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The Great Zimbabwe and Other Ancient Ruins in Rhodesia

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the cone there was a thin stratum of grey-coloured stone, which appeared to separate the black basaltic rock from the reddish formation above.

Thousands of birds—Wilson's, brown-backed, and white petrels, prions, and cape pigeons—were seen near these islands, the northern end of the larger and the cone of the smaller one being covered with them.

On the following day we had fine clear weather. Good observations for latitude and longitude were obtained, and Lieut. Mulock made a sketch-survey, and took soundings all round the islands. The position of the centre of Scott island is lat.  $67^{\circ} 24\frac{1}{2}'$  S., long.  $179^{\circ} 55\frac{1}{2}'$  E.

## THE GREAT ZIMBABWE AND OTHER ANCIENT RUINS IN RHODESIA.\*

By RICHARD N. HALL.

*Progress of Researches.*—Before introducing a discussion as to the recent researches respecting Rhodesian antiquities, I would venture to express my high appreciation of the work of the late Mr. Theodore Bent at the Great Zimbabwe. Having devoted eight years to the study of the ancient monuments in various parts of Southern Rhodesia, and having resided for over two years at Great Zimbabwe, I have no hesitation in stating that I have found Mr. Bent's work to be both valuable and reliable. Mr. Bent experienced great obstacles in his examination of these ruins. He found the ruins to a great extent buried in soil and *débris*, and covered with dense and almost impenetrable jungle. He was also seriously handicapped by the shortness of his stay, by an insufficiency of labourers, and by adverse climatic conditions; yet he was able to sweep away many of the myths, romances, and theories which had always surrounded the Rhodesian remains. But to Mr. Bent belongs the credit of giving to this problem an entirely new orientation. This new orientation is now unreservedly recognized in the highest scientific circles of Europe as practically incontestable.

The recent researches have yielded additional internal evidences in support of Mr. Bent's conclusions, that the oldest portions of the Great Zimbabwe, and a certain number of the ruined structures elsewhere, testify to Southern Rhodesia having once been a colony of the ancient empire of Saba, in South Arabia.

The Royal Geographical Society was primarily responsible for the visit of Mr. Bent to Rhodesia. This Society, by its practical assistance and its consistent interest in our ruins, has always acted *in loco parentis* to researches in Rhodesia. In a sense, the Rhodesian monuments may well be considered as one of the specialities of the Royal Geographical Society. All South Africans will, with confidence, continue to look to the Royal Geographical Society for further manifestation of its support and interest in this direction.

\* Read at the Royal Geographical Society, January 23, 1905.

Not a single one of the hundreds of ruins in Rhodesia can be said to have been more than partially explored. Many ruins of major importance, some rivalling in certain respects the Great Zimbabwe, have never been seen save by casual travellers, while it still requires more than the labour of a lifetime to unearth but a portion of the Great Zimbabwe area. Dr. Petrie informs me that his difficulty in Egypt is not that of means, but of obtaining sites to explore. In Rhodesia we have the sites, but do not possess the means. Research in Rhodesia has always been by unassisted individual effort, and hence it has been spasmodic and without organized system.

Sir William Milton, the Administrator of Rhodesia, has shown in a practical form his deep interest in the preservation of the ruins of Great Zimbabwe. He is entitled to your warmest thanks for taking timely action to secure their preservation. But every pioneer bemoans the preventable dilapidation at many of the most important ruins throughout the country. Whole lengths of high walls are disappearing. These prehistoric buildings can never be replaced. This is a matter of grave concern for archæologists everywhere, and one that demands prompt attention.

Since Mr. Bent published 'The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland' in 1892, decided progress has been made, both at Great Zimbabwe and elsewhere, in the investigation of our ancient monuments. The last three years have witnessed the following advance in these researches:—

(1) The re-examination of Great Zimbabwe, including the unearthing of floors, passages, drains, and walls, with a detailed description, accompanied by plans, sections, and photographs, of all architectural features, methods of construction of the ruins of several ages in this group, thus constituting a permanent record of Zimbabwe which must prove of incalculable value in the discussion of these ruins.

(2) The re-examination, in the light of discoveries at Zimbabwe, of ruins elsewhere in Rhodesia which had previously been located and described.

(3) The discovery and examination of numerous and altogether fresh ruins of both major and minor importance, the existence of which was unsuspected, the reports on these ruins including plans, photographs, and detailed descriptions.

(4) My recent inspection, on behalf of Mr. Rhodes' trustees, of the ruins of the Inyanga area, including (a) hill terraces, (b) hill forts, (c) aqueducts, and (d) so-called "slave-pits," the reports on these ruins and on the relics containing plans and photographs.

(5) The comparisons, by means of photographs and written descriptions, of the ruins of Mount Injakafura district with those at Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Rhodesia.

(6) The plans carefully prepared by Mr. Franklin White of certain

ruins in Matabeleland, and also his recent survey of the elliptical temple since the explorations.

(7) The inspection and reports on some scores of stone-built villages, and stone rampart forts on hills, of the Makalanga and Barotse.

(8) The successful tracing of several additional chains of forts in several parts of the country, especially in the Motelekwe and Sabi districts.

(9) The securing of the exact locations within numerous ruins of some two hundred relics and "finds," with particulars of their associated articles, their locations on certain floors, and the associated features of architecture and construction of the buildings in which they were found,



VIEW OF INTERIOR OF ELLIPTICAL TEMPLE FROM SUMMIT OF NORTH WALL.

these buildings being of several distinct types of architecture, each yielding distinct classes of relics, both buildings and relics representing periods extending from pre-historic times to within, in some instances, but a few score years ago.

(10) The accumulation of a vast fund of expert opinion as to the relative ages and the origins of the relics and "finds," and their parallels and identities in other lands.

But while these and other internal evidences have been obtained from the actual ruins, other researches have, within the last few years, been prosecuted in various quarters, from which much additional light has been, and may yet further be, shed on the origin of the Rhodesian monuments. Some of these may briefly be stated as follows :—

(1) The very marked advance within the last few years in archaeological researches in Arabia and the Near East, and further examination of historical records concerning the peoples who are now believed to have been responsible for the oldest type of building in Rhodesia. It is now possible to speak with fuller knowledge and greater assurance of such matters, which before were largely subjects of conjecture only.

(2) These remarks apply also to recent researches with regard to the close connection existing in mediæval times between Arabia, the Mozambique coasts, and Rhodesia.

(3) The recent discoveries by M. Grandidier and other savants of the traces of the influence of Sabæans, Phœnicians, and Idumean Jews of the Red sea on the Mozambique coasts and Madagascar.

(4) A fuller knowledge of the extent and methods of ancient gold-mining in Rhodesia, as apart from gold-mining in these regions by mediæval Arabs and Portuguese, and also by indigenous people. The confirmation of the suggestions made by the late Mr. Telford Edwards as to widely distinct mining operations at totally different periods and by different peoples.

(5) The study now in hand of such of the trees and plants found in the ancient mines and ruins' area as are not indigenous to South-East Africa.

And (6) a largely increased fund of information as to the history of the once partially civilized Makalanga, or "People of the Sun"—both of Matabeleland and Mashonaland—from the earliest mediæval times to the present day, and the preparation by Dr. John Helm and the Rev. A. A. Louw of the first grammar of the Chicarang language.

It will thus be seen that within the last few years archaeological and antiquarian researches in Rhodesia have made very great progress, and the results so obtained, added to our previous knowledge, enable us at last to pronounce some judgment on certain of the distinct types of ruins to be found in this country.

*Variety of Ruins.*—It may be taken as a very modest estimate that there have been located in Rhodesia no less than three hundred distinct ruins and groups of ruins, and these, or such of them as were first discovered, were classed by all writers as "ancient," this term having also been applied to many of such ruins as are of mediæval and even of later times.

Probably it would be more correct to say that the term "ancient," as relating to the suggested Sabæan occupation of Rhodesia, can only be applied to a few scores of the three hundred of Rhodesian buildings, though later investigations may show that certain other ruins are also entitled to rank under the title of "ancient" as so understood. Of this older class of ruins, the oldest portions of the elliptical temple and of the Acropolis ruins, and probably certain walls in the Valley of Ruins, may safely be considered to represent the most ancient form of architecture extant in Rhodesia.

But there are many ruins showing distinct forms of architecture and construction hitherto termed "ancient," and once considered to be such, which can now be shown to be ancient in a modified sense only—that is, though they bear evidence of some antiquity, the manner of their construction and the nature of the relics yielded on their original floors, point to a period much later than any Sabæan period.

There exists a further type or class of ruins of certain well-defined



GRANITE-CEMENT PLATFORM AND STEPS, AND CARVED SOAPSTONE BEAMS,  
NORTH OF COUNCIL TOWER, DISCOVERED 1903.

style of architecture and construction which give evidence of erection at a still later date, and these yield no relic which, in the opinion of the highest expert authorities, can date back beyond the thirteenth, fourteenth, or fifteenth centuries of this era. To these two latter classes, I believe that the bulk of the ruins in Rhodesia belong.

Again, ruins exist, also hitherto styled "ancient," which have clearly been the work of some comparatively later indigenous people, the construction of which does not suggest any controlling influence of a foreign race. These appear to have been a crude reproduction by natives of

the older and much superior buildings in the country. In this class of poorer construction, nothing save distinctly native articles are to be found. Some of these structures are doubtless several centuries old, but others are of later date.

In 'The Ancient Ruins of Rhodesia' the authors defined two principal classes and ages of ruins to be found in Rhodesia, and these were respectively called First and Second Period buildings. From the descriptions of these distinctive styles of architecture therein set forth, I have, after three years' additional exploration work in several types of ruins, nothing or hardly anything to withdraw, but, on the other hand, very much more information to strengthen the argument, which can now be carried much further, even beyond the reach of controversy.

It is from a consideration of the type of first period ruins alone that authorities can demonstrate that the architecture of the oldest ruins was not evolved and did not originate in Rhodesia, but was directly imported from the Near East.

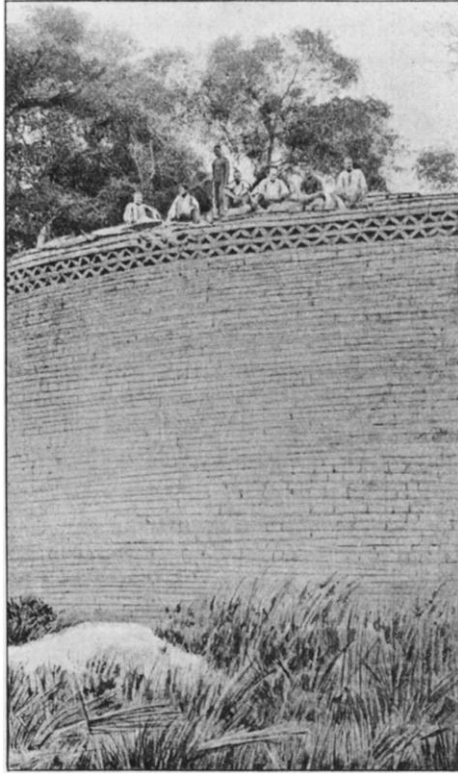
*Evidences of Ancient Civilization.*—It can fairly be asked, What evidences exist of ancient civilization and arts on the part of the builders and occupiers of the ruins of the earliest period? These are not far to seek. Looking at the Great Zimbabwe, we find them to be abundant. There is overwhelming proof in this direction in the actual walls, in the relics discovered on the lowest floors, and in the "finds" of gold of the early period, and in the character of a religion which constrained the ancients to devote such an immense amount of patient labour and such marvellous constructive skill in the plan, erection, and decoration of their temple. The Zimbabwe temple is now admitted on all hands to be the finest and most intact example of a Nature-worshipping shrine known to the world.

The mural decoration of chevron pattern, the monoliths, and also the remains of small towers on the summit of the east wall immediately over the pattern, the great tower of conical form, the platform, and the general plan of the structure, all point unmistakably to some knowledge of geometry and astronomy on the part of the builders. The application of these sciences for Nature-worshipping purposes was common to the ancient Semitic peoples, whether of Babylonia—the cradle of the zodiacal science—Phœnicia, Arabia, and elsewhere. The astronomical knowledge of the Semitic race was profound.

But whether the ancients of Zimbabwe carried out the principles of these sciences to their full extent is a matter which for the present is *sub judice*. At any rate, it is obvious that some of these principles were applied at Zimbabwe and at some other ruins, and that the ancients by these means marked off the seasons and periods of the year, and so provided the elements of a calendar, fixed the times of agriculture, and marked the festivals held in honour of natural powers. Knowledge of even the elements of such sciences could not

be otherwise treated than as pertaining to people who were largely civilized. Whatever the degree of knowledge of these sciences possessed by the architects of Zimbabwe and other ruins may have been, it is quite a moral certainty that even the cruder methods of their application were imported from the Near East, and did not originate in South-East Africa.

But there is not lacking authoritative opinion that the application of such sciences to the buildings of Zimbabwe enabled the solar and



CHEVRON PATTERN EAST MAIN WALL, ELLIPTICAL TEMPLE.

astral worshippers to observe the planets and stars, but most probably those of the northern hemisphere. The right ascension of the sun, the heliacal rising and the meridian passages of stars are believed to have been noted at Zimbabwe. Solar and astral worship as evidenced at Zimbabwe must have been coeval with an advanced form of civilization.

The older walls of the temple to no less extent envisage the fact of a high state of skill in architecture on the part of the builders.

One has but to glance at the grandly sweeping and massive walls for convincing proof on this point. The architectural features declare loudly the skill and art of the ancient builders. The even courses, the carefully selected blocks, the beautifully worked out batter or lean-back faces of the walls, so free from defects of construction, the elaborate system of drainage contemplated when the first foundation stones were laid, bespeak an art which baffles and amazes all practical builders of to-day. Such a monument of architectural and constructive skill as these grey walls present does not testify of an uncivilized race.

But the ancient builders were past masters in the science of military defence. Traverses, buttresses, screen-walls, intricate entrances, narrow and labyrinthine passages, sunken thoroughfares, rampart walls, banquettes, parapets, sentry recesses, and all other devices of a people thoroughly conversant with military engineering and defence, are the prevailing features of all first period buildings throughout the country. These, in their ingenuity, massive character, and persistent repetition at every point of vantage, astonish the best experts of modern military engineering science. The ancient builders were military strategists of the highest order. Such a demonstration in this direction do these stupendous walls afford that one's mind is forced to the only possible conclusion that their constructors must have been a civilized race.

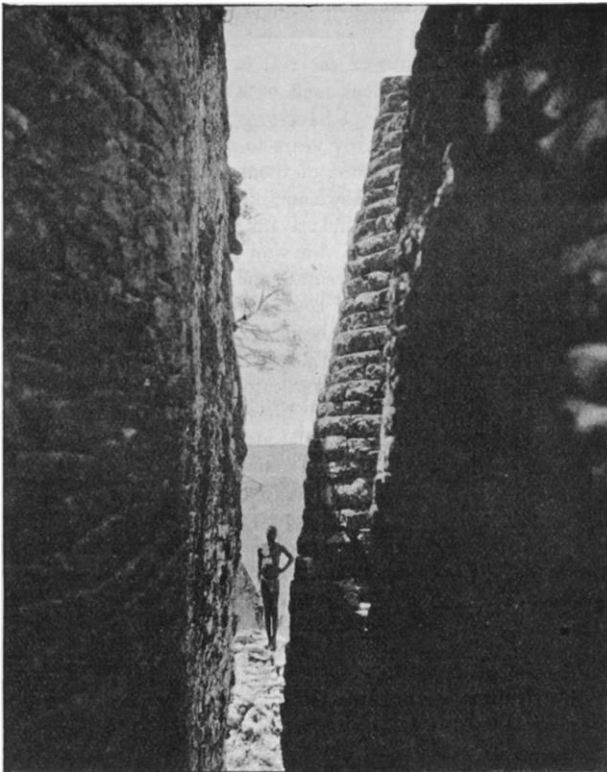
The ancient gold found so plentifully on the lowest floors afford similar testimony to the skill of these ancients. Gold ornaments of most excellent make, and so pronounced by jewellers at Home, could not have been the work of an uncivilized people. Engravings on some of the ornaments, so minute and delicate that nineteen out of twenty persons examining them would not detect the presence of decoration, bespeak artistic skill and workmanship of highest order. Tacks of gold so microscopic in size that without the aid of a magnifying glass it is often impossible to say which is the point and which the head. Work which, one would suppose, must have caused the ancient goldsmith to go blind at an early age is inconsistent with the idea of a lack of civilization. Their extensive smelting of gold and the employment of fluxes, now analyzed, might also be cited as additional evidence to the same conclusion.

The carvings of beautifully symmetrical and massive soapstone bowls and their decorations, also the carved soapstone beams, and similar articles, tell of a sculptor's art which was by no means crude.

But one turns to their gold-mining operations and sees written large in reefs that these ancients possessed a wonderful knowledge of mineralogy. The many hundreds of ancient gold-mines scattered thickly over the whole country lying between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers yield evidences of the ancients' skill in metallurgy. They picked out rich shoots, patches, and pockets with marvellous cleverness. They knew the assay value of the quartz they worked. They differen-

tiated the worth of "footwall" or "hanging wall" as the case might be. The sinking of shafts, the driving of long adits, the avoidance of the more refractory ores, testify to their skill as miners.

Taking all these evidences into consideration, and knowing that these ancients extracted some seventy-five millions of pounds sterling worth of gold—and this is a very reasonable estimate—it is impossible to conceive any other people than those experiencing the advantages of civilization, and of extensive knowledge of mining in other countries,



PATTERN PASSAGE, ACROPOLIS, LOOKING EAST.

to have carried on these operations, which were conducted on such inconceivably extensive lines.

The argument could be developed much further. For instance, the arrangement and distribution of the ruins of the first period throughout the whole country, whether as capital centres, or in districts, or in chains protecting routes at strategic points, reveal an admirable system of organization having once been in existence, an organization

by some superior race possessing an intelligence which is simply marvellous.

The lecturer, by means of plans and sections of four distinct ruins, showed the methods adopted by the ancients for fixing times and seasons; and later, by means of a large number of magnificent photographic views thrown on the screen, conducted the audience on a tour of the Great Zimbabwe ruins, pointing out features of ancient architecture, and explaining many matters of great interest, including the numerous prehistoric relics discovered by him during his recent explorations at these important ruins.

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Before the paper, the PRESIDENT said: It is now upwards of fifteen years ago since our lost friend Theodore Bent read us a paper on the interesting subject which will occupy us this evening. I have great pleasure in introducing Mr. Hall to the meeting, who has devoted many years to these researches, and will give us, I am sure, a most interesting account of them. I will now call on Mr. Hall to read his paper on "The Great Zimbabwe and other Ancient Ruins in Rhodesia."

After the paper, the PRESIDENT said: I am afraid it is too late in the evening for us to enter into a discussion, but I am sure it has been a great satisfaction to all of us to hear from Mr. Hall how accurate and how useful have been the labours of our old friend Theodore Bent. Of course, as we have seen and heard to-day, Mr. Hall has done much more, having been many more years at work, and I think what has struck me most, and probably has struck the meeting, is how history may be written without any books. By a careful and accomplished investigator, like Mr. Hall, we are informed simply by the studies of these ruins how in most ancient times a colony from Asia established itself in the centre of Africa, and how a great oceanic trade was continued for several centuries. We have been able from these ruins to learn the method of building of these colonists, their style of art and of ornamentation, their system of drainage, their system of constructing aqueducts, the character of their religious rites, and even the age in which they were established, the chronology, and the fact that they departed suddenly—all this we learn, not from any books, but from the studies of ruins by an able man like Mr. Hall. You will all wish to pass a very cordial vote of thanks to him for the way in which he has explained to us the history and the story of these ruins by his illustrations and by his very lucid account of them. I have much pleasure in proposing a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Hall for his interesting paper.

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## EXPLORATION OF WESTERN TIBET AND RUDOK.\*

UNDERTAKEN BY CAPTAIN RAWLING AND LIEUT. HARGREAVES, OF THE  
SOMERSET LIGHT INFANTRY, IN 1903.

By Captain C. G. RAWLING.

THE expedition into Western Tibet, undertaken by Lieut. Hargreaves and myself during the summer of 1903, had for its chief object the extension of Captain Deasy's survey made in that direction in 1896.

Every assistance was given us by Colonel St. G. Gore, Surveyor-

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\* Map, p. 480.