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THE
ZIMBABWE CULTURE

RUINS AND REACTIONS

by

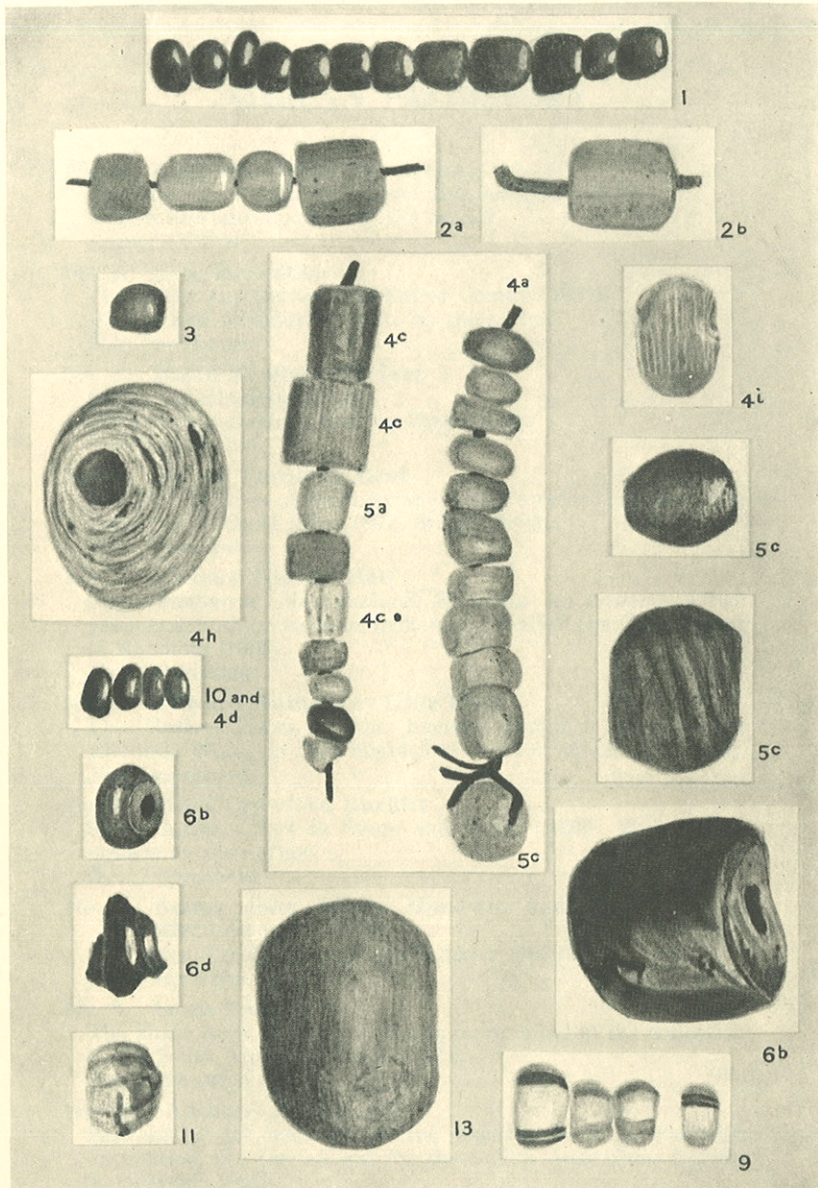
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SECOND EDITION

With a new Introduction by

THE AUTHOR



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INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

From the vantage point of 1968 it is interesting to look back upon the Zimbabwe problem of nearly forty years ago, when, in response to the challenge of an enigmatic and controversial enterprise, I temporarily suspended work in Egypt to see what contributions I could make towards its solution.

The result, now reprinted, was written after my return to England in October 1929 and published in 1931. Rereading *Zimbabwe Culture* after so many years, the thing which stands out noticeably is the progress of archaeology in range and control since 1929, with gathering momentum since the last war. It would consequently be misleading to launch this verbatim reprint, containing as it does distorted interpretation of incomplete evidence, without attempting to synthesize the Zimbabwe question as it appeared to me then and as I see it now in the clearer, better-informed, light of later students' work in a wider geographical field, equipped with accumulated knowledge, improved techniques, and fortified by radio-carbon dating.

None the less, whatever the amendments I now see are necessary, I do not think this old account of the 1929 excavations is out of date: for, in spite of the great advance recently made towards Zimbabwe's background and dating, many questions remain unanswered. For example, the identity of the "ruin-builders", and their predecessors who occupied the site still eludes certainty. That they were African is generally agreed by qualified opinion, but evidence is confused by millennia of hybridisation and absorption, as well as by our present ignorance of the physical extent to which, in whole or part, African populations have been subject to Asiatic or other intrusions. Where morphology leaves off genetics may take over.

The first step towards knowledge is classification and definition, and in these respects the archaeology of Africa south of the Equator has made enormous advances since my day, and it is impossible to review *Zimbabwe Culture* intelligibly without constantly drawing upon the work of those more recent archaeologists who have transformed the whole outlook. This review is a corrected guide for students of the subject and therefore cannot escape some essential detail on pottery and beads.

It should be made clear that this Preface is written by an armchair observer of the African scene, in touch with it only at second hand. My last visit to the Rhodesias was in 1955.

Ceylon, undertaken mainly to test ideas about Zimbabwe, have contributed to my continued view that stone building was indigenous and that 'Trade-wind' beads in general arrived from India and Indonesia rather than from the Arab world. In the following pages, and in particular the final Section 5, in which the hazardous attempt is made to connect a pre-Zimbabwe to the world around it, I have used radio-carbon determinations as a skeleton framework. It must be emphasized that these are not immutable, since carbon dating is a developing science still confronted with technical problems of radioactivity. Nor must it be forgotten that the 'dates' quoted with their standard errors are no more than a statistical probability and, moreover, dependent upon the quality of the field-work which produces the material to be processed.

None the less the consistency of results obtained from wide areas of Africa, and produced by various laboratories, is so remarkable, that it would be foolish not to accept those that do not run contrary to all archaeological reasoning.

1. THE DATING QUESTION OUTLINED

The salient differences between the dates proposed in my book for the foundation of the stone buildings of Zimbabwe, and those advanced by R. Summers, K. Robinson and A. Whitty in 1961, working for the National Museums and Historical Monuments Commission of Southern Rhodesia on a carefully prepared plan, will now be briefly summarised. The archaeological details upon which those respective dating conclusions were based are in this book, and those of the National Museums and Historical Monuments Commission (which, throughout, will, for brevity, be referred to as the *N.M.M.C.*) will be found in 'Zimbabwe Excavations, 1958', *Occasional Papers of the National Museums of Southern Rhodesia*, vol. 3, No. 23A.

1929. *Caton Thompson, K. Kenyon and D. Norie*. Major excavations were centred on two main spots, the Maund Ruins and the upper slopes of the Acropolis (Tests A1 to A4), with numerous minor tests in both areas to tie in with each other, but not directly relevant to this discussion, though participating in the general conclusions. My aim was to relate deposits to building foundations. I was not primarily concerned with the eventual history of the site.

A preliminary pottery classification, then almost completely lacking, was compiled and fell into four main classes designated 'A' to 'D' with two subdivisions in 'B'. The Maund Ruins provided a welcome feature in a flooring of hard daga-cement, itself contemporary with the walls. This defined pre-building from post-building deposits. Below it lay sedimentary soil; and this yielded predominantly Class 'A' sherds, 650 in number, with 5 specimens of 'B', as well as many iron tools and weapons,

slag and bronze strip wire. The priority of 'A' was therefore assured. It did not transgress into 'B' levels, though 'B', a post-building ware, turned up with 'A' as stated. The deposits, whether in the Maund and adjacent buildings, or on the Acropolis, followed more or less the same pattern of pre- and post-building, and it became clear that glass import beads would be the only available informants as to date. To them I attached, and still attach, greater potential importance than at that time was usual or welcomed; partly owing to early contacts with the pioneer work of H. C. Beck, partly to my training in Egypt. Since all recorded evidence pointed to a long-established pre-Portuguese import trade in beads, the inclusion at Zimbabwe in pre-building contexts of certain types dated in India and Malay by coins of the 8th to 10th centuries encouraged hope of their value in the ruins. I maintained that this view has not been invalidated by later experience, though far more technologically complex than was then realised.

The dating question at Zimbabwe thus resolved itself into the interpretation of the age-relation between objects in the sub-flooring deposit and the buildings over them. By how much, in time, were they separated? No humus line or other indication suggested any appreciable period of exposure between the two. The answer therefore seemed to impose two alternatives; either an earlier pre-building settlement, in which case Zimbabwe's stonework foundations might, on bead reckoning, belong to some period between about the 8th to 10th century, and some time during or after the 13th, when the import ceramics found by earlier investigators, showed the place to be flourishing; or, on the other hand, the objects in the pre-flooring deposit could represent the period of activity preliminary to building, on the assumption that builders precede buildings, and workmen, the world over, tread their rubbish into muddy ground. In any case, the difference between the two did not seem to me great from a chronological point of view.

The second alternative was cautiously favoured, influenced by the unexplained presence of Class 'B' sherds rightly belonging to post-floor positions, with 'A', and which could therefore (it was thought) represent the more sophisticated rubbish of the over-lords as against the 'A' ware of the under-dogs. Nearly 30 years passed before the next major inquiry.

1958. *R. Summers, K. Robinson and A. Whitty*. These excavations were the culmination of ten years' field and other investigations by the Keeper of Antiquities at the National Museum at Bulawayo and his professional colleagues, particularly Keith Robinson, Chief Inspector of Historical Monuments (hereafter referred to as K.R.), into the prehistory of Southern Rhodesia as a whole. Distribution charts of mines and ruins, their potteries and other contents, disciplined by an exact terminology within the Iron Age classification proposed by Summers in 1950,⁵⁰ along

with tentative dating, provided a wide basis for the eventual test of validity at Zimbabwe itself. How penetrating that prolonged study had been was confirmed.

At last carbon 14 determinations were available to pronounce their own verdicts and provide more or less fixed points for the essential counter-checks of archaeological method. From the last undisturbed 25 ft. of vertical deposit in the Western Enclosure of the Acropolis, K.R. got material for three, far-spaced successive carbon dates, A.D. *circa* 320 ± 150 , 1075 ± 150 , and 1440 ± 150 . These are more easily visualised if set out in tabular form based on the *N.M.M.C.*'s publication. It will also clarify the differences between K.R.'s results and mine.

Period	C.14 Test	Pottery NMMC	Pottery GCT	Associations
I	pre 320 ± 150	1	'A'	Rough-textured. Stamp-decorated ware. No beads or iron, due probably to the restricted area. (see p. 23)
II	320-1075 ± 150	2	Not identified	Change of pottery to smooth faced, plain. Iron. Clay figurines, glass beads, mainly 1 to 3.5 mm. diam.
III	1075-1440 ± 150	3	'B'	Earliest building at Z. Beads more abundant and varied, and larger. No figurines.
IV	1440 to 17th cent. or later	4	'C', 'D'	Best period of building. Elliptical Building. Conical Tower. Later types of beads.

Meanwhile Summers, trenching the Elliptical Building (his 'Great Enclosure') unearthed Syrian glass of the 14th-15th centuries in a position "at least as old as the very oldest walls",⁵⁶ themselves predecessors of the great outer wall and Conical Tower, attributed by him to the 17th-18th century, a date recently questioned on ceramic grounds.¹⁸ A carbon date of 1380 ± 90 confirms the glass.

These joint findings, including a close architectural study by A. Whitty of successive building methods and styles welded in to the archaeological evidence, are based upon admirable field-work, and seem unlikely to be substantially changed at Zimbabwe itself, unless carbon dates require revision; modification in particulars may however have to be made, since obviously more carbon dates are needed. In particular the gap between 330 and 1085 will have to be narrowed by more information. For it is the crucial period when formative things were happening in East and Central Africa.

The new evidence indicates that my suggested foundation dates of 8th to 10th centuries for earliest stone-built Zimbabwe is unacceptable. This will now be discussed.

2. THE MAUND CHRONOLOGY REVIEWED

Re-reading the archaeological evidence in the light of carbon 14 it is clear that the trouble-makers are not the beads with their 8th to 10th century prototypes, but Pottery Classes 'A' and 'B'. On a mistaken interpretation of their relationship to the overlying Maund buildings I attributed 'A' to a period either slightly older than, or contemporary with the building foundations. The true age of 'A', pre-4th century A.D. indicates that nearly a thousand years separates the pre-and-post floor material, not the hundred or so envisaged in 1929.

Reserving, for the moment, the 'B' sherds for separate discussion (see Section 3), how, then, is the chronology of the Maund to be reconstituted, faced by this radical evidence? I suggest on these lines.

Sometime, not later than the 4th century A.D., a body of Early Iron Age people, makers of Stamped-ware, Class 'A', arrived at Zimbabwe. They sheltered among the great boulders of the Acropolis, but left, apart from their sherds, no other belongings. They were also in the Valley, though not, apparently, as dwellers. Their middens (if any) are unknown, their sherds in the veld soil alone prove their presence within the limited area of the future Maund Ruins. Surprisingly, none of the other excavated Valley or Plateau ruins, nor in the lowest level of the Elliptical Building, including the virgin soil under the Conical Tower, have yielded a trace of them. Perhaps moisture in the lower-lying valley is the explanation. In any case, they moved on, and the ground reverted to the wild for hundreds of years until the next occupants, the 'Ruin Builders', took possession. Trees and scrub would have had to be cleared, the ground levelled, before walls could be built, floors laid and daga huts erected on them. Builders precede buildings, as I have observed before, and in the process the ground was further disturbed and the builders' rubbish and stray 'B' sherds got mixed with the 'A' relics in the trampled, sodden ground.

3. THE ACROPOLIS CHRONOLOGY REVIEWED. POTTERY

It may have been noticed that in the Table representing the succession in the Western Enclosure by the *N.M.M.C.*, a second later, and different, pre-building ware was identified, Zimbabwe Class 2.

Its makers, unlike their predecessors, occupied the site in daga huts for a very considerable time somewhere within the over-long carbon interval between 320 and 1075. Judged on the well-published material by the *N.M.M.C.*, this pottery, not yet recorded elsewhere at Zimbabwe, but found also in the Chibi Reserve, 30 miles distant³⁸ (see p. 23) appears in fabric, form and finish, to compose a rather heterogeneous class,

owing nothing to its Stamped predecessor. Class 2 is seldom decorated, apart from rather tentative scratchings. A shallow hollow or 'dimple' in the base is sometimes noted.³⁷ Even more distinctive are the accompanying small clay figures of humans and animals, mainly long-horned cattle, and the appearance of early, though not the earliest, glass import beads, testifying to contacts with the outer world.

Class 2 was not recognised by me either in the Maund or in the various other tests. In view of K.R.'s opinion that "There is obviously some relationship between Classes 2 and 3, but there are elements in Class 3 which are absent in Class 2" (*N.M.M.C.*, p. 186), it is likely that without the guide of an associated collection of such sherds in stratigraphical context, I classified them under the 'B' heading.

Of the four tests we carried out on the upper slopes of the Acropolis "outside the city walls", A3 was remarkable for a 24 ft. depth and the presence at 15' to 17' 6" below the surface of a pavement and stone building of unknown purpose and sealing a midden which lay below (*Z.C.* pp. 75-77). The beads from this midden became the control string for the earliest Zimbabwe beads then known, which Beck and I considered to contain types of approximately the same age as dated Indian and Malay prototypes—namely 8th to 10th century. The midden pottery was classified by me as Classes 'A' (which is not in doubt) and 'B', but in view of the discovery of the *N.M.M.C.*'s Class 2, there has been doubt if this 'B' assignment is correct. K.R., the discoverer of Class 2, has expressed the opinion that he had "no hesitation in claiming the pottery from the A3 midden as belonging to Class 2, which is the pottery of Period II in the Western Enclosure" (*N.M.M.C.* p. 193). This is supported indirectly by the find of a broken figurine of a cattle horn (*Z.C.*, pl. XXV, 4), not then recognised as such, and a hollow-based pot, both from an adjacent midden of similar relative position (A4), and I accept with tentative qualifications the diagnosis as almost certainly justified.

The lamentable disappearance of the boxes of pottery from all sources left behind at Zimbabwe in 1929 in assumed safety makes it now impossible to conduct a *post-mortem*, apart from the handful of samples in Bulawayo and the British Museum. I believe, however, that my Class 'B' was probably also present. Problems of stratigraphy are involved which can now only be clarified at some open-sided test dig on the Acropolis slopes where the relationship of one layer to another might be better observed than was possible in our relatively small vertical hole 24 ft. deep, opened up through not very comfortable-looking terrace infilling (see in pl. XXIV, 1) reached by a ladder, with a windlass to haul up, basket by basket, the dark saturated midden soil to dry in the sun. I made no claim, therefore, for any observation of possible stratification in the contents lying below the stone pavement. The presence of 'B' sherds could therefore be accounted for by a period when the midden of

Periods I and II was still open for the possible later addition of Class 'B' sherds. It is also possible that Stamped-ware sherds do not represent the *in situ* midden of their Period I, but were thrown down the steep slope from above, when the new arrivals of Period II cleared the pre-existing rubbish for their huts.

The date of arrival and duration of Pottery Class 2 within the limits set by the 4th-11th centuries is guess work, and K.R. reports a sterile stratum separating Periods I and II, indicating an interval, perhaps of some duration, between them. This may suggest that Pottery 2 people arrived in the second half of Period II rather than the first—say in the 7th-8th century. (See also pp. 20, 21.) The typological overlap between Classes 2 and 3, already noted, might indicate that Class 2 was in circulation at least until the end of the 11th-12th century, when the "Ruin Builders" of Period III took over on the Acropolis and, in due course, laid the foundations of part of the stone parapet and the south wall of the Western Enclosure, Whitty's Style P. This he attributed to the 13th century and provisionally claimed it as the earliest evidence for stone building at Zimbabwe. (*N.M.M.C.*, pp. 185, 298.)

The probable nature of the take-over from the Period II occupants by new arrivals is described by K.R. (*N.M.M.C.*, pp 186-187) and can be summarized by his statement that there was "no apparent break between Periods II and III", and it would therefore seem possible that the junction in the A3 test between midden and what overlay it, represents the period of ill-defined transition between Periods II and III.

This assumption carries incidentally with it the implication that possibly the masonry 'structure' sealing the midden (*Z.C.*, pl. XXIV, 1), which approximates to Whitty's earliest Style P of thin uncoursed slabs, may represent the work of Period II and be the first example known to date of stone-building on the Acropolis, perhaps within the 11th-12th century rather than the 13th (see pp. 23, 24). The unique achievement of the *N.M.M.C.* in securing an approximate date for the earliest known walling on the Acropolis and Zimbabwe as a whole, need not obscure the possibility that still earlier walling may exist as yet undiscovered (see Section 5).

4. THE ACROPOLIS CHRONOLOGY REVIEWED. BEADS

The beads published in *Z.C.* were a pioneer attempt to get them taken seriously as a potential aid to chronology before the days of carbon were even imaginable. My publication with H. C. Beck's appendix, at least succeeded in getting beads under discussion, usually with sceptical results and enlivened by well-argued doubts about their dating value from such well-informed critics as the late J. F. Schofield⁴⁷ and C. van Riet Lowe.²⁷

With the careful publication of the *N.M.M.C.*'s discoveries, material is now provided for another advance in 'beadology'. I am concerned here only with the pre-building beads, and to examine to what extent the introduction of a Period II at Zimbabwe, with a pottery of its own, affects the assignment of my so-called 'bedrock' series to a primary position dated about the 9th–10th centuries.

The bedrock series from the sealed midden A3.49, already discussed in regard to its pottery, lies within about 50 yards of the *N.M.M.C.*'s Acropolis soundings. The latter produced 90 glass beads from three separate tests referred to Period II. Mine to 80 beads from one.

Test I. Layer 14.	39 beads	Ten Class 2 Sherds.	Clay figurines
Test V. Layer 3.	3 beads	Mainly Class 2 Sherds but some Class 1.	Clay figurines
Test IX. (midden)	48 beads	Forty-nine Class 2 Sherds three Class 1.	Clay figurines

My results in 1929 were

Test A3, 49 (midden)	80 beads	Twenty Class 1 (ex A) Seventy-three Class 2? One hundred and sixty-four Class 3 (ex B)	No figurines though one came from comparable test. A4.
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(The respective number of sherds of Classes 2 and 3 is questionable, the 73 being based upon doubt recorded in *Z.C.* p. 79)

Correlation of these four bead tests is published in *N.M.M.C.*, p. 230, and with permission is reproduced:

	<i>G.C.T.</i> A3 midden	<i>K.R.</i> Test I.14	<i>K.R.</i> Test V.3	<i>K.R.</i> Test IX midden
Black cylinders and oblates	34	17	—	—
Yellow opaque cylinders and oblates	5	5	—	—
Yellow translucent cylinders	—	—	—	5
Sky blue opaque oblates	14	—	—	—
Blue transparent cylinders	10	—	—	—
Royal blue transparent oblates	1	—	—	—
Light blue opaque cylinders	—	4	—	—
Light blue translucent oblates	—	—	—	2
Dark blue translucent oblates	—	1	—	—
Blue-grey translucent cylinders	—	4	—	20
Blue-green transparent cylinders	—	—	—	6
Green opaque cylinders	6	3	—	—
Green opaque oblates	—	—	—	11
Dark green transparent oblates	—	2	—	—
Green transparent cylinders	—	—	3	2
Indian-red opaque cylinders	1	3	—	2
Indian-red over clear green base cylinder	1	—	—	—
White oblates	8	—	—	—
	80	39	3	48

K.R. considers that "the bedrock beads from the A3 midden have much in common with the beads from Layer 14, but Tests V and IX have produced types which do not occur in the A3 series and may possibly be older" (*N.M.M.C.*, p. 232). I venture however to think that the differences outweigh the resemblances for the reasons to be discussed. This is partly based on a discrepancy by the blues, which, with the blacks, are an important element in A3, 49. Blues are hard to define as shades have a wide range and grade imperceptibly. Moreover translucent glass displays a different 'nuance' to opaque. As this list stands only 4 out of 18 colours are shared in common, a surprisingly low proportion if the age is the same; classification of the blues may be partly responsible. K.R.'s "light blue opaques" would probably form part of my "sky blue opaques" and so forth. But even allowing for this possible adjustment, it is clear that A3.49 has practically nothing in common with IX and V and only 6 to 18 with Test 1, 14, allowing for an amalgamation of two sets of blues.

K.R., whose handling of beads both in the field and study has always been outstanding, has shown that Tests V and IX are probably older, within the elastic limits of Period II, than his Test 1.14, taking into account the relatively high proportion of translucent and transparent cane cylinders (*N.M.M.C.* pp. 227–229). His previous excavations at Gokomere⁴⁰ and evidence elsewhere, had already alerted him to this possibility, and it may on this and other supporting evidence now be accepted with growing confidence that translucent, cut-ended cylinders of various blue to greenish shades were among the earliest to witness Rhodesia's contacts with the outer world in the early first half of the first millennium A.D., and possibly before. The vogue for these particular beads lingered on into later times; for example, amongst the Leopard's Kopje Culture groups, carbon-dated to between 700 ± 110 and 1090 ± 95 for the earlier phases. At K.2 (Bambandyanalo) similar beads of the latter date are recorded from a bovine burial.¹⁵

The earliest appearance of small opaque beads needs watching. Period II bead totals on the Acropolis are too small to be reliable, but it may be worth noting that A3.49 has 42.5%; Test 1.14 38%; and Test IX 27% of the totals. On the other hand three opaques were found at Mabveni (see p. 23), which, on carbon-dating and Z. Class 1 pottery combined, is earlier than Period II. None the less it seems possible that there was a progression towards a new fashion in opaque beads in Period II, and it is perhaps worth considering whether this may not be connected with the practice, frequently noted by K.R. and others, but not stressed by Beck, of reheating and 'rumbling' the angular ends of cylinders in order to round and smooth them with an eye to greater suppleness in the eventual string.

Experimental observations have shown that both shade and density

may change in the reheating process, which is still practised as a home industry in primitive African communities.⁴⁹ It seems therefore possible that many of the numerous oblates made from canes started life as translucent cylinders which underwent reheating.

Should this surmise be verified, it will to some extent undermine the significance of a classification based on colour and the degree of transmitted light, such as my own attempt in 1929.

Returning to the Acropolis chronology. What does the difference which I believe to exist between beads from A3.49 and K.R.'s Test 1.14 of Period II amount to? The salient point in common is the high proportion of small black oblates, and green and yellow opaques. The black, so far at any rate, are rare or unknown elsewhere in the company of the bluish translucent cylinders, but they commonly occur sometimes in abundance as at Mapungubwe in Period III contexts.²⁷ A3.49 undoubtedly contains some beads earlier than the others; for instance the white opaques and solitary Indian-red over green core were both found at Mabveni of Period I: the latter has also been found at Gokomere Tunnel, of the sixth century A.D. These beads can no longer be scorned as "late trade beads". The sixth century is nearing the postulated appearance of the Period II people on the Acropolis.

The two relevant tests therefore, in spite of considerable differences both in pottery and beads, seem to represent an approach to the near end of Period II. Test 1.14 would represent a late phase within that period, whereas A3.49 belongs to the obscure transition between Periods II and III, about which information on duration and typology is lacking.

In other words I now regard A3.49, not as a midden with 'bedrock' beads, but as a rubbish shoot which received the sweepings of a prolonged period, beginning with the Stamped-ware of Period I. I do not, however, think it crosses the border into Period III, though there can be no hard and fast line. But as typical Period III blue "wound" beads overlay the pavement which sealed the midden, I think it probably was in use nearly to that period. (*Z.C. Frontispiece 4i, 4h; p. 77.*)

In conclusion may I pay tribute to H. C. Beck who, with far less to guide him than now exists, pronounced in 1929 a probable date of about 8th-10th century for certain of the A3.49 collection. This falls within the presumed span of Period II ending A.D. 1075 ± 150.

5. ZIMBABWE IN WIDER PERSPECTIVE: A Conjectural Outline

It will be obvious to those who have read the preceding sections that they have little or nothing to do with 'Zimbabwe Culture' conceived as great buildings and their contents. My 1929 mission was to deal with foundations and origins, and I arrived at a date which, nearly forty

years later, proved to belong to an ancestral Zimbabwe, at that time unimagined, of which few vestiges remain. None the less, these ancestral occupants currently classified as Zimbabwe II, are directly relevant in continuity to the "Ruin Builders" of about the 13th century onwards.

In *Zimbabwe Culture* p. 8 I commented, "The light of of history, of prehistory, has not yet dawned upon the ancestral history of the Bantu tribes." The long-delayed inquiry into some of the many difficult questions involved may at last be shaping towards an answer. A framework erected by the unceasing labours over the past years of Louis and Mary Leakey on post-palaeolithic research in Kenya and Tanzania, of Desmond Clark and Brian Fagan in Zambia, and Roger Summers and Keith Robinson in Southern Rhodesia and their respective colleagues, reinforce archaeologically the current work of the Bantu Studies Project, launched in 1966 with American funds from the Astor Foundation through the British Institute of History and Archaeology in East Africa.

Meanwhile, a quantity of uncoordinated information of the utmost potential value awaits incorporation into a less speculative pattern than that so ably surveyed by Merrick Posnansky,³⁴ in which the archaeological evidence, upon which the Bantu Project partly rests, is but one of several lines of approach.

Who, in racial origin, were the Bantu-speaking peoples, with whom the Early Iron Age complex of proto-historic peoples are presumed, rightly or wrongly, to be derived or correlated? There is no sure answer: conceivably there cannot be, for we meet the question historically too late. Interbreeding down the ages of several ethnic strains is involved. A more manageable question is, who was in primary possession of the vast territories of East, Central and South Africa when the Iron Age people arrived, and what seems to be their physical relationship to each other? The evidence, drastically simplified for present purposes, is substantial. They consisted both of Bushmen in a belated Late Stone Age survival, and the more robust Khoisan people of Boskop Palaeolithic descent, from which Hottentots are also derived. Hybridisation of the two strains for millennia gave rise, it is thought, to the controversial Bush-Boskop physical type, and this composes, along with variable degrees of negro admixture, most of the Early Iron Age human remains found in Africa from the Sahara southwards, irrespective of associated culture, and which still pervades the Bantu-speaking negroid population, some of whose ancestors inevitably assimilated Caucasoid elements; the Eastern seaboard has been open to localised intrusions from earliest times, and the Mediterranean also cannot be excluded from possible contributions. There is probably no such thing as a 'pure' African, any more than a 'pure' Anglo-Saxon.

In what heartland was the Bantu language shaped? In detail, specialists differ, but in general they support a westerly African primary

core of proto-Bantu language in the Cameroon-Chad area, about 10 to 15° north of the Equator. There is a convergence of opinion towards a secondary area of linguistic development and population growth, which includes the Katanga division of Congo, from whence the subsequent gradual displacement, east and south, the subject of the present discussion, took place.

Linguistic methods of approach vary, but Guthrie's analysis¹⁹ of the percentages of Bantu root-words within, and peripheral to, the postulated secondary area of diffusion, presents an impressive argument, particularly when contributions from anthropology, plant ecology and archaeology are superimposed upon it, such as Professor Oliver's valient synthesis has attempted.³²

From this digression archaeology can again take over. Its detective clues, dependent on sherds and scraps of iron and slag in ancient settlements, add up to a picture of people on the move under pressure—human or climatic—we can only guess at. Their iron tools and weapons would give them mastery over territories thinly occupied by users of bone, wood or stone. In addition some were cattle and small-stock owners and primitive cultivators. Their villages consist mostly of ashy midden and pulverous daga-clay, the relic of huts and floors, often superimposed, which archaeologists strive to convert into a settlement pattern: they are shallow or deep according to the length of occupation, in some cases several centuries. These, at best, produce besides pottery, bronze, copper or iron rings and bracelets, coloured glass beads and in many cases small clay figurines of women and of cattle, usually long-horned but occasionally short-horned.³⁵ The figurines have been the subject of study by R. Summers.⁵³

Iron, cattle and knowledge of primitive crop-growing, are the components of a relatively advanced standard of living, and raise questions of the sources of their Iron Age economy. To this I shall return, somewhat apprehensively, later on, when I try to place their background into some sort of possible perspective.

The migrations of these people is perhaps best regarded, not as a mass migration, but as a slow infiltration, perhaps discontinuous, of ancestrally related groups, diversifying with time and distance as is suggested by the local variations in pottery within an overall ceramic tradition. They settled, moved on, fanned out, but cumulatively headed towards the general region of the Upper, Middle and probably Lower Zambesi over and beyond. Natural growth within the spread would exercise its own secondary pressures and form splinter groups.

Another view has been advanced, suggesting that from the ancestral pool there was a single secondary expansion, perhaps rapid.²¹ Whatever the components of this still speculative Iron Age exodus may have been, it becomes certain that some elements in it had, how long before we can

only guess, assimilated the knowledge and practice of agriculture and domestic stock.

Agreement upon the chronological definition of the Central African Iron Age has not, to my knowledge, been reached. I propose here, for temporary convenience, to refer to the Early Iron Age (approx. 1st to 11th cent. A.D.; Middle Iron Age (approx. 11th to 15th cent.); and Late Iron Age (approx. 15th to 18th cent.).

There is, as yet, no certainty of the courses followed by these southerly migrations. The recent discovery of Early Iron Age sites at Kwale in south-east Kenya,⁴⁸ carbon-dated to A.D. 270–260 ± 110, and a number of others over the Tanzania borders with Kwale-type pottery but apparently of later age, suggests one route along the Malawi Rift into the Rhodesias, to which current research in Malawi may provide an answer. The Lake Victoria area is also quantitatively significant. Another area of early expansion lies to the west in Congo and Ruanda.

The immediate problem in the search for traces of these early population movements, to which Zimbabwe owes its origin, is the ethno-chronological relationship of various types of inter-related potteries. Fagan, in his review of the research confronting the 'Bantu Project', starts by isolating a salient question.¹³ "It has long been recognised that the Dimple-based wares of East Africa are similar in style and decoration to the Channel-decorated vessels of Zambia, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. Many of us had been led to speculate on the significance of the widespread distribution of these related pottery types."

Understanding of their relationship is a first need. I feel however that the nomenclature of these two pottery groups is unfortunate. 'Dimple-based' is a *functional* description, related to the convenience in a round-bottomed pot of a shallow hollow to prevent rocking.* 'Channel-decorated' ware is a *decorative* description, which may or may not include bands of stamped impressions, which latter characterises in particular the earliest Iron Age wares of Rhodesia such as Zimbabwe Class 1. Emphasis on 'dimpling' obscures the true difference with Channel-decorated pottery. It lies, not in 'dimpling', but in the frequently curvilinear incised or grooved patterns of the former group as distinct from the predominantly rectilinear impressed decoration of the latter. I have, therefore, for present purposes, used the term Channelled-ware (incised) and Stamped-ware (impressed) to emphasize the predominance of one or the other, since so much of the early pottery combines both. Form and fabric are not less important in classification than decoration or its

* This feature is not confined to Africa or to any period. For instance I published over 20 years ago excellent examples from the interior Hadhramaut, of about the 4th–5th centuries B.C. ('The Tombs and Moon Temple of Hureidha'. *Report of the Research Committee of the Soc. of Antiquaries*, No. XIII, 1944, pls. XXX, 7–11, Liii, 1–13.)

absence, but all these intricacies must be left to specialists to sort out appropriate nomenclatures. Further details are inappropriate here, but reference to some early carbon determinations on settlement pottery and their provenance is apposite since their overall consistency is remarkable and, as with beads, the earliest appearance is the significant thing.

Channelled-ware. The Nyanza Province of Kenya is the original type area for 'Dimple-base' ware, with channelled and grooved decoration, and has provided a carbon-date of A.D. 390 ± 95 .²⁶ * It spreads into Eastern Congo (Kivu, Kasai, Ruanda), where Hiernaux and Nequin have found iron-smelting furnaces of A.D. 250 ± 100 and 300 ± 80 .^{20, 30}

In Northern Zambia, in the splendid stratified 800-year old settlement at Kalambo Falls, Channelled-ware begins in 345 ± 40 . In the Upper Zambesi area at Machili, a carbon-date of A.D. 99 ± 212 has been obtained from charcoals in assumed contemporaneity with Channelled-ware.^{8, 10} This is the earliest carbon determination recorded for the Early Iron Age, and may be compared with Rhodesia's date from Mabveni, A.D. 180 ± 120 .³⁸ †

Variants of Channelled-ware are numerous in Zambia's Southern Province, which may imply the appearance from time to time of overlapping or splinter groups, some of which occupied their villages for hundreds of years. Thus, on carbon showing, Kalandu Mound was founded in A.D. 300 ± 90 ; whereas Isamu Pati began in 650 ± 90 .^{10, 21}

Stamped-ware. As a general proposition it may be hazarded that whereas Channelled-ware predominated north of the Zambesi, Stamped-ware takes over south of it; and whereas glass beads are not infrequent in the later part of the Early Iron Age in Rhodesia, they appear at all times more scantily in Zambia, Tanzania and Kenya.

In Rhodesia early carbon-dates are recorded: among these Zimbabwe Period I, earlier than A.D. 320 ± 120 ;³⁷ Mabveni 180 ± 120 ;³⁸ Gokomere 530 ± 120 .⁴⁰ All three share a typical Stamped-ware pottery.

Third Group. A third distinctive but heterogeneous class of Early Iron Age pottery has been referred to (p. 11), and plays a most important part in the chronological succession of Rhodesia. This, to select examples, is represented by Zimbabwe Period II (Class 2) in Mashonaland, and by Leopard's Kopje Culture in Matabeleland. Inyanga Ziwa-ware probably qualifies for inclusion but remains in a suspense account for lack of carbon-dating.⁵⁵

On pp. 11-12 it was noted that Period II at Zimbabwe partly occupies

* Carbon-dates quoted throughout are taken from item 12 of the Select Bibliography p. 32. Others were kindly supplied by Mr. Summers. Nearly all were released after the dates of the related publications.

† A second determination from the same stratum gave 570 ± 110 , but was believed to be contaminated by roots. As the Stamped-ware is identical with Zimbabwe Class 1 pottery, the earlier date is more acceptable.

the chronological gap between Periods I (ending 320 ± 150) and III (A.D. 1075 ± 150). Within that gap arrived the newcomers of Period II introducing a different, mainly undecorated pottery containing new forms. The date of that arrival is unknown, but a stratigraphical hiatus separates it from Period I. I have suggested that the 7th to 8th centuries may be a reasonable guess, as there could, I think, be some obscure connection with the appearance at about that time of the Leopard's Kopje Culture in Matabeleland.

It is a remarkable fact that these early metal-using peoples, with their iron and copper artifacts and ornaments, the metals for which they were almost certainly mining in the early 1st millennium A.D. or before, showed little or no interest in gold as a material for beads or other objects of adornment such as mark their successors many centuries later.

Yet it has been established that in the ancient gold mines of Rhodesia, of which many thousands are known to exist, pottery of Early Iron Age type was a contemporary of some at least of them, as well as clay figurines.

Leopard's Kopje Culture is dominant in South-west Rhodesia in the gold-belt area though not confined to it: it has been subdivided into three developing phases covering some 600 years between 700 ± 100 (Phase I) and 1310 ± 90 (Phase III). These coincide in part with Periods II and III at Zimbabwe, lying about 150 miles to the west. L.K. II and III in particular are associated with the Matabeleland gold reefs.⁴¹

Summers' definitive publication on mines is awaited, consequently evidence is still scanty. Discounting coins of various periods and countries found in dubious circumstances,²⁸ the best dating evidence for gold mines has been the discovery of sherds in mine-shafts comparable to those classed as L.K. 2 and 3. Summers has claimed that the mines relate to Period II at Zimbabwe and are therefore earlier than any stone building.⁵⁹ So far as I know, however, no gold has been found at Zimbabwe in Period II deposits. This may be due to restricted excavation, or to the depredations of the European gold robbers in the 1890's who undoubtedly carried away fairly large amounts, though, presumably, only from more accessible levels of Periods III and IV.⁴³ In any case the gold beads, tacks, wire and plating they overlooked come from superficial levels.

The material culture of L.K. is interesting because affinities may be detected in Phase II not only with Zimbabwe Period II but with Bambandyanalo (K2) beyond the Limpopo. The outline for this opinion is as follows:

(a) L.K. pottery is an aberrant type which deviated from the basic Stamped-ware tradition of Phase I, and in Phase II developed other kinds of simple decoration. It is however mainly undecorated, smooth-faced and sometimes burnished. Though not identical, these are characteristics

of Zimbabwe class 2. In form, beakers and beaker-bowls are prominent, recalling similar shapes at K2 as also does a spouted vessel. Zimbabwe Class 2 also includes a rare beaker-bowl but no true beakers.

(b) The glass beads of L.K. II have many close resemblances to Z. II and K2.

(c) Many L.K. sites are on or near the south-west gold belt. A crucible with specks of gold was found in a Phase I settlement. A connection with gold extraction is implied. Gold has not been noted in Z. II deposits or at K2.

(d) Uncoursed rough stone-walling, sometimes extensive, in the vicinity of L.K. settlements suggest pastoral or agricultural boundaries. In pole-and-daga huts stone paving stones were laid flat or set on edge as a revetment. Others supported vanished super-structures, probably grain bins. On present evidence nothing comparable has been noted at Zimbabwe at this period, but at K2 walling of similar type is present.

(e) A fertility cult, presumably relating women and cattle, is implied both by clay figurines and, in Phase III, by buried horn-cores of cattle in proximity to human burials (believed to be of Bush type tending to negro). At K2 cattle remains, carbon-dated to 1050 ± 65 , were ceremonially buried. At Zimbabwe clay figurines are a feature of Period II.

K.R., the excavator of Leopard's Kopje settlements, cites various African practices with cattle bones or horns, but disclaims any specific connections. That does not to my mind dispel the suspicion that L.K. communities, as at K2, were the traditional inheritors, at endless removes in time and space, of a cattle and human fertility cult inherent from remote antiquity to the present day in North-east Africa. Surely the transmission of *beliefs* knows no ethnic or time frontiers?

We may fairly conclude that L.K. people, towards the mid-8th century or earlier, were aware that gold was present on their land, and recognised that it, as well as pre-existing export ivory, could be bartered through middlemen on the East Coast for, to them, more desirable possessions. They had contacts with K2 to the south and with Zimbabwe II to the east, itself half-way to the sea, with a direct route along the Lundi and Sabi Rivers. It is noteworthy that these triangular, ill-understood, connections, continued into the subsequent period of Zimbabwe III, Leopard's Kopje III and Mapungubwe Hill near K2.

An attempt to probe these relationships from the Zimbabwe end will now be made, starting with Period I as a background.

In the first place what, if anything, can be deduced as to the relationship of Zimbabwe Period II to its Period I predecessors? The basic facts, collected by the *N.M.M.C.*, are set out on p. 13. One lot of people with a radically different pottery, indirectly succeeded the other after a break of unknown duration. Period I ended in A.D. 320 ± 150 and left nothing behind except Stamped-ware. Period II ended in 1075 ± 150 by absorp-

tion or take-over by newcomers of Period III who erected the earliest known masonry, Whitty's Class P.⁶⁹ No carbon material was found to date their initial arrival; my tentative guess of 7th–8th centuries would not be accepted by all. More information is urgently needed to fill the long gap between Periods I and II on the Acropolis, and it may well be that further excavations at Mabveni could supply the information denied by the meagre evidence of the Zimbabwe deposits which gave no hint of the true economic status of Period I.

Mabveni, in the Chibi Reserve, carbon-dated to A.D. 180 ± 120 but see footnote p. 20, lies some 30 map miles west of Zimbabwe.⁸⁸ It consists of an extensive but straggling kraal and midden, in which K.R., its discoverer, made five big soundings, and obtained invaluable carbon-dated material. Details from the careful publication include:

1. Pottery in quantity; Zimbabwe class I is confirmed and extended. Stamped-ware, some with zonal channelling; exceptional appearance of a triangular motif and graphite finish. Some beaker-bowls, doubtfully present at Zimbabwe (*N.M.M.C.* p. 196).
2. Iron (absent at Z.), slag, and furnace remains; iron and copper rings.
3. Three clay fertility figurines (absent at Z.); too fragmentary for further identification.
4. Glass beads, three only; one red-over-green core; two white, oblate and cylinder. These are the earliest indication at present in Central Africa of an overseas bead trade; they were evidently a great rarity amongst the thousands of shell beads. The occurrence of both types in the Acropolis A3.49 midden caused sceptics at that time to deny their antiquity. (See p. 16.)
5. Pole-and-daga hut remains; daga floors. Three erect granite slabs set on end form a revetment.
6. Lengths of uncoursed, undressed, stone walling, surviving up to 18" high, straddles a small water-course, thus forming a dam. Stamped-ware lay in the stream bed. Similar walling bounded an enclosure.
7. Agriculture and small stock-keeping is probable: bones include a sheep and the single tooth of a small female buffalo (*Synceros coffer*): this last could become important, if this potentially domestic animal turned up (as it has done in Predynastic Egypt) more certainly elsewhere.

This then, is the material culture of those elusive earliest visitors to Zimbabwe. Despite its greater age, it proves, pottery apart, to be closely similar to that of Period II and Leopard's Kopje II.

Mabveni was published in 1961 before its early carbon-date was released. Perhaps for this reason the presence of Zimbabwe Class 2 sherds on the Mabveni Spur (below which lay the settlement) and on other hills nearby, was noted but not pursued. The relationship of the two groups urgently needs to be unravelled since Zimbabwe itself failed

at this point. Meanwhile, one thing is certain; the Mabveni village itself is of Period I only: the stone walls however could be the work of Period II since they are themselves undateable, though the Stamped-ware in the stream-bed does something to invalidate this possibility; but it cannot be ruled out in view of Leopard's Kopje Culture walling. In either case it proves that functional stone walling substantial enough to withstand the weathering of nearly two thousand years was a commonplace of the time.

Though the evidence is at present presumptive, I myself have little doubt that, as far as Zimbabwe is concerned, the occupants of the Acropolis in Period II (and possibly in I also) would almost certainly have used their building capacity to construct from the granite slabs lying to hand rough stone walls and revetments for shelter and convenience of their pole-and-daga huts erected precariously along the precipitous crags.

Mr Whitty, in his architectural study^{66, 69} has suggested that the earliest type of walling, style P, in Zimbabwe Period III (*circa* A.D. 1200) was probably designed to fill in gaps between the gigantic rounded granite outcrops which form the hill, and that from this elementary start slowly developed the eventual expertise of the dressed and coursed masonry of Period IV which became the crowning glory of the Zimbabwe of today.

That may be so, but personally I would give the initial credit for the earliest attempts at building to the occupants of Period II if not to I. I cannot believe that instant masonry arrived with, or in, Period III. The need for resumed excavation is manifest, both for this and another reason.

The burials of Zimbabwe's 'great' period, from about the 14th-early 15th century to the late 17th-18th, have never been discovered. Perhaps some guidance as to their possible whereabouts rests with the summit of Mapungubwe Hill on the Limpopo,¹⁴ where fabulous rich burials of three chieftains interred in semi-sitting postures occurred along with humbler beings; or Ingombe Ilede on the Zambesi where, within the same period (14th cent.), the great men were buried on the highest ground of the locality into the accumulated deposits of a long-established modest farming settlement.

Just as the treasures of past history were revealed in 1931 at Mapungubwe by chance discovery of non-archaeologists, so did another chance discovery by civil engineers working on the Kariba project, reveal at Ingombe Ilede in 1960-1 a site of comparable importance.¹⁰ Ingombe Ilede lies on the Middle Zambesi reaches near the river's Zambian bank, some 30 miles below Kariba Dam and not far from gold-reefs across the river in Rhodesia. Like Mapungubwe it had been both a settlement of centuries' growth, and finally the burial place of chieftains. As the

definitive publication by Dr Fagan is awaited, an outline only is permissible.

The mound began its long accumulation of debris in the late 7th century. The occupants were normal Early Iron Age mixed farmers who hunted big game including elephant, whose ivory they doubtless consigned to overseas traders down-river. Their possessions were few and poor; coloured beads were a great rarity.

In contrast with this normal peasant community, eleven extended bodies had been buried into the upper levels of the settlement mound together with an extraordinarily rich assortment of sophisticated goods. Outstanding are the specialised iron tools, single iron gongs,⁶⁴ cruciform copper ingots, bars of lead and bronze, gold and glass beads in masses on neck and waist, copper and iron rings in sheaths on the limbs; and pottery vessels of unprecedented fabric and beauty. The chiefly rank of two skeletons was indicated by the M'pande conus shell, emblem of office, one of which had been backed by a gold foil mount. Though less opulent than the Mapungubwe 'gold' burials, these in some other respects exceed them in importance.

The age of these burials has been the subject of some confusion caused by the initial inexpert selection of carbon samples from the graves. Four laboratories tallied in their determinations of a date in the 9th-10th centuries, thus making them the contemporaries of Zimbabwe II and Leopard's Kopje i.e. Early Iron Age. This raised hopes that at last a comparatively early trading post had been found, handling metal ingots and currency, and perhaps already finished goods, via the Upper Zambesi, and trading them down-river together with local ivory and perhaps slaves, to a coastal entrepot of the overseas market. It might even be (it was thought) that the 'rich' burials in their unusual postures, might represent a foreign plutocracy, Arab, Malay or Indian.

These carbon-dates though consistent in themselves, did not escape challenge on archaeological grounds. On general considerations of comparison with the material culture of other Zambian settlements of the same period, such as Isamu Pati (p. 20), the Ingombe material was an anachronism; on specific grounds it seemed impossible to reconcile the essentially post-10th century Middle Iron Age character of the abundant import beads with anything earlier than the 13th-14th centuries.⁶⁰

Renewed tests on fresh material, collected under greater safeguards, have indeed confirmed, without reasonable doubt, a dating of 1340 ± 85 and 1445 ± 85 for these burials.

This dating, far from impairing Ingombe's value, increases it, for it now takes its place in historical perspective with Zimbabwe III and Mapungubwe's plutocratic burials of the 14th-15th century. It provides the most convincing evidence we have that the ramifications of trade relations, if not of political integration, were very extensive.³¹ They

implicated, almost certainly, the whole 2,000 miles of the Zambesi's course, much of it navigable, with further extensions deep into Katanga and Kasai (see p. 20), where iron-smelting may have been established or expanded by Bantu-speaking people before the Christian era. Ingombe, Zimbabwe and Mapungubwe form, one might say, a golden triangle of socially stratified régimes of peasants, artisans and aristocracy and represent the zenith of power, prosperity and material culture before its progressive decline in the 16th century Colonial Age onwards.

Before gathering together the different pieces of the scatter which composes this Introduction to the 1969 edition, two observations may be made.

Speculative studies in an obscure subject such as the long-past history of illiterate Africa, are useful only to the extent that they eliminate one by one, as fresh evidence or ideas come to hand, the impossible from the possible interpretation. Bearing this in mind I am ready at any moment to be peacefully eliminated from the present race to make bricks with too little straw. The straw is radio-carbon dating: it is a primary necessity to establish the degree of reliability any valid historical study may depend on from that quarter.

And secondly, in view of the scarcity of money and trained archaeologists relative to the vast territories involved in migration studies, it will be essential, as others already have urged, to prepare an international programme of integrated research concentrated on vital areas; Tibesti, Libya, Chad, Niger, the Central African Republic, Congo, come to mind, as well as Mosambique and Madagascar.

This said, I am left to see Zimbabwe as the near end-product of three distinct and separate historical processes.

The first has its remote origins in the pastoral and agricultural precocity of North-east Africa. The second, millennia later, was the diffusion of iron. The third, the impact of the overseas barter trade.

1.* PASTORALISM and food cultivation have, as yet, no background limits. When and how propagation of edible plants, indigenous or imported, began in Africa is at present the subject of such diversified informed opinion that it would be unprofitable for an outsider to appraise it. The Fayum Neolithic cereals, wheat and barley, which I believe to be nearer 5500 B.C. or more than the 4400 carbon determina-

* The opinions here expressed are unrelated to J. D. Clark's important review of 1967 (item 7 of Select Bibliography), which was at the time of writing unknown to me. He is rightly cautious of unconfirmed acceptance of Mori's high C14 estimates. In so far, however, as the carbon samples were obtained from carefully executed and recorded stratified painted cave deposits of some depth, containing sherds and pigments (Mori pp. 239-240), I am prepared to gear my conception of the South Saharan 'Neolithic' to carbon-dates in the 7th and even 8th millennia. Incontestably pastoralism continued in the area until the 4th and 5th, and probably later still in relict areas.⁷²

tion of 20 years ago,⁶⁵ show a long history of selection behind them, and remain the earliest evidence for agriculture we definitely have in Africa.

Up to a point the course of pastoralism is easier to follow. The herding of long-horned cattle was fully developed in earliest dynastic Egypt in the late 4th millennium. Before that, predynastic and preceding Tasa-Badarian peasants had already established, in all probability, during the 6th and 7th millennia, a funerary cattle-cult. The Fayum Neolithic settlements yielded bones of cattle, pig and sheep or goat which seem more likely to have been domesticated than appeared probable at the time of publication 30 years ago.

In Nubia, vast herds of captured cattle were hieroglyphically recorded in the early 3rd millennium. Veneration of cattle bones in pious burial was a characteristic of Pan-grave and C-group desert tribes in the 3rd millennium. Hathor, the Cow-goddess, could be invoked as 'Lady of the Desert' among her other attributes.

From whence were these revered animals and customs derived? South-west Asia, Iraq, Iran, with carbon-dates up to the 7th millennium for cattle, believed on osteological evidence to be domesticated, has been the accepted view. Current research however in Africa introduces, I suggest, other possibilities.

The evidence does not rest, as in Asia or Egypt with cattle bones in archaeological context, but with representations in rock-shelter art. These occur in a wide East to West belt, stretching across the Continent from Ethiopia to Mauritania fringing the southern Sahara and Libyan Deserts on both sides of the Tropic of Cancer. In depth it includes the Sudan, Chad-Tibesti, Libya, Algeria, Niger, Mali. It is a little explored area of diversified terrain of high volcanic mountain and sandstone peneplain, dry river beds and old lake sediments, including those of the huge vanished Lake Chad. It is revealing itself as a vast picture-gallery wherever rock formations provide a palette under cover, concerned with animals and man's relation to them as breeder and hunter. The belt is richer in representations of cattle than any other in the world: nowhere else are they depicted so accurately and sympathetically. I propose to call it the Cattle Corridor.

No doubt can exist of the domesticity of the animals. The beasts stand or lie peacefully and unafraid of the men beside them, in vivid contrast with the alert or fleeing movements of various other big game, pursued by men with bows of Libyan type.

Here, long-horned cattle of *Bos taurus* ancestry was domesticated by at least the 7th millennium: present carbon dates range from the 7th to the 4th.¹²

The Corridor's Eastern flank covers Ethiopia, and from thence, I suggest, pastoralism could have spread via Somalia to reach Kenya not later than 1000 B.C. At some stage crossing with Asiatic cattle strains

must have taken place. The population would probably be Erythriote-Caucasoid, perhaps superposed upon proto-Bushman of Singa type, carbon-dated to 17000 B.C.⁷¹

To the west of the Nubian and Sudanese Nile, in Borkou and Ennedi, and extending in particular across South Libya and Algeria, also lie areas of rock shelters of related 'Neolithic' pastoralists with artistic genius and spare time to indulge it with religious fervour.

From excavated and carbon-dated shelter deposits in Fezzan, with paintings of the highest quality, come dot-impressed sherds of Nilotic-Shaheinab type. Though the latter's lithic equipment is unrepresented in the group under discussion, some very remarkable long-distance connections are indirectly revealed by these sherds. For beads of Amazon-stone from the northern foothills of Tibesti, within the Corridor, appear both at Shaheinab and in the Fayum Neolithic.² In any case it leads one to wonder if the Fayum practice of wheat and barley growing on old lake sediments might not have been imparted to the lake-side communities in the Cattle Corridor, perhaps with millet cereals, if not barley. (Vavilov maintained that wild barley would be found in Tibesti, and the Ethiopian highlands. I do not know if it has.)

In any case the cattle herders also fished, hunted big game, wove straw or grass mats, used leather and bone, potted and presumably cultivated since a solitary flaked stone hoe has been found *in situ*. Doubtless they roamed the seasonal pastures with their animals and could have practised transhumance between mountains and plains.

From Tadrat Acacus,²⁹ along with a quantity of cattle bones and a cave deposit of cow manure, comes a frontal of the animal itself, carbon-dated to 5952 B.P. It is tentatively ascribed to *Bos brachyceros*, which is not the long-horned beast of the pictures. In general the carbon-dates for the 'Pastoral Series' which separates an earlier phase without cattle from later Garamantian chariots, range from the 6th to the 8th millennium; already selection and domestication was far advanced. The older style also has yielded sherds of dot-impressed ware in strata carbon-dated to 8072 B.P. Much may be gathered about the inhabitants of the vast belt of grassland from their portraiture. They include Libyans, Negroids, Bushmen with Libyan-type bows, and 'Mediterraneans' with pale skins and delicate features. These last cannot fail to recall the celebrated Brandberg figures, and despite distance some obscure connection seems inevitable. Could they be proto-Berbers or Pliny's Leucoaethiopes?

The East to West axis of the Corridor savannah should not outweigh consideration of the North-South routes from the Mediterranean upon which the great trade routes of historic times were inevitably based. The Fayum-Tibesti Amazon-stone distribution may represent one such via Kufra; another of these routes leads from Tunis to Bilma within the Cattle Corridor, which must have been a Neolithic Mecca to ethnic

intermingling, already displayed by the Asselar skeleton of 4400 B.C. from 250 miles north of Timbuctoo.³ From Bilma to past and present Lakes Chad must have been another line of movement for herders and crop farmers.

From there southwards across Niger no evidence is forthcoming. The postulated nuclear area of proto-Bantu language has been reached and nothing fills the archaeological void until the unexpectedly early date for the Iron Age Nok Culture of Nigeria carbon-dated to 275 B.C. is reached.

2. IRON. The coming of iron to sub-Saharan Africa was the second of its historical landmarks. On present carbon evidence, apart from Nok, it had reached the Zambesi in the 1st century A.D., Rhodesia in the 2nd, and Ruanda and Kivu in the 3rd. Earlier carbon-dates may confidently be expected. In the absence of better evidence one must conclude that knowledge of it spread south from one or all of three chronologically possible sources.

The first is Napata and Meroë (about 800 B.C. to A.D. 24). The date of the great iron-foundry mounds at Meroë is uncertain, and may, on deductive reasoning not precede 100 B.C.⁶³

The second possible source is Cathage (founded about 800 B.C.), destroyed by Rome 146 B.C.

The third source could be from the Asiatic side of which Sabaean Axum in the last few centuries B.C. may be the most likely.

There seems no reason why all these should not have added their quota to the diffusion of the knowledge of iron in black Africa, starting perhaps with cheap iron trade goods suitable for barter with primitive tribes. Meroë in particular was far-famed for iron, but all of these great kingdoms carried on a luxury caravan trade with interior Africa within their respective orbits from which their riches were largely derived. The slave trade was a feature of their economy, itself contributing to the circulation of ideas and contacts. Negro slaves in all probability worked in the iron foundries and acquired the know-how; every so often a slave would escape to his kindred bearing perhaps the chains of his captivity as well as the knowledge of their manufacture.

It seems reasonable to conclude that iron diffusion "originated" in all three places, from where it reached East and West Africa respectively. Whatever the truth may be, whatever the date, the possession of iron transformed its possessors to a dominant position in control of their chosen environment.

3. BEADS. The third formative process, due to overseas contacts, operated at a later date than the other two and was apparently chiefly concentrated on Rhodesia and Mozambique.

No archaeological evidence yet exists for pre-Islamic trading stations or settlements on the East Africa coast, by which imports from the outer

world could have reached the hinterland.^{4, 5} We know they must have existed (Appendix V. of *Z.C.* pp. 260–274 gives a still valid sketch); but possibly they were at first too transitory to enable identification.

If we are right to equate import beads and ceramics with the barter trade, first established, it must be supposed, with ivory export, we need to seek the earliest period they arrived as witnesses. Geographically it might be thought that the Kenya-Tanzania coast would produce the earliest evidence; but this at present is not the case. We must be content with the somewhat precarious assertion that the bead trade began on the Mozambique estuaries, and that its products reached the interior in the 2nd century A.D. (Mabveni). Those beads were only three in number (see p. 23), but they doubtless created a great sensation, for the Early Iron Age people had up till then never possessed or seen a coloured ornament: their adornments were of metal or shell. Only one of the three however was coloured—the Indian red; the other two were disappointingly dull white.

With the next oldest consignment we know of, about 300 years later (Gokomere) it is noticeable that the importers had learnt their lesson and dropped the whites which thereafter remained an insignificant ingredient in the parcels if present at all. Ingombe Ilede, for instance, contained not a single white amongst some thousands of coloured. The A3.49 lot of whites at Zimbabwe is an as yet unexplained exception (see p. 14).

In any case comparatively few glass beads reached the interior at any one site before about the 11th century. After that the build-up of exchange gradually reached saturation towards about the 15th–16th centuries. The situation is reflected in a comparable increase in the volume of gold exports, already substantial in Masudi's day, according to the information he picked up from a Sirafian ship's crew travelling from Oman to Kanbalu (Madagascar) in A.D. 916.

The obvious point I wish to make is the impact however slender of an alien and ancient civilisation, whether Indian, Malaysian or South Arabian, thus introduced to the inland native communities; an impact which lies at the heart of Zimbabwe Culture. At the start contacts would be established only along the coast, where mixed Asiatics met natives ready to make a deal, but with increasing familiarity and confidence the exchange and mart would push inland to fresh elephant hunting grounds and gold reefs, up navigable rivers, and local assemblages of a Swaheli type would become a familiar feature in many districts. New ideas, new practices, new blood were introduced to an extent still under discussion and research.

In *Zimbabwe Culture* p. 101, I advanced the possibility that the famous Rhodesian buildings, though native creations, may have owed something to coastal Islamic influences. I would now rather doubt if

Arabian traders (as distinct from Islamic) were ever established on the Mozambique coast or rivers for, from a trader's point of view, it had been an age-old Indian, Indonesia or Malay preserve, operating, I suggest, on definite mining concessions in Rhodesia.

I am as confident as ever that the great buildings as well as the lesser ones, are African in conception and execution, remembering that their builders, even at their eventual best, though excellent dry stonemasons, were never architects. Their craft, I believe, developed at Zimbabwe from very small fragmented beginnings in the Early Iron Age of Period II (or possibly I) and grew gradually in building skill and size in Periods III and IV under the stimulus of expanding ivory and gold exports and the import of desirable articles of which glass beads and ceramic fragments alone survive. This expansion would be the expression of a stable, centralised, administrative system which reached its zenith in the 16th and 17th centuries under the energy and power of an autocratic and paramount dynasty centred at Zimbabwe, but controlling through semi-independent provincial chieftains, such as those at Ingombe and Mapungubwe, the extensive area of the "Golden Triangle", and perhaps beyond.

In conclusion I must express my appreciation of the help given by three experts in the field of African archaeological research, Roger Summers, Keith Robinson, and Brian Fagan, upon whose publications and correspondence I have drawn so freely. Their comments on the script of this Preface-Review gently steered me away from some pitfalls, while leaving me at liberty to fall into others under the guidance of my own point of view or opinion. No greater help can be imagined, or thanked more warmly.

Dorothy de Navarro's trained eye has constantly helped me to subdue an unruly text, and I am deeply grateful to her for the loan of it.

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