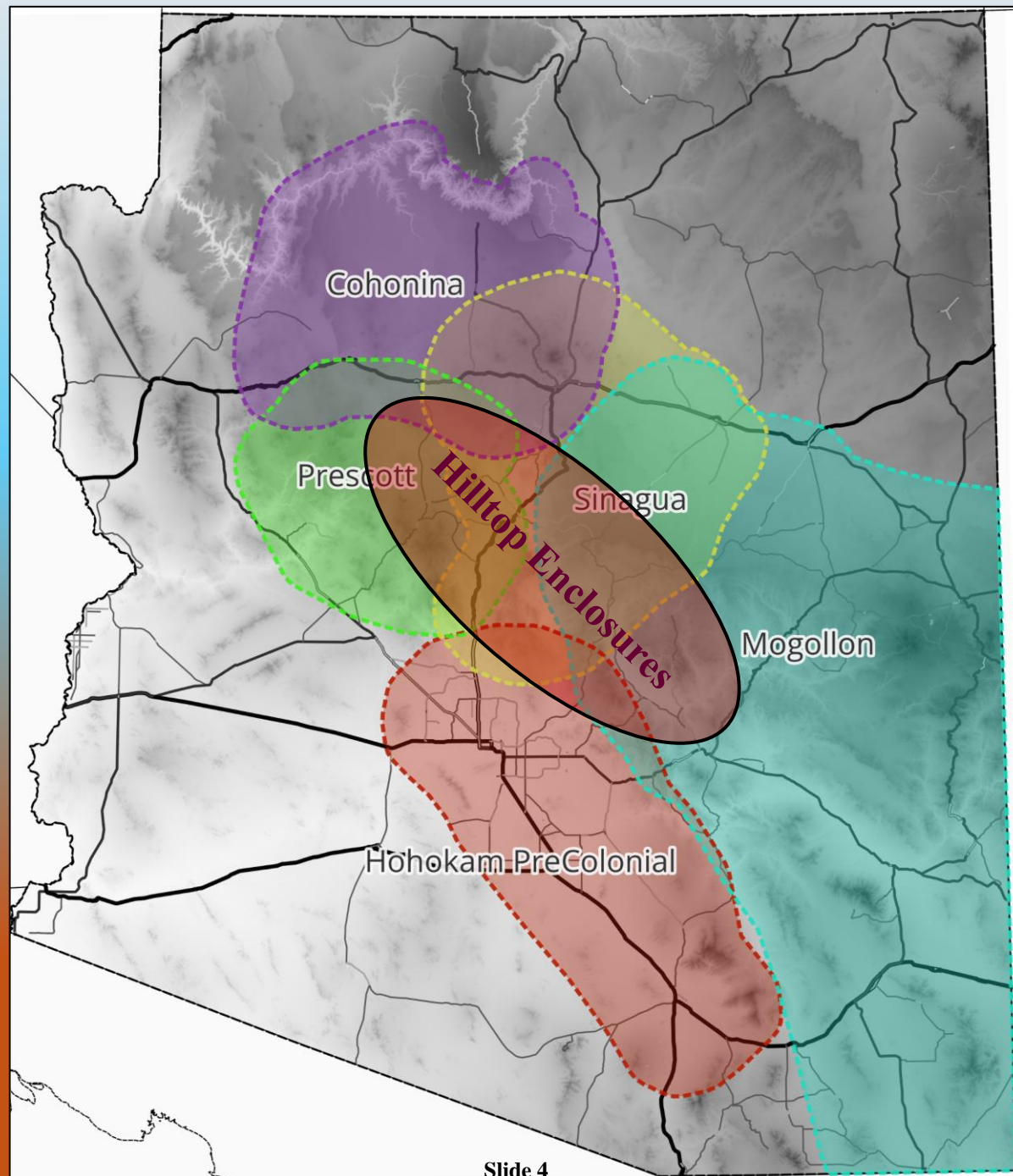
## **Hilltop sites were originally recorded as forts**

**As Euroamericans moved into Arizona soon after the Civil War and engaged in war with the Apache and other indigenous people they saw every wall on a hilltop as a fort.**

**Archaeologists followed suit and generated a large body of literature and scholarship attempting to figure out who was fighting with whom , why, and when:** Haas and Creamer (1996); Lambert (2002); LeBlanc (1999, 2000); LeBlanc and Rice (2001); Solometo (2006); Spoerl (1979); van Waarden (1984); Wilcox and Haas (1994); Wilcox et al. (2000); Wilcox et al. (2001a, 2001b).

**Recent work has suggested a variety of functions for these sites:** Abbott and Spielman (2014), Kwiatkowski (2021), Kellett (2022), Schaafsma et al. (2023).



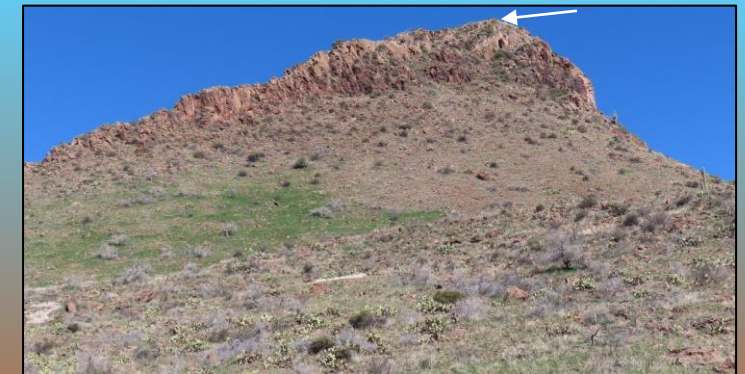




## Topographic locations:



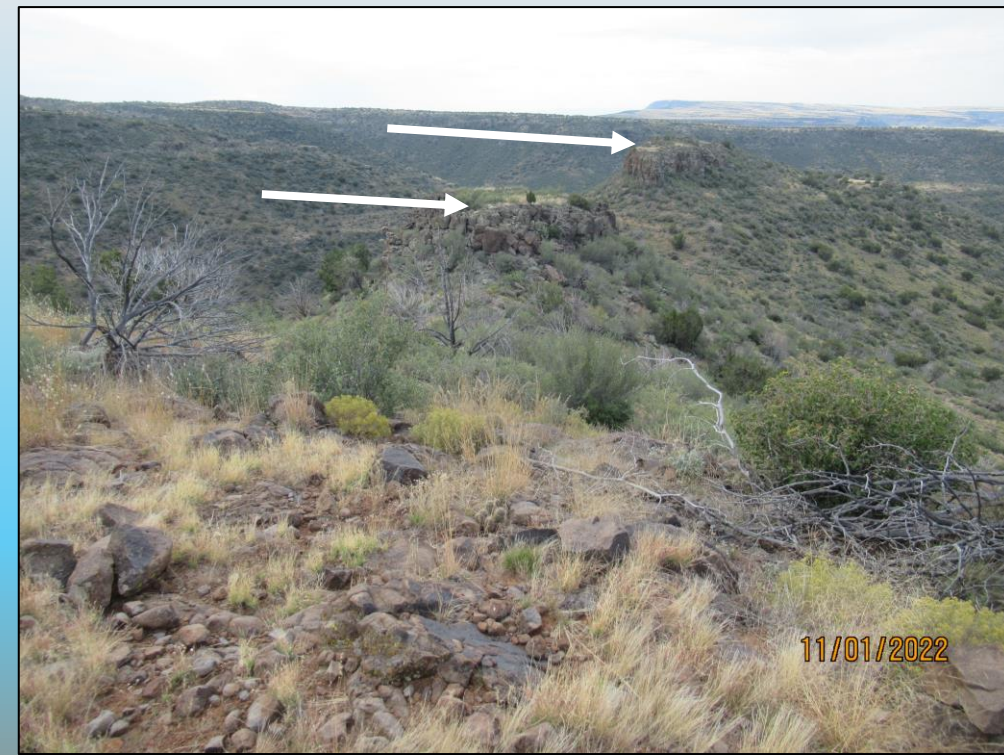
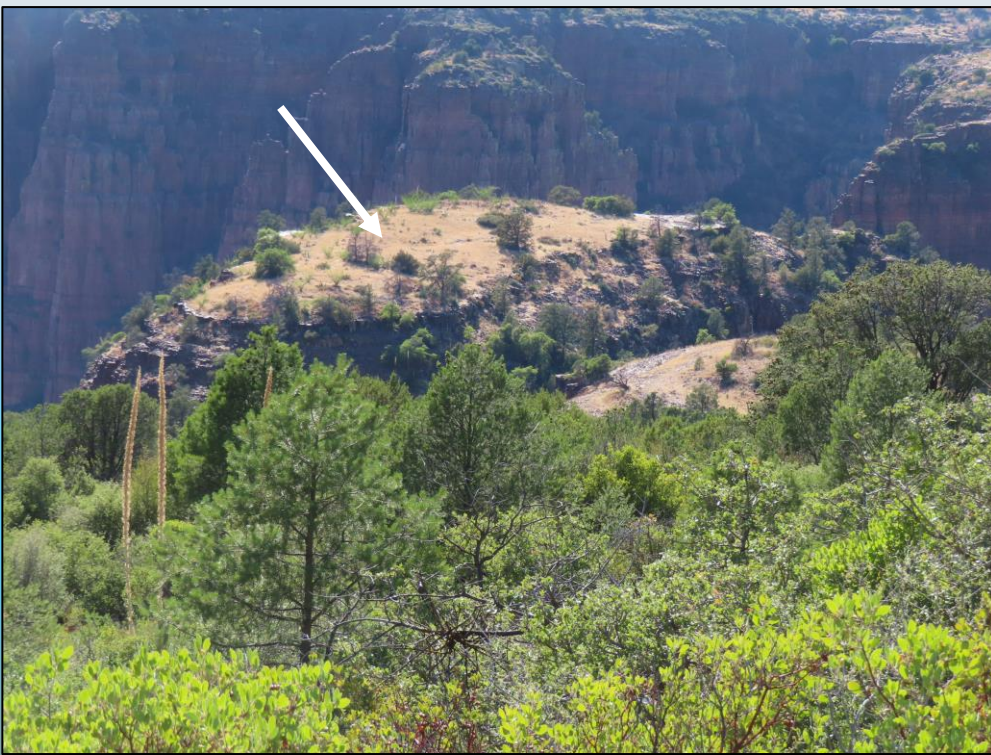
**Hilltop enclosures are commonly located on hilltops, often on dramatic heights. But many are also on low rolling hills without a commanding view of the surrounding landscape.**





## Topographic locations:

Ritual enclosures are also located on small 'island' mesas or buttes.





## Topographic locations:

**Ritual enclosures are also located on ridges, mesa edges, or saddles between two hilltops.**





## Shape of Enclosures:

### Rectangular Enclosures





**Shape of Enclosures:**

**Oval to Circular**

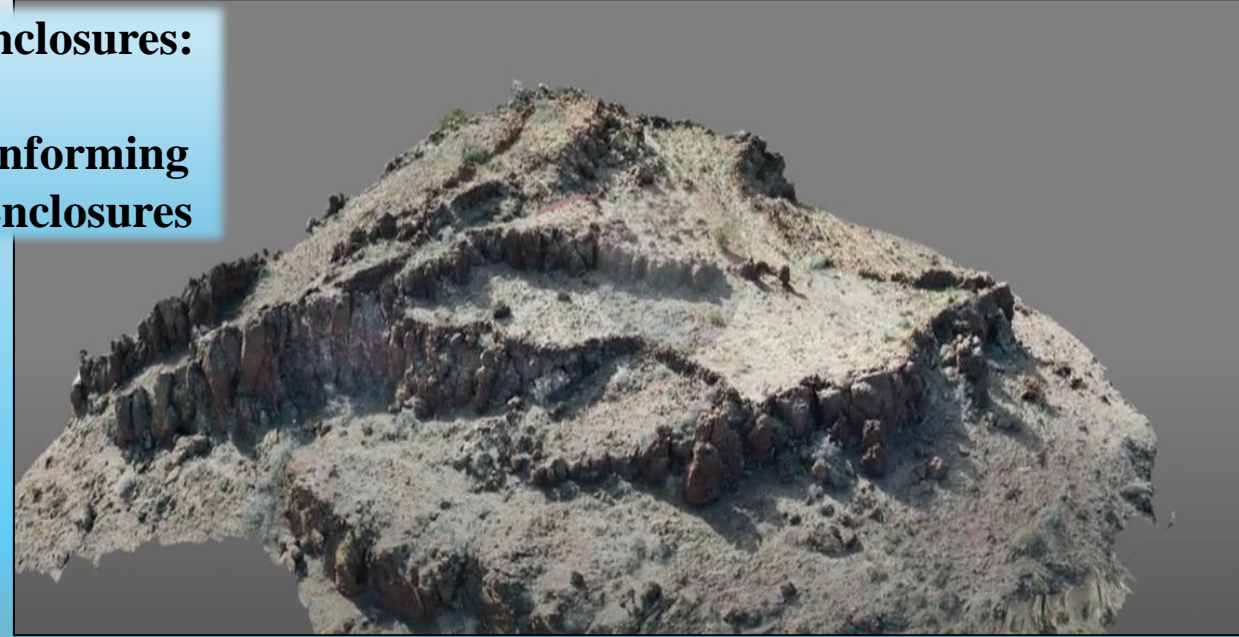




**Shape of Enclosures:**

**Terrain Conforming  
Irregular Enclosures**

**Built walls  
shown in blue**







**Structure using cliff and boulder  
as wall ends—open to the north**



**Structure using cliff as one end--  
open to the south**



**Structure using cliff as one side**



**Intermittent wall using edge of hill to define space**



**Wall construction technique:  
most common is core-veneer type  
construction.**



Slide 12





**Wall construction technique:  
Imported stone for decorative  
elements**





**Wall construction technique:**

**Rubble mound construction**

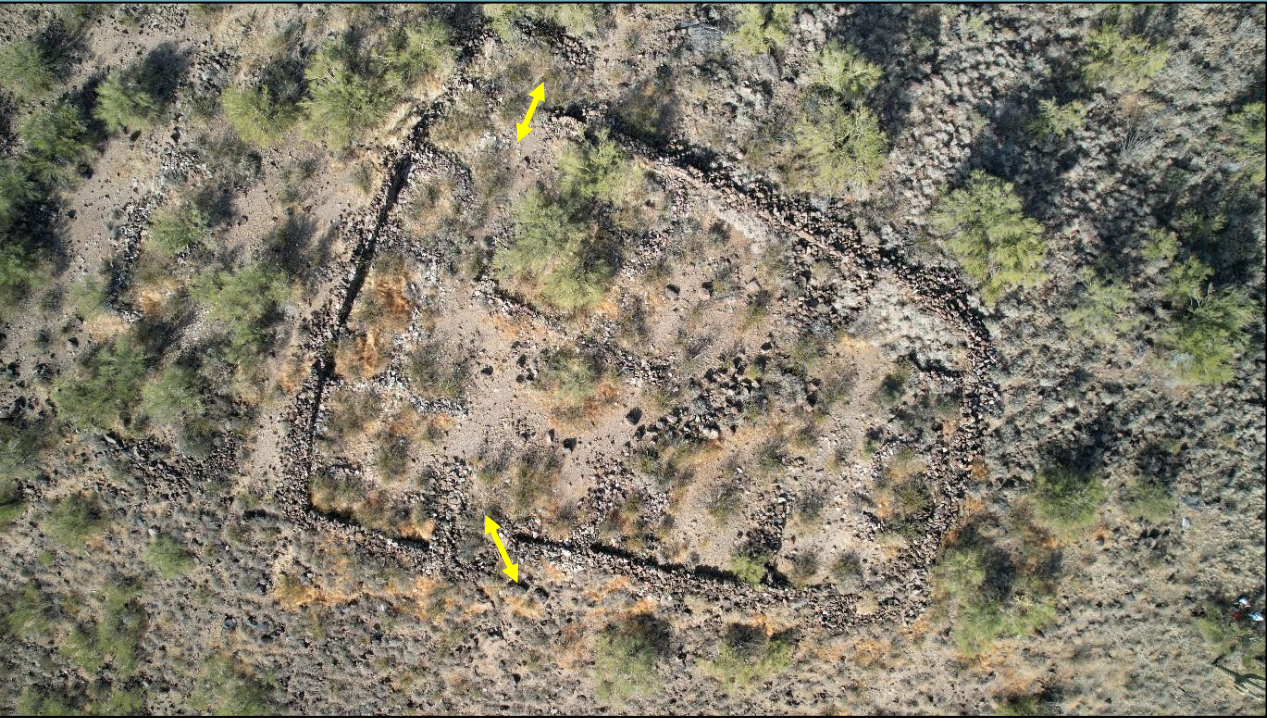
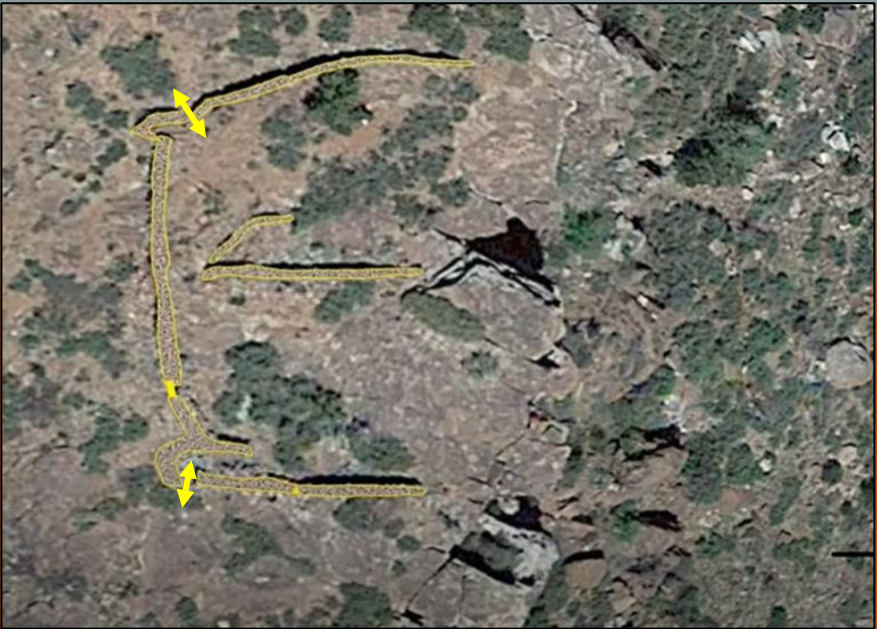
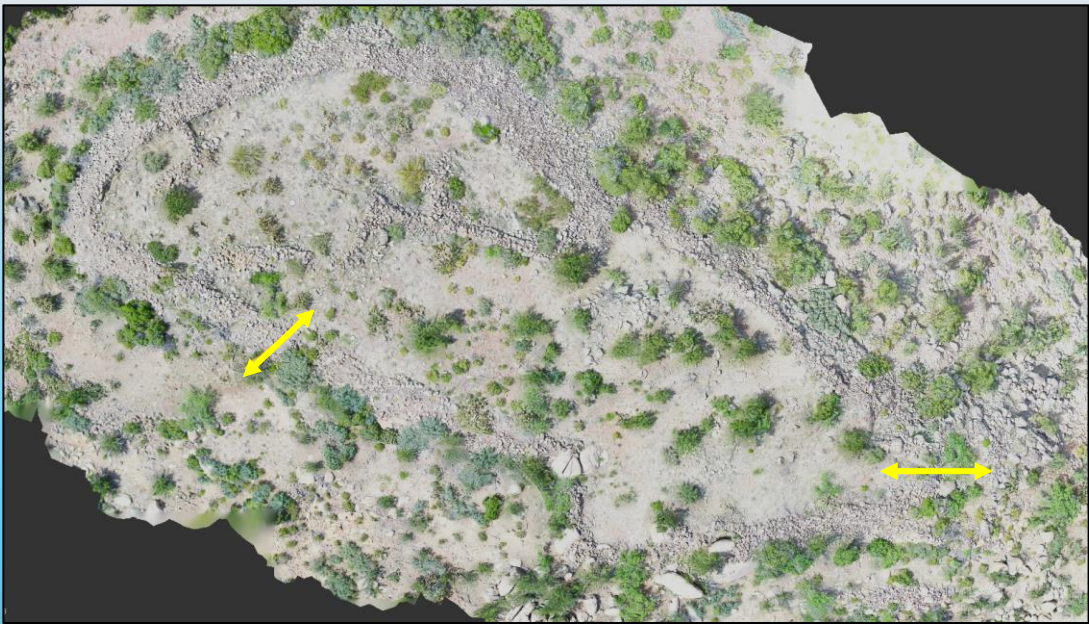






**Structural details:**

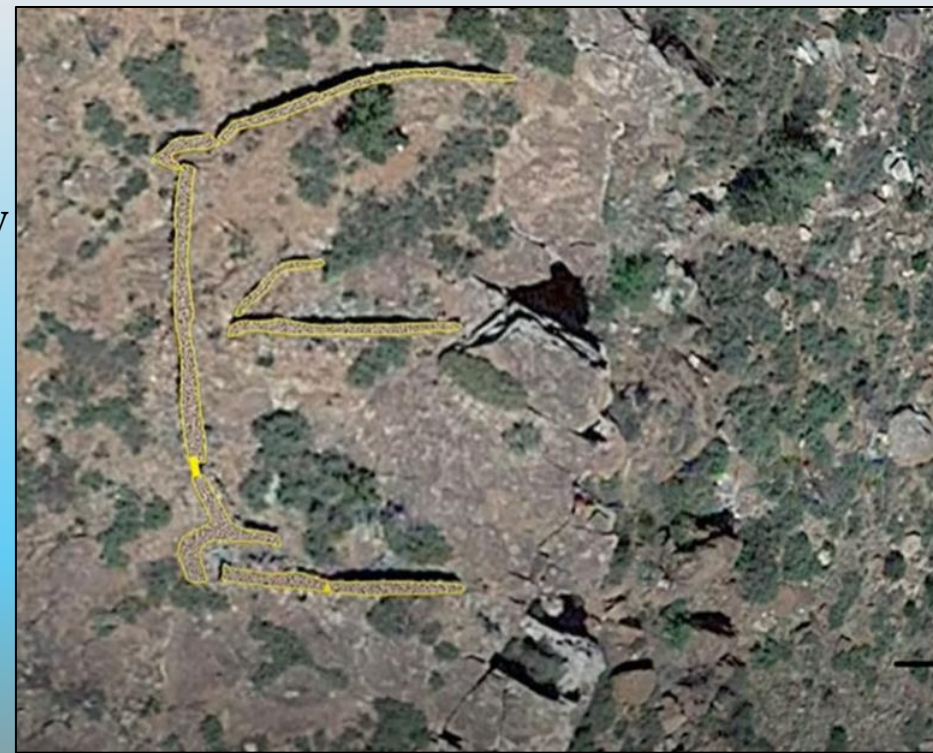
**Enclosures often  
have openings on  
two opposite sides.**





## Structural details:

Some enclosures have a dividing wall, usually creating two roughly equal halves.





## Structural details:

**Walls built to mimic or enhance the natural shapes present in the landscape.**



## View ports





## Structural details:

**Walls with stripes created using different shaped stones (flagstone vs cobble) or different colored stones.**



**Bi-colored walls created using two colors of stones.**



**Polychrome walls created using three colors of stone.**







**Structural details:  
Megaliths natural  
and constructed  
incorporated into  
walls**







**Structural details:  
Small rooms or  
chambers built in the  
walls**





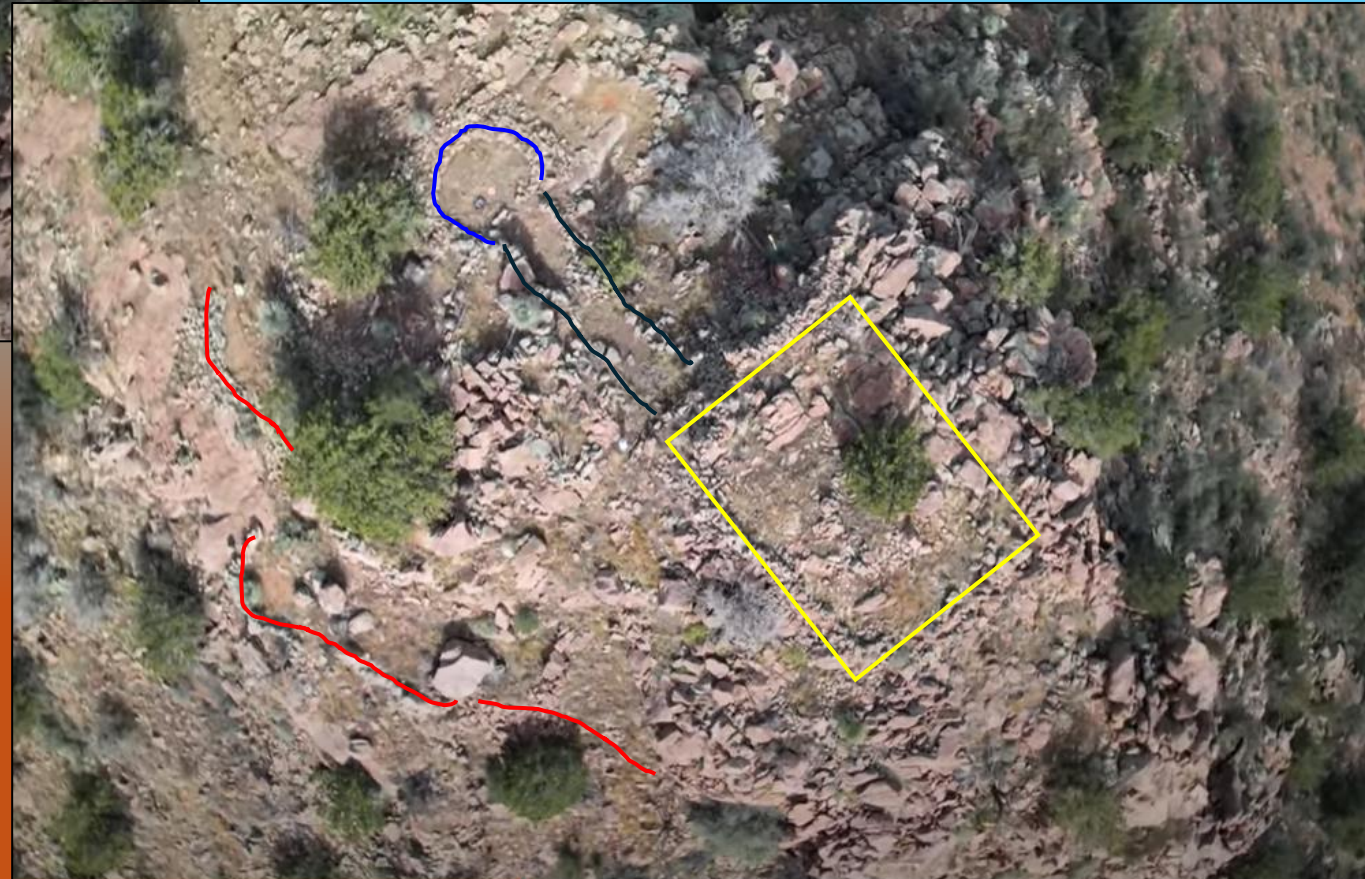
**Structural details:  
Four small rooms  
with stone mound.  
Corridor between.**





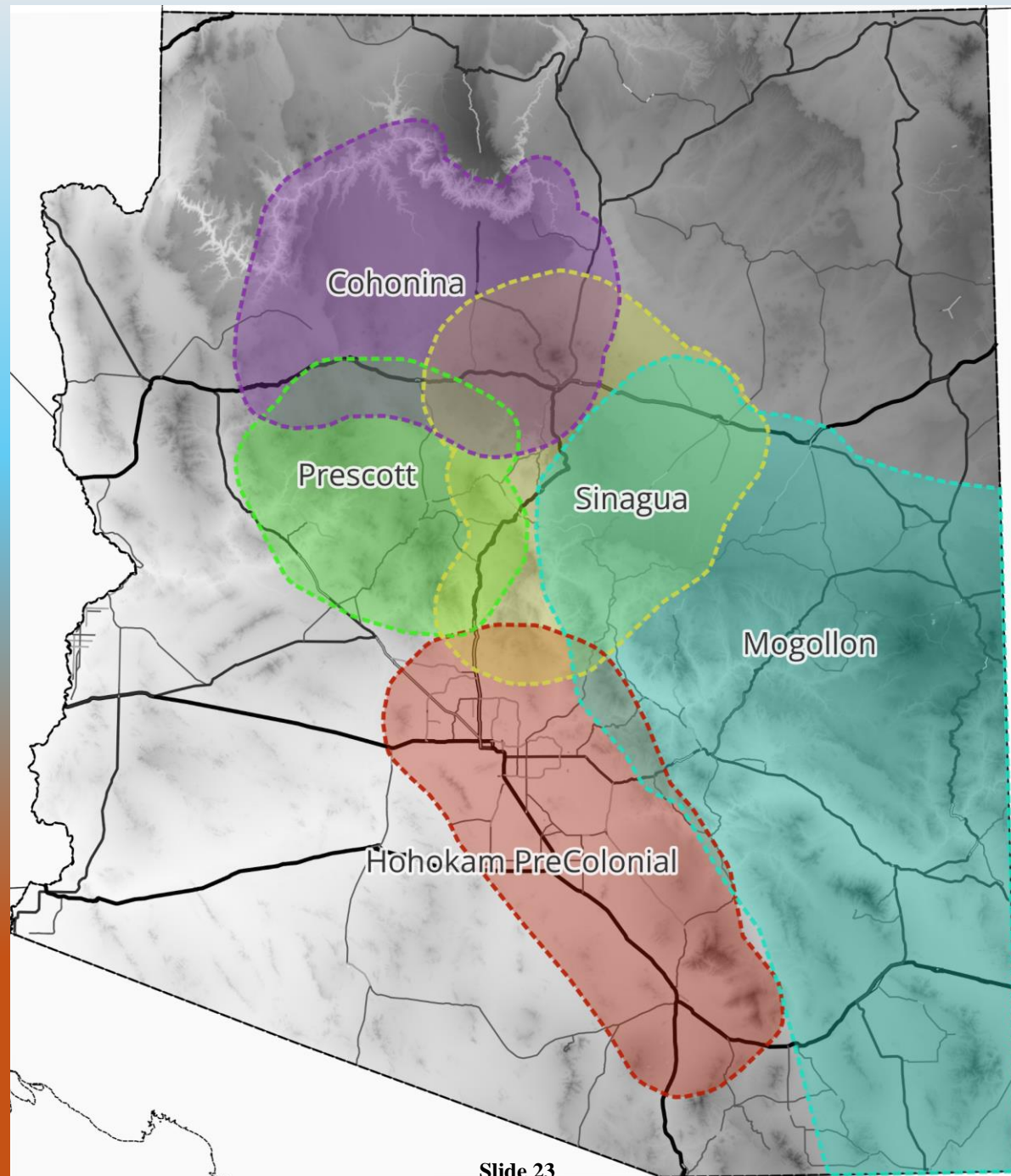
**Structural details:**

**Complex site with circular and rectangular enclosures connected by a built, ramped corridor.**

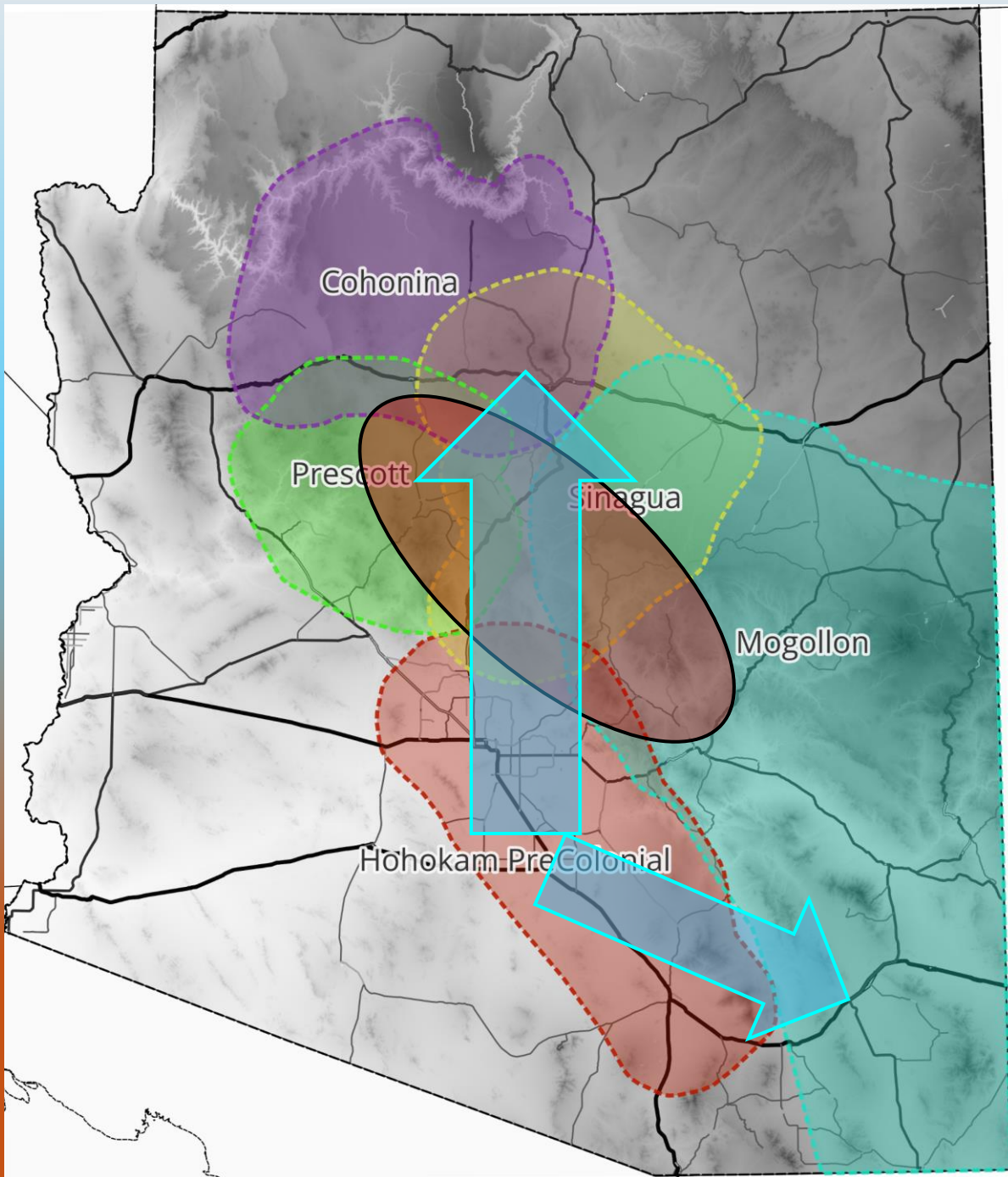




**Cultural groups  
of Central  
Arizona roughly  
AD 750**





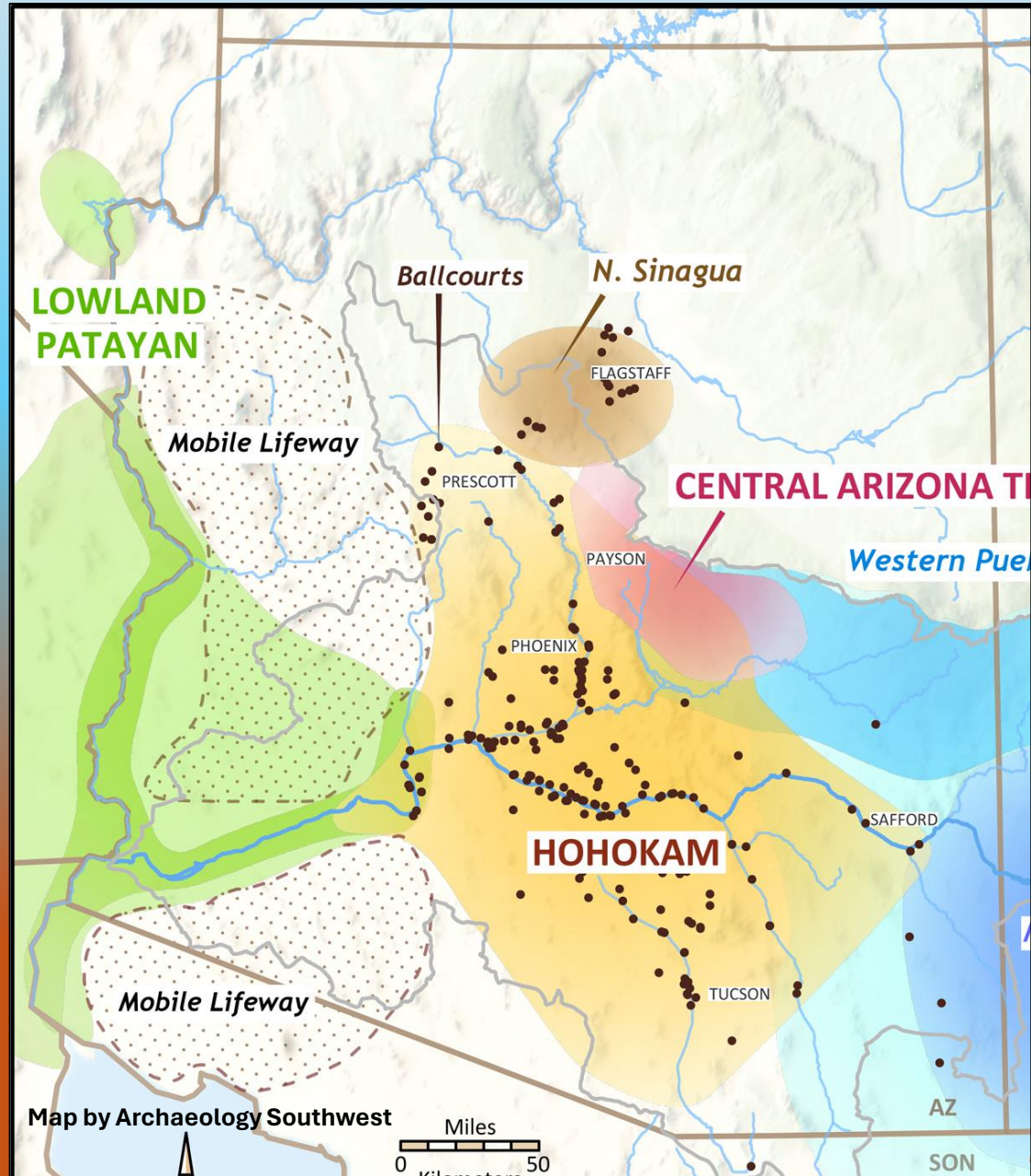


YEAR	PERIOD		PHASE	
A.D. 1900	HISTORIC	Late	American Era	Blackwater
A.D. 1800		Early	Hispanic Era	
A.D. 1700	PROTOHISTORIC		-	Bachi
A.D. 1600				
A.D. 1500	Boundary not well defined			
A.D. 1400	POST-CLASSIC		Polvorón	
A.D. 1300	CLASSIC		Cívano	
A.D. 1200			Soho	
A.D. 1100	SEDENTARY		Sacaton	
A.D. 1000				
A.D. 900	COLONIAL		Santa Cruz	
A.D. 800			Gila Butte	
A.D. 700	PIONEER		Snaketown	
A.D. 600			Estrella/Sweetwater	
A.D. 500	EARLY CERAMIC		Vahki	
A.D. 400			Red Mountain	
A.D. 300				
A.D. 200				
A.D. 100				

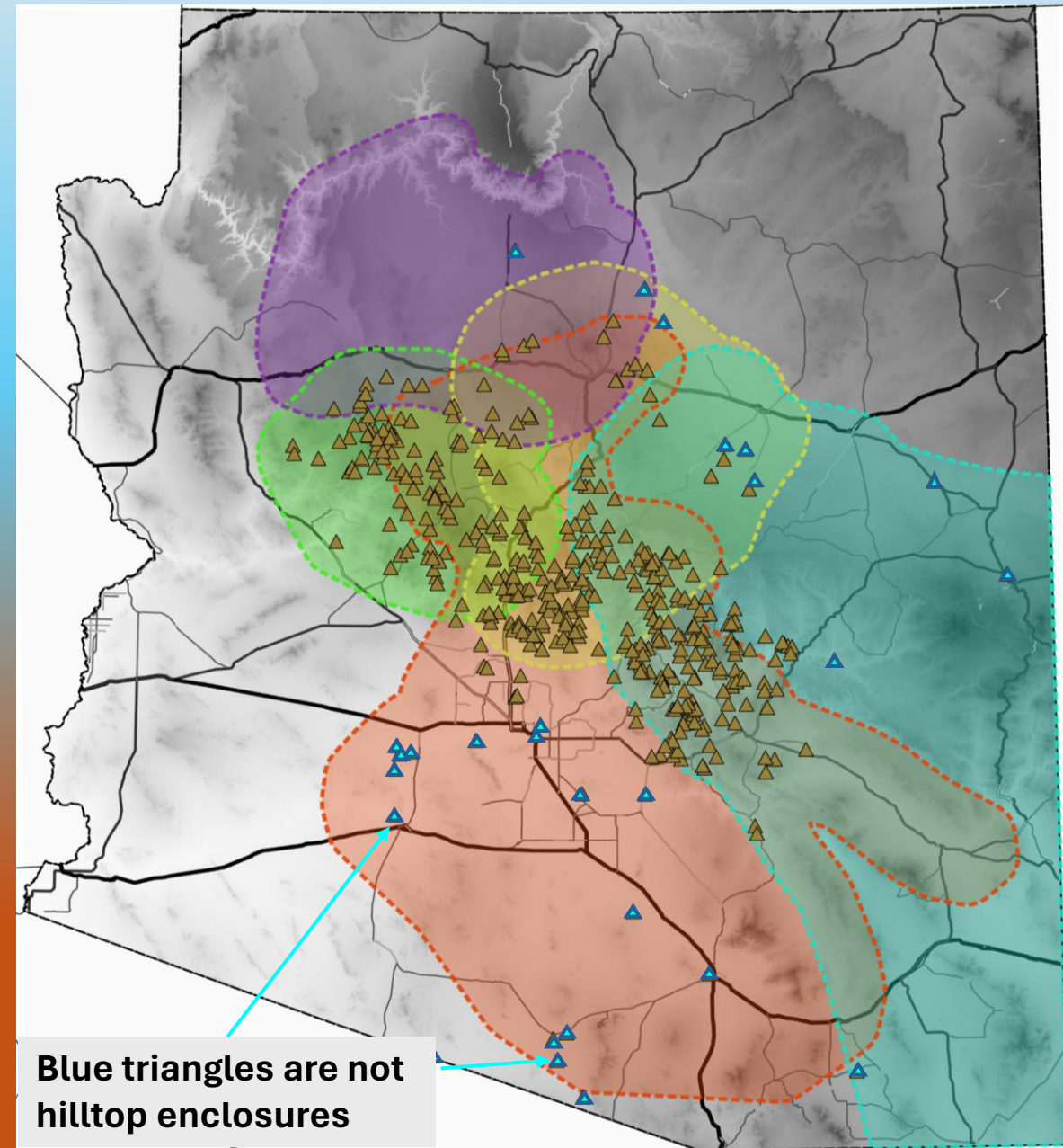
**Hohokam time-line**



## Distribution of Ballcourts during Preclassic Hohokam: Black dots



## Distribution of Hilltop Enclosures during Preclassic Hohokam: Tan triangles



Blue triangles are not  
hilltop enclosures



**Classic Period extent of Hohokam cultural area.**

**Perry Mesa in the heart of a multi-cultural area.**

