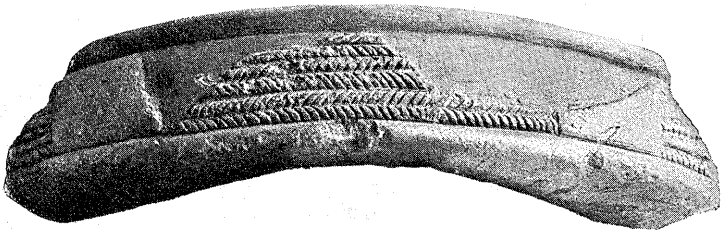
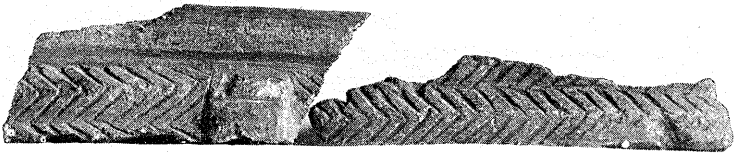


proto-Arabian type of lettering used in the earlier Sabæan inscriptions, specimens of which I here give, and also with some curious rock carvings found by Mr. A. A. Anderson in Bechuanaland. It was common in Phœnician and early Greek vases to have an



SOAPSTONE BOWL WITH CORD PATTERN

inscription or dedication round the lip; *vide*, for example, a *lebes* in the British Museum from a temple at Naucratis with a dedication to Apollo on the rim, and used, like the one before us, in temple service. The circles on the birds also appear to have



FRAGMENT OF SOAPSTONE BOWL

a line across, like the fourth letter given as illustrating the early Arabian alphabet.

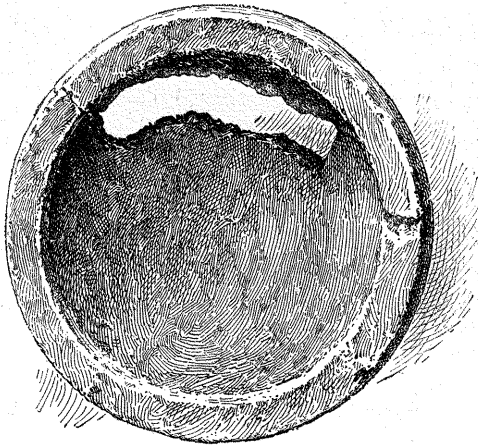
Of the other fragments of bowls we found, one has a well-executed cord pattern running round it, another a herring-bone pattern alternating with what

would appear to be a representation of the round tower ; and besides these there are several fragments of



PLAIN SOAPSTONE BOWL WITH HOLE

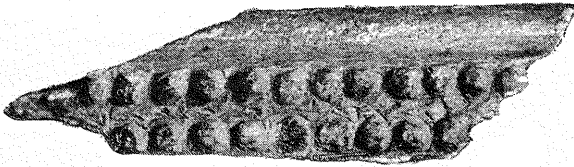
what have been perfectly plain bowls, notably one large one, the diameter of which is outside 2 feet and



PLAIN SOAPSTONE BOWL

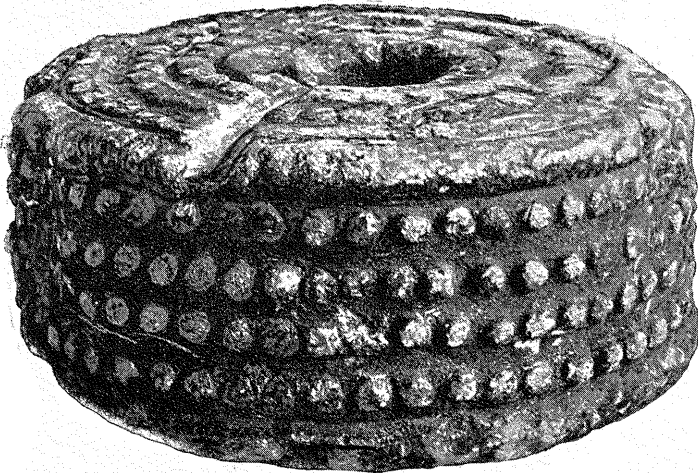
inside 1 foot 8 inches. The edges of this bowl are very carefully bevelled and the bottom rounded, and

it is a very fine specimen of workmanship, the whole of which we were able to recover saving a portion of



FRAGMENT OF BOWL WITH KNOBS

the bottom. Another plain bowl has a round hole pierced through its side, and another fragment is

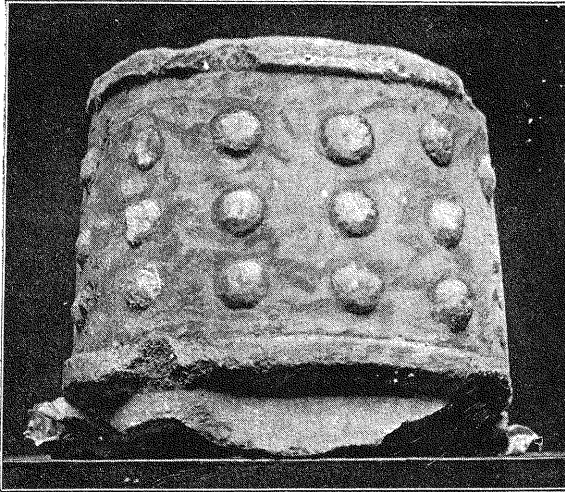


SOAPSTONE CYLINDER FROM ZIMBABWE

made of a reddish sort of soapstone with oxide of iron in it. The tool marks on these bowls point to very fine instruments having been used in carving.

them. Altogether these bowls are amongst the most conspicuous of our finds, and the fact they all came from the proximity of the temple would undoubtedly seem to prove that they were used in temple service, broken by subsequent occupants of the ruins, and the fragments thrown outside.

The next find from Zimbabwe which we will



OBJECT FROM TEMPLE OF PAPHOS. CYPRUS

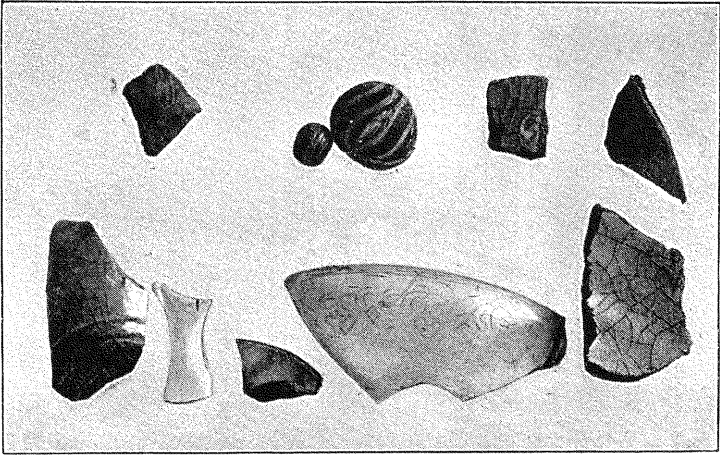
discuss is the circular soapstone object with a hole in the centre, which at first is suggestive of a quern ; but being of such friable material such could not have been the case. It is decorated round the side and on the top with rings of knobs, four on the side and four on the top ; from the central hole a groove has been.

cut to the side, and the whole is very well finished off. This thing is 2 feet 2 inches in circumference. We also found portions of a smaller bowl with the same knob pattern thereon. The use of this extraordinary soapstone find is very obscure. Mr. Hogarth calls my attention to the fact that in the excavations at Paphos, in Cyprus, they found a similar object, similarly decorated, which they put down as Phœnician. It is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, and is a cylindrical object of coarse white marble six inches in diameter and about four and three-quarter inches high. It is studded with round projecting studs left in relief on the marble, resembling in general disposition those on our soapstone find, and there is no question about the similarity of the two objects. They remind one of Herodian's description of the sacred cone in the great Phœnician temple of the sun at Emesa, in Syria (Herodian, bk. v. § 5), which was adorned with certain 'knobs or protuberances,' a pattern supposed by him to represent the sun, and common in phallic decorations.

In the vicinity of the temple we also came across some minor objects very near the surface, which did not do more than establish the world-wide commerce carried on at the Great Zimbabwe at a much more recent date, and still by the Arabians—namely, a few fragments of Celadon pottery from China, of Persian ware, an undoubted specimen of Arabian glass, and beads of doubtful provenance, though one of them may be considered as Egyptian of the

Ptolemaic period. Glass beads almost of precisely the same character—namely, black with white encircling lines—have come from ancient tombs at Thebes, in Bœotia, and are to be found in almost every collection of Egyptian curiosities.

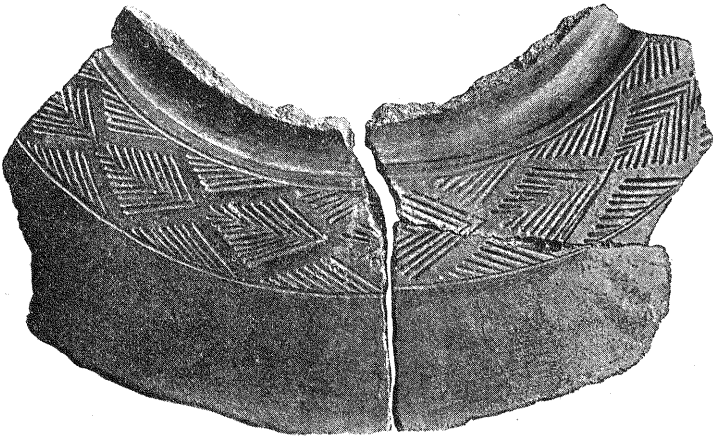
The pottery objects must have been brought here



GLASS BEADS, CELADON POTTERY, PERSIAN POTTERY, AND  
ARABIAN GLASS

by Arabian traders during the middle ages, probably when the Monomatapa chiefs ruled over this district and carried on trade with the Arabians for gold, as European traders do now with objects of bright appearance and beads. Similar fragments have been found by Sir John Kirk in the neighbourhood of Quiloa, where in mediæval times was a settlement of

Arabs who came from the Persian Gulf, forming an hereditary intercourse between the Arabs and the east coast of Africa until the Portuguese found them there and drove them away three centuries ago. It is impossible that a collection of things such as these could have been brought together by any but a

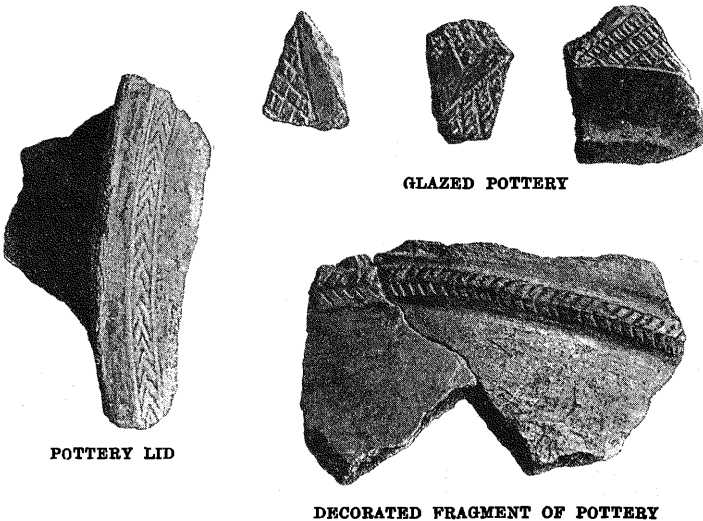


FRAGMENT OF BOWL OF GLAZED POTTERY

highly commercial race during the middle ages, and the Arabians alone had this character at the time in question.

Considering the large quantity of soapstone fragments, bowls, and other things, the finds of pottery of a good period at Zimbabwe were not many. Noticeably one piece of pottery is exceedingly excellent, worthy of a good period of classic Greek ware. The pattern round it is evidently stamped on, being

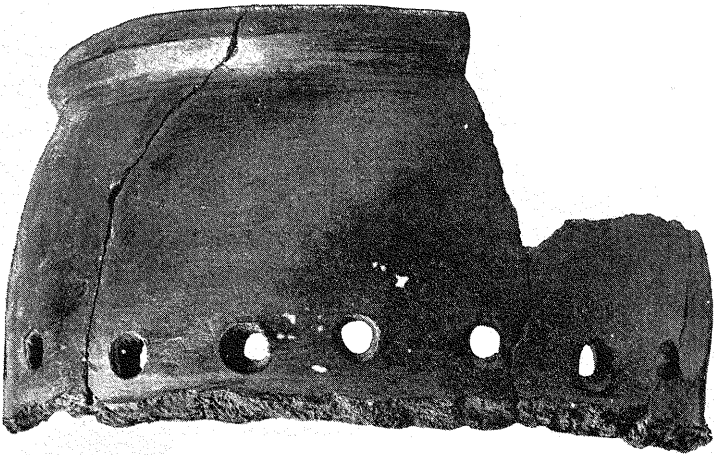
done with such absolute accuracy. It is geometric, as all the patterns on the pottery are. It is not hand-made pottery, for on the back of it are distinct signs of a wheel. Then there are some black fragments with an excellent glaze and bevel, also fragments of pottery lids, and a pottery stopper, pointing to the fact that the old inhabitants of Zimbabwe had reached an



advanced state of proficiency in ceramic art. Fragments of one pot with holes neatly bored round the neck remind one of water-coolers still found in the East. Besides the fragments of pots, we found an enormous number of small circular objects of pottery, which may have been used as spindle-whorls, though most of them show no signs of wear, and some of

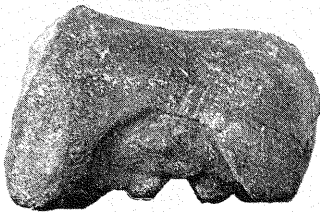


them having rude decorations thereon. The only fragment which shows an attempt at the use of pot-



TOP OF POTTERY BOWL

tery for other than domestic purposes is a sow which we found in a kitchen midden just outside the large



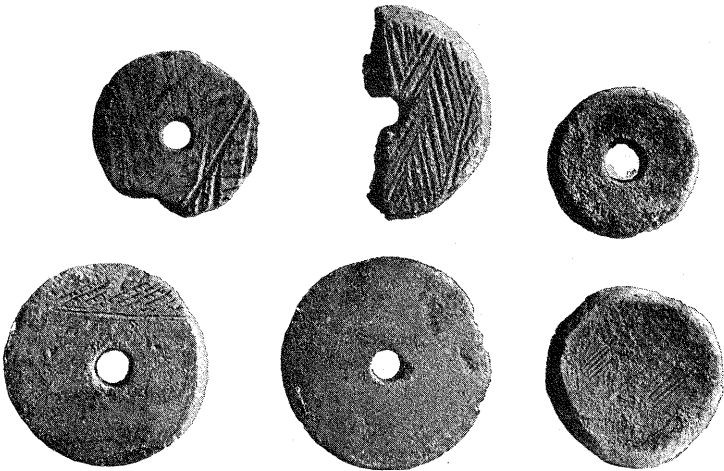
POTTERY SOW



POTTERY WHORLS

circular building on the plain, with two phalli near it. This animal compares well with the rude

attempts to depict animal life found in prehistoric excavations on the Mediterranean. Whether it has any religious significance or not is, of course, only conjecture, but it is curious that Ælian tells us that the Egyptians 'sacrifice a sow to the moon once a year;' and Herodotus says 'the only deities to whom the Egyptians are permitted to offer a pig are the moon

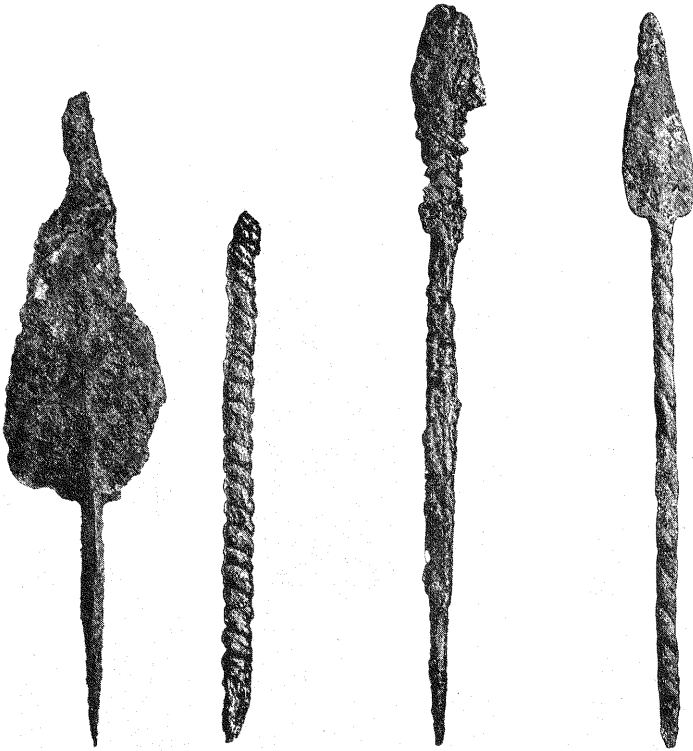


POTTERY WHORLS

and Bacchus.' All that the pottery proves to us is that the ancient inhabitants of Zimbabwe had reached a high state of excellence in the manufacture of it, corresponding to a state of ceramic art known only to the rest of the world in classical times.

Concerning the bronze and iron weapons and implements which we found at Zimbabwe it is very difficult to say anything definite. In the first place,

these ruins have been overrun for centuries by Kaffir races with a knowledge of iron-smelting, who would at once utilise fragments of iron which they found for



WEAPONS

their own purposes ; secondly, the shapes and sizes of arrows and spear-heads correspond very closely to those in use amongst the natives now. As against this it must be said that there are many iron objects amongst

our finds which are quite unlike anything which ever came out of a Kaffir workshop, and the patterns of the assegai, or spear-head, and arrow are probably of great antiquity, handed down from generation to



IRON BELL

generation to the present day. Amongst the most curious of our iron finds at Zimbabwe certainly are the double iron bells, of which we found three in the neighbourhood of the temple on the fortress. Similar bells are found now on the Congo. There are some

in the British Museum, and also in the Geographical Society's Museum at Lisbon, which came from San Salvador, on the Congo, and are called Chingongo,



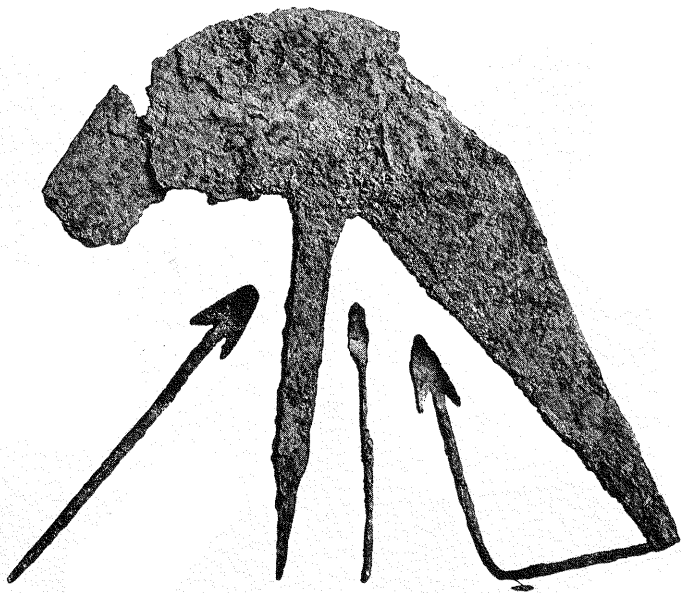
HALF OF AN IRON BELL



BRONZE  
SPEAR-HEAD

whereas amongst the present race inhabiting Mashonaland the knowledge of this bell does not exist, nor did it presumably exist in Dos Santos' days, who

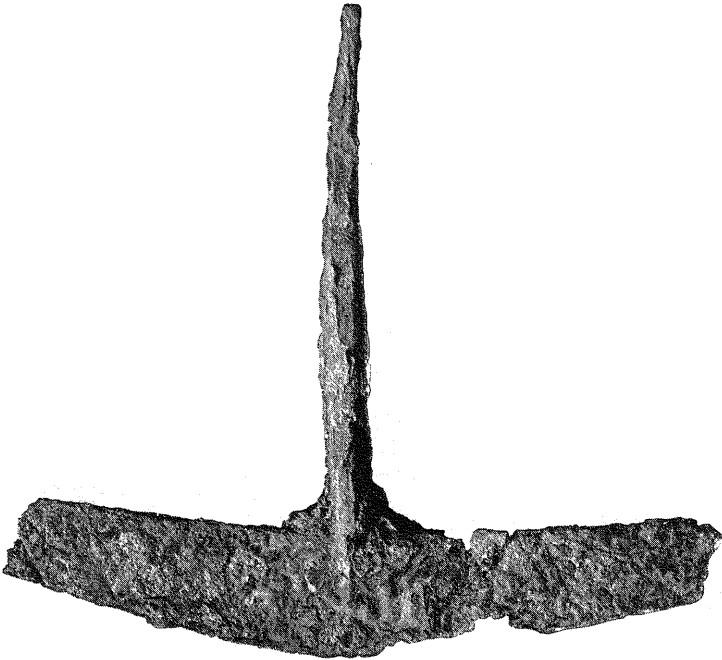
enumerates all the Kaffir instruments which he saw ; and he would assuredly have mentioned these bells had they existed there in his days 300 years ago. We must, therefore, conclude that either these bells are ancient, and were used by the old inhabitants of these ruins, the



BATTLE-AXE AND ARROWS

traditional form of which has been continued amongst the negroes of the Congo, or that some northern race closely allied to the Congoraces swept over this country at some time or another, and have left this trace of their occupation. The barbed bronze spear-head we found under a mass of fallen rock close to the entrance

to the fortress. This again finds a parallel in weapons which come from much farther north in Nubia, though its execution is finer than any of that class which has come before my notice. The shape of this weapon



BATTLE-AXE

is exactly the same as that of the unbarbed spear-head, which has a coating of gold on it,<sup>1</sup> and shows the same peculiarity of make as the assegai-heads still made by the natives—namely, the fluting which

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* illustration, p. 216.

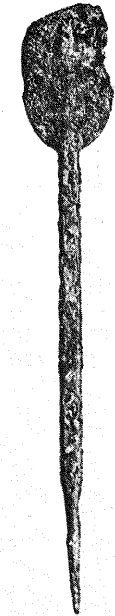
runs down the centre being reversed on either side. Then there are the tools—chisels, an adze, pincers, spades, &c., which are quite unknown to the Kaffir races which now inhabit this country. Still it is possible that all these things may have been made during the time of the Monomatapa, who evidently had reached a higher pitch of civilisation than that existing to-day; so that I am inclined to set aside the iron implements as pertaining to a more recent occupation, though at the same time there is no actual reason for not assigning to them a remoter antiquity.

The finds in the fortress of Zimbabwe which touch upon, perhaps, the most interesting topic of all are those which refer to the manufacture of gold. Close underneath the temple in the fortress stood a gold-smelting furnace made of very hard cement of powdered granite, with a chimney of the same material, and with neatly bevelled edges. Hard by, in a chasm between two boulders, lay all the rejected casings from which the gold-bearing quartz had been extracted by exposure to heat prior to the crushing, proving beyond a doubt that these mines, though not immediately on a gold reef, formed the capital of a gold-producing people who had chosen this hill fortress with its granite boulders for their capital owing to its peculiar strategic advantages. Gold reefs and old workings have been lately discovered about twelve miles from Zimbabwe, and it was from these that their auriferous quartz was doubtless obtained.

Near the above-mentioned furnace we found many

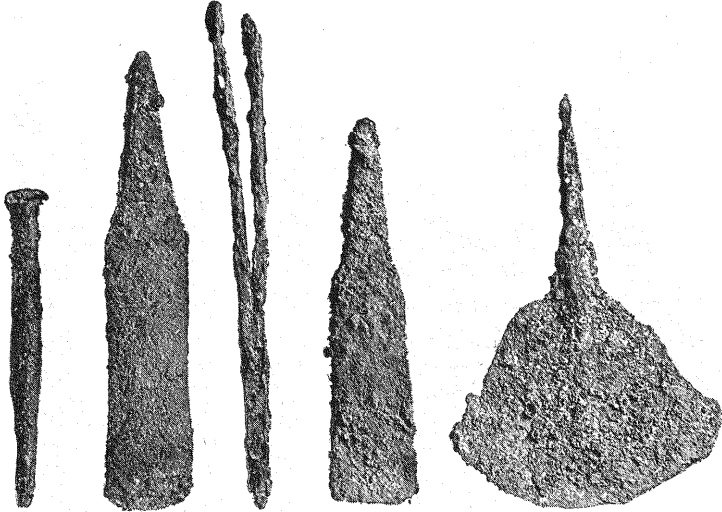


little crucibles, of a composition of clay, which had been used for smelting the gold, and in nearly all of them still exist small specks of gold adhering to the glaze formed by the heat of the process. Also we found several water-worn stones, which had been used as burnishers, which was evidenced by the quantity of gold still adhering to them; and in the adjoining cave we dug up an ingot mould of soapstone of a curious shape, corresponding almost exactly to an ingot of tin found in Falmouth Harbour, which is now in the Truro Museum, and a cast of which may be seen at the School of Mines in Jermyn Street. This ingot of tin was undoubtedly made by Phœnician workmen, for it bears a punch mark thereon like those usually employed by workmen of that period; and Sir Henry James, in his pamphlet describing it, draws attention to the statement of Diodorus, that in ancient Britain ingots of tin were made

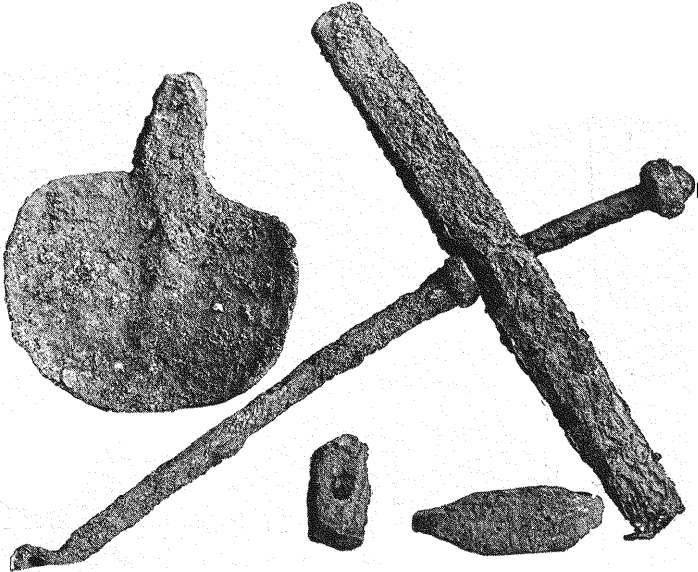


GILT  
SPEAR-HEAD

*ἀστραγάλων ῥυθμοῦς*, or of the shape of astragali or knuckle-bones; and the form of both the ingots is such that the astragalus may easily be used as a rough simile to describe them. Probably this shape of ingot was common in the ancient world, for Sir John Evans, K.C.B., has called my attention to an ingot mould somewhat similar in form, found in Dalmatia, and the Kaffirs far north of the Zambesi

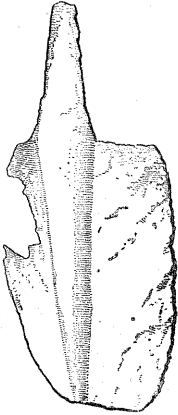


TOOLS



TOOLS

now make ingots of iron of a shape which might easily be supposed to have been derived from the astragalus; but at the same time the finding of two ingots in two remote places where Phœnician influence has been proved to be so strong is very good presumptive evidence to establish the fact that the gold workers of ancient Zimbabwe worked for the Phœnician market. A small soapstone object with a hole in the centre would appear to have been a sort of tool used for beating gold.



ANCIENT SPADE

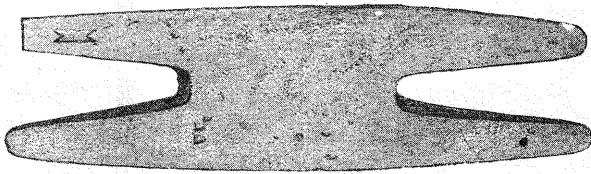
An interesting parallel to the ancient gold workings in Mashonaland is to be found by studying the account of the ancient gold workings at the Egyptian gold mines in Wadi Allaga, also given us by Diodorus.



SOAPSTONE INGOT MOULD. ZIMBABWE

There, too, the gold was extracted from the quartz by a process of crushing and washing, as we can see from

the process depicted in the paintings on the Egyptian tombs; and in any gold-producing quarter of Masho-



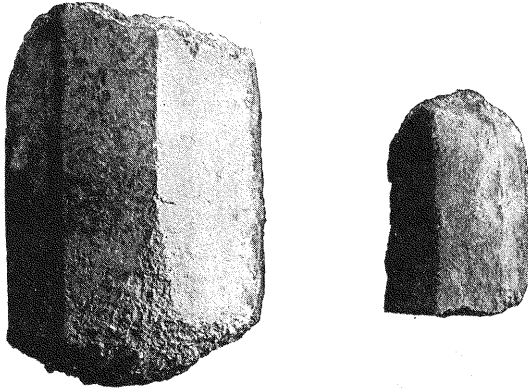
INGOT OF TIN FOUND IN FALMOUTH HARBOUR

naland, near old shafts and by the side of streams, innumerable crushing-stones are still to be seen, used anciently for a like purpose, when slave labour was employed. Diodorus tells us of the gangs of slaves employed, of the long dark shaft into which they descended, of which a countless number are scattered still over Mashonaland; and after describing the process of washing and crushing he concludes: 'They then put the gold into earthen crucibles well closed with clay, and leave it in a furnace for five successive days and nights, after which it is suffered to cool. The crucibles are then opened, and nothing is found in them but the pure gold a little diminished in quantity.' Hence it is obvious that the process employed by the ancient Egyptians for crushing, smelting, and forming into ingots was exactly the same as that employed by the ancient inhabitants of Zimbabwe; which fact, when



SOAPSTONE  
OBJECT

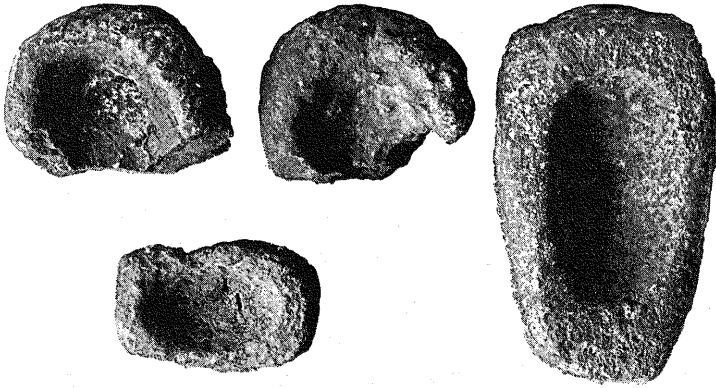
taken in conjunction with the vast amount of evidence of ancient cult, ancient construction, and ancient art, is, I think, conclusive that the gold-fields of Mashonaland formed one at least of the sources from which came the gold of Arabia, and that the forts and towns which ran up the whole length of this gold-producing country were made to protect their men engaged in this industry. The



BEVELLED EDGE OF GOLD-SMELTING FURNACE

cumulative evidence is greatly in favour of the gold diggers being of Arabian origin, before the Sabæo-Himyaritic period in all probability, who did work for and were brought closely into contact with both Egypt and Phœnicia, penetrating to many countries unknown to the rest of the world. The Bible is full of allusions to the wealth of Arabia in gold and other things. Ezekiel tells us that the Sabæans were merchants in gold for the markets of Tyre. Aristeas

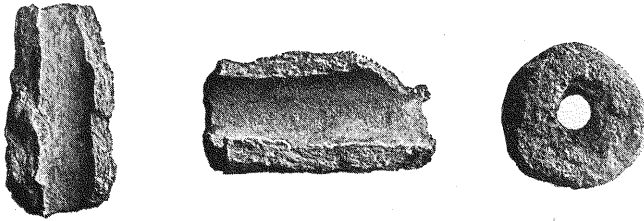
tells us that a large quantity of spices, precious stones, and gold was brought to Rome *διὰ τῶν Ἀράβων*, not from Arabia, but by the Arabians. The testimony of all travellers in Arabia is to the effect that little or no gold could have come from the Arabian peninsula itself; it is, therefore, almost certain that the country round Zimbabwe formed one at least of the spots from which the '*Thesaurus*



CRUCIBLES FOR SMELTING GOLD FOUND AT ZIMBABWE

*Arabum*' came. Egyptian monuments also point to the wealth of the people of Punt, and the ingots of gold which they sent as tribute to Queen Hatasou. No one, of course, is prepared to say exactly where the kingdom of Punt was; the consensus of opinion is that it was Yemen, in the south of Arabia. But suppose it to be there, or suppose it to be on the coast of Africa, opposite Arabia, or even suppose it to be Zimbabwe itself, the question is the same:

where did they get the large supply of gold from, which they poured into Egypt and the then known world? In Mashonaland we seem to have a direct answer to this question. It would seem to be evident that a prehistoric race built the ruins in this country, a race like the mythical Pelasgi who inhabited the shores of Greece and Asia Minor, a race



FRAGMENTS OF POTTERY BLOW-PIPES FROM FURNACE

like the mythical inhabitants of Great Britain and France who built Stonehenge and Carnac, a race which continued in possession down to the earliest dawnings of history, which provided gold for the merchants of Phœnicia and Arabia, and which eventually became influenced by and perhaps absorbed in the more powerful and wealthier organisations of the Semite.

## CHAPTER VII

*THE GEOGRAPHY AND ETHNOLOGY OF THE  
MASHONALAND RUINS*

THE ancient geography of the east coast of Africa is a subject fraught with difficulties on all sides. To begin with, our authorities are not only meagre, but they are men who had no practical knowledge of the subject, and who knew next to nothing of the vast extent of commercial operations which were going on outside the limits of the Red Sea. The written accounts come to us from either an Alexandrian or Roman source, whereas the practical knowledge possessed by the Arabs themselves of these outer waters is lost to us for ever. It was probably the monopolising policy of the Semitic nations which induced them to conceal from other countries the whereabouts of their commercial relations, which on the one hand extended outside the pillars of Hercules to the Canaries and Great Britain, and on the other hand outside the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb to India, China, and the east coast of Africa. Of these two directions the voyage to



Great Britain was undoubtedly the most adventurous, the navigation of the Indian Ocean with a knowledge of the monsoons, which the Arabian who lived on it must have had from time immemorial, presenting far less difficulty. Hippalus has the credit of introducing the monsoons to Western civilisation, but surely a seafaring race like the Arabians, who lived on the spot, must have known all about them long before his day; and just as they were reticent on the subject of their voyages, so were they reticent on the subject of the localities from which their merchandise came. The knowledge given us by Marinus of Tyre, by the anonymous author of the 'Periplus of the Red Sea,' by Ptolemy, by Pliny, and others, was obviously not the knowledge possessed by the traders of the world, for they do not even attempt to elucidate the question of where the precious commodities came from which they enumerate.

Ptolemy's information is provokingly vague, and he candidly admits in his first chapter that it was obtained from a merchant of Arabia Felix; he gives us such names as 'Cape Aromata, supposed to be Guardafui, outside the straits, the inland province of Azania and Rhapta. The only thing we gather from him is that they were trade emporia, and therefore places of considerable importance.

The 'Periplus' enters into further details, and mentions that the Arab settlement at Rhapta was subject to the sovereign of Maphartes, a dependency of Sabæa or Yemen. Dean Vincent imagines Rhapta

to have been  $10^{\circ}$  south of the equator, that is to say, near Quiloa, where again an Arab settlement continued right down into the middle ages. The 'Periplus' further tells how Muza, Aden, and other points near the mouth of the Red Sea were emporia for the goods brought from outside by the Arabians and then transferred to Egyptian and Phœnician trading vessels.

Further south the 'Periplus' mentions Prasum as the farthest point known to the author; and here he says 'an ocean curves towards sunset and, stretching along the southern extremities of Ethiopia, Libya, and Africa, amalgamates with the western sea.' All this probably the author of the 'Periplus' got from the Arabs, just as the Portuguese got all their information from the same source thirteen centuries later, and just as Herodotus got his vague story of the circumnavigation of Africa six centuries before, when he tells us how the Phœnicians in the service of Pharaoh Necho, B.C. 600, 'as they sailed round Africa had the sun on their right hand.'

From these and other statements in Marinus of Tyre, Pliny, and others, it is obvious that the waters of East Africa were known only to the Greeks and Romans vaguely through a Phœnician and Arabian source. The early legendary stories of Greece tell of a voyage fraught with every danger in search of gold. The celebrated Argonautic expedition has given commentators an immense amount of trouble to reconcile its conflicting statements—namely, that it went

to the extremities of the Euxine, entered the great stream ocean that went round the world, and returned by the Nile and Libya. It certainly appears to me simple to suppose that it is merely the mutilation of some early Phœnician story made to suit the existing circumstances of the people to whom the story was narrated. The Bible gives us the account of King Solomon's expedition undertaken under Phœnician auspices; in fact, the civilised world was full of accounts of such voyages, told us, unfortunately, in the vaguest way, owing doubtless to the fact that those who undertook them guarded carefully their secret.

From an Egyptian source also certain knowledge may be gained, though the Egyptians themselves would appear never to have carried their commerce outside the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, but to have met at the port of Adule, at the south of the Red Sea, Arabian merchants who did so. Now in the reign of Queen Hatasou, of the eighteenth dynasty, in the seventeenth century B.C., the land of Punt was conquered by an Egyptian expedition, and on the monuments of Deir-el-Bahari the conquered people of Punt are depicted as sending tribute, which included ebony, ostrich feathers, leopard skins, giraffes, lions, living leopards, cynocephalous apes, elephants' tusks, and ingots of gold, all products of South-eastern Africa. When compared with the Biblical account of King Solomon's expedition about seven centuries later, the productions of both show a very

remarkable analogy. Gold was the most important of the objects brought, gold in ingots such as the mould would produce which we found at Zimbabwe, and the gold of Arabia in antiquity was proverbial. During the height of the prosperity of Rome gold was sent thither by the Arabians, as we have seen from Aristeas. Horace bears testimony to this in his line, 'Thesauris Arabum et divitis Indiæ.' Agatharcides, in B.C. 120, speaks in glowing terms of the wealth of the Sabæans; allusions to it are common in the Bible, and the connection between Phœnicia and Arabia is borne testimony to by Ezekiel in his denunciation of Tyre: 'Arabia and all the princes of Kedar, they occupied with thee in lambs, and rams, and goats: in these were they thy merchants. The merchants of Sheba and Raamah, they were thy merchants: they occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones, and gold.'<sup>1</sup> Probably community of origin, the inherent commercial instinct common to the Semitic races, brought about this intimate relationship between Phœnicia and Sabæa. Another testimony to the wealth of gold in Arabia is given us by the Assyrian inscriptions, on which Tiglath Pileser II., B.C. 733, is mentioned as receiving tribute from that country in gold, silver, and much incense; and Sargon in his annals also mentions the tribute of Shamsi, Queen of Arabia, as paid in gold and spices. There was little, if any, gold to be found in Arabia itself; on this point all travellers who have

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxvii. 21, 22.

penetrated this country are agreed. Here, near the east coast of Africa, far nearer to Arabia than India and China and other places, which they were accustomed to visit, not only is there evidence of the extensive production of gold, but also evidence of a cult known to Arabia and Phœnicia alike, temples built on accurate mathematical principles, containing kindred objects of art, methods of producing gold known to have been employed in the ancient world, and evidence of a vast population devoted to the mining of gold.

As to the vexed question of the land of Ophir, I do not feel that it is necessary to go into the arguments for and against here. Mashonaland may have been the land of Ophir or it may not; it may have been the land of Punt or it may not; Ophir and Punt may be identical, and both situated here, or they may be both elsewhere. There is not enough evidence, as far as I can see, to build up any theory on these points which will satisfy the more critical investigation to which subjects of this kind are submitted in the present day. All that we can satisfactorily establish is that from this country the ancient Arabians got a great deal of gold; but as gold was in common use in prehistoric times, and lavishly used many centuries before our era, there is no doubt that the supply must have been enormous, and must have been obtained from more places than one. 'Tyre heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets,' Zechariah tells us (ix. 3), and the subject could be flooded with

evidence from sculptural and classical sources; and though the output from the old workings in Mashonaland is seen to have been immense, yet it can hardly have supplied the demand that antiquity made upon it. The study of Arabian and Phœnician enterprise outside the Red Sea is only now in its infancy—we have only as yet enough evidence to prove its extent, and that the ruins in Mashonaland owe their origin to it.

After the commencement of the Christian era there is a great gap in our geographical knowledge of these parts; and as far as Western civilisation is concerned, this corner of the world had to be discovered anew. It was not so, however, with the Arabians, who, though probably banished from the interior many centuries before by the incursions of savage tribes, still held to the coast, and exchanged with the natives their cloth and their beads for gold which they brought down. Of Arab extension in Africa we have also other evidence. The 'Periplus' tells us that the Sabæan King Kharabit in A.D. 35 was in possession of the east coast of Africa to an indefinite extent. The Greek inscription from Axume in Abyssinia, copied by Mr. Salt in his travels there, further confirms this. It was a dedication to Mars of one golden statue, one silver, and three of brass in honour of a victory gained by 'Aizanes, king of the Axomites, of the Homerites (given us by Eratosthenes as one of the Arabian tribes), of the Æthiopians, and of the Sabæans.' Three cities of the name of Sabæ are

mentioned as connected with this kingdom, two in Arabia and one in Æthiopia; and now we have the river which doubtless in those days formed the great outlet for the population between the Zambesi and the Limpopó, still bearing the name of Sabæ or Sabi, and in the Æthiopian tongue the word Saba is still used for 'a man.' Herr Eduard Glaser, the Arabian traveller and decipherer of Himyaritic inscriptions, states in his work: 'So much is absolutely certain, that Himyar (Arabia) then possessed almost the whole of East Africa. Such a possession, however, was not won in a night, but rather presupposes, in those old times, without cannon and without powder, centuries of exertion.'

Arabian writers of the ninth and tenth centuries A.D. frequently allude to the gold of Sofala; but to the Western world this country was a blank until Portuguese enterprise again opened it out. John II. of Portugal sent Pedro de Covilham and Alfonso de Payva in 1487 to Cairo to gather information concerning a route to India by the Cape. It is not at all unlikely that Covilham heard from the Arabs reports concerning the gold country behind Sofala; but sufficient evidence to this effect is not forthcoming. He died in Abyssinia, and never returned to Portugal to tell in person his experiences. At any rate, ten years later the Cape was rounded by the Portuguese, and Vasco da Gama in all the ports he called at on the east coast of Africa found Arab traders established, who told him about the gold. The next expedition,

under Alvarez de Cahal in 1505, found Sofala, and in its harbour two Arab dhows laden with gold.

The Portuguese commander, Pedro de Nhaya, took possession of the town of Sofala in the name of the King of Portugal and garrisoned the old Arab fort there, and with this act began the modern history of this country, about which a veil of mystery had hung from the very beginning of time. That the Arabs were confined to the coast at this period is evident from Duarte Barbosa's remarks, who wrote in 1514: 'The merchants bring to Sofala the gold which they sell to the Moors (the name applied to the Arabs by the Portuguese), without weighing it, for coloured stuffs, and beads of Cambay.'

Before discussing the Portuguese accounts of this country, let us linger a little longer amongst the Arabs, and see what we can get from them about the inhabitants of this district and the irruption of the wild Zindj tribes over it, which probably caused the destruction of the earlier civilisation. Zaneddin Omar ibn l' Wardi' gives us an account of these Zindj. He wrote in the 336th year of the Hegira, and tells us that 'their habitations extend from the extremity of the gulf to the low land of gold, Sofala 't il Dhab,' and remarks on a peculiarity of theirs, namely, that 'they sharpen their teeth and polish them to a point.' He goes on to say: 'Sofala 't il Dhab adjoins the eastern borders of the Zindj . . . the most remarkable produce of this country is its quantity of native gold, that is found in pieces of two or three *meskalla*,



in spite of which the natives generally adorn their persons with ornaments of brass.' He also states that iron is found in this country and that the natives have skill in working it, and adds that 'ships come from India to fetch it.' This shows us the origin of the skill still possessed by the natives in smelting iron, which has been handed down from generation to generation.

El Masoudi, who has been called the Herodotus of Arabia, gives us still further details about the race, speaking of Sofala as a place to which the Arabs of his time went habitually to obtain gold and precious stones from the natives. He is more explicit about the descent from the north of the Zindj tribes, which took place not long before his day; and unless there was a previous wave of barbarians, concerning whom we have no account, it may be supposed that it was owing to their advent that the gold settlements up country were finally abandoned, and the Arab traders restricted to the coast. Describing the natives of the land behind Sofala, he speaks of them as negroes naked except for panther skins; they filed their teeth and were cannibals; they fought with long lances, and had ambuscades for game. They hunted for elephants, but never used for their own purposes the ivory or gold in which their country abounded. From this picture it is easy to see that in those days the inhabitants were just as they are now, an uncultured wild race of savages. We get another testimony to this in the voyage of two Arabs

who went to China in 851 A.D., and returned by the east coast of Africa. M. Renaudot has translated their experiences, in which they describe the Zindj as follows: 'Among them are preachers who harangue them, clad in a leopard skin. One of these men, with a staff in his hand, shall present himself before them, and having gathered a multitude of people about him, preach all the day to them. He speaks of God and recites the actions of their countrymen who are gone before them.' In this account we easily recognise the witch-doctor and ancestor worship, the Mozimos and Muali of the present race. Abou Zeyd's evidence is also to the same effect. He thus speaks of the Zindj: 'Religious discourses are pronounced before this people, and one never finds elsewhere such constant preachers. There are men devoted to this life who cover themselves with panther and monkey skins. They have a staff in their hands, and go from place to place.' Quite an accurate description of the South African witch-doctor. Consequently, from this mass of evidence we may affirm with absolute certainty that for a thousand years at least there has been no change in the condition of this country and its inhabitants. Further testimony to the same effect is given us by Edrisi in his geography, who alludes to the Zendj tribes as inhabiting this country, and occupying the coast towns Dendema and Siorma, 'which latter is situated on a gulf where foreign vessels come to anchor.' He speaks, too, of the iron trade which the Zendj carried

on with the Indians, and of the abundance of gold in the mountains behind Sofala, adding, 'nevertheless, the inhabitants prefer brass, making their ornaments of the latter metal.'

The simple Arabian stories of Sindbad the sailor and Aladdin are quite as credible as some of the stories which the first Portuguese travellers who visited the east coast of Africa tell us about the great Emperor Monomatapa and the wealth of gold in his dominions. When they first appeared on the scenes the Monomatapa was a big Kaffir chief, like Cetewayo or Lobengulu, who ruled over the gold district in which the Zimbabwe ruins are situated; nevertheless they burden their accounts with stories of the gilded halls in which he lived, of nuggets of the precious metal as big as a man's head, and which with their force raised the roots of trees. Needless to say these are the fabrications of their own brains, written to attract attention to the country they had discovered.

That this big Kaffir chief, Monomatapa, lived at his Zimbabwe or head kraal is, however, pretty clear, not necessarily at the place where the ruins are, because the whole of this country is scattered with Zimbabwes. Each petty chief now calls his head kraal by this name, and this fact, not thoroughly recognised, has brought about endless confusion in topography. The derivation for this name which to my mind appears the most satisfactory is of Abantu origin, and came from the north, where it is generally used

to denote the head kraal of any chief. *Zi* is the Abantu root for a village, *umzi* being in Zulu the term for a collection of kraals. *Zimbab* would signify somewhat the same, or rather 'the great kraal,' and *we* is the terminal denoting an exclamation, so that Zimbabwe would mean, 'here is the great kraal.'

Again, another source of confusion arises from the fact that Monomatapa—or, as it ought to be written, *Muene*, or lord of Matapa—is a dynastic name, just as every petty chief in Mashonaland to-day has his dynastic name, which he takes on succeeding to the chieftdom. So did the lords of Matapa. In various Portuguese treaties we have the names of different Monomatapa's: one is called Manuza, another Lucere, and so forth, right down to the days of Livingstone, when the Monomatapa he mentions was a petty chief near the Zambesi.

When the Portuguese arrived at Sofala they got a lot of information from the Arab traders they found there concerning the wonders of the country, the great chief and the great ruins; and as Zimbabwe was the name of the chief's residence and the name given by the inhabitants to the ruins, it is not to be wondered at that some confusion arose.

Now these Arab traders were particularly and not unnaturally jealous of the arrival of the Portuguese, perhaps not unlike the Portuguese are now of the British arrival. They made all the mischief they could between the Portuguese and the natives, they represented the Portuguese Jesuit Father Silveira, who

nearly managed to convert the Monomatapa to Christianity, as a spy, and conducted to his martyrdom in 1561. In fact, one of the great obstacles to the success of the Portuguese was Arab jealousy, which was at the bottom of the failure of all their expeditions up country.

Of all the Portuguese travellers who wrote about this country, Father dos Santos is the most reliable. Though he did not travel far up country, nevertheless he told no lies; and anyone who has been amongst the inhabitants as they are now will recognise in his narrative a faithful and accurate account of the people, proving how little they have altered in the lapse of between three and four centuries. A few extracts will show this: 'They beat their palms, which is their mode of courtesy.'<sup>1</sup> 'They smelt iron and make mattocks, arrows, assegai-points, spears, little axes, and they have more iron than is necessary, and of copper they make bracelets, and both men and women use them for their legs and arms.' He describes their indistinct idea of a Supreme Being, their feasts in honour of their ancestors, their curious pianos, 'with bars of iron enclosed in a pumpkin,' their 'wine of millet, which the Portuguese could not bear, but were obliged to drink and make festivity, for fear of quarrelling.' 'They have an infinity of fowls, like those of Portugal;' and also he describes the days on which they are not to work, appointed by the king, unknown to them, when they make

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Chap. III.

feasts and call these days *Mozimos*, or days of the holy already dead.<sup>1</sup> In fact, this narrative is so truthful in all its details, that we may safely take from it his account of the disintegration of the Monomatapa chiefdom, as it accounts for many things which otherwise would be obscure. He tells us that a Monomatapa sent three sons to govern in three provinces, Quiteve, Sedanda, and Chicanga; on their father's death they refused to give up to the heir their respective territories, and the country became divided into four. Since then it has been subdivided again and again; each petty chief fought with his neighbour, union was impossible, and in their turn they have fallen an easy prey to the powerful Zulu organisation under Umzilikatze and his successor Lobengulu. This I take to be, in a few words, the history of the country and its people during modern times, and as much probably as will ever be known of them.

Dos Santos calls these people Mocarangas, and in this too, I think, he is right, for the reasons I have previously given.<sup>2</sup> They are now, as we have seen, a miserable race of outcasts, fleeing to the mountain fastnesses on the approach of a Zulu raid, hounded and robbed until there is no more spirit in them. Monteiro mentions a Monomotapa, or emperor of Chidima, very decayed, but respectable, with a territory to the west of the Zambesi, near Zumbo. This is probably the same that Livingstone alludes to. An interesting fact that Monteiro also gives us is the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Chap. XI.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. II.

number of Zimbabwes north of the Zambesi, as the head kraals of chiefs, showing the northern origin of the name.

Having considered the people in whose country the Great Zimbabwe ruins are, let us now proceed to cull what we can from a Portuguese source concerning the ruins themselves.

De Barros<sup>1</sup> gives us the fullest account of the ruins. Let us take it and see what it is worth: 'In the midst of the plains in the kingdom of Batua, in the country of Toroe, nearest the oldest gold mines, stands a fortress, square, admirably built, inside and out, of hard stone. The blocks of which the walls consist are put together without mortar and are of marvellous size. The walls are twenty-five spans in thickness; their height is not so considerable compared with their breadth. Over the gate of the building is an inscription, which neither the Moorish traders (the Arabs of the coast) who were there, nor others learned in inscriptions, could read, nor does anyone know in what character it is written. On the heights around the edifice stand others in like manner built of masonry without mortar; among them a tower of more than twelve bracas (yards) in height. All those buildings are called by the natives *Zimbahe*—that is, the royal residence or court, as are all royal dwellings in Monomotapa. Their guardian, a man of noble birth, has here the chief command, and is called Symbacao; under his care are some of the

<sup>1</sup> De Barros, *De Asia*. Lisbon. 1552.

wives of Monomotapa, who constantly reside here. When and by whom these buildings were erected is unknown to the natives, who have no written characters. They merely say they are the work of the Devil (supernatural), because they are beyond their powers to execute. Besides these, there is to be found no other mason work, ancient or modern, in that region, seeing that all the dwellings of the barbarians are of wood and rushes.'

De Barros further states that when the Portuguese Governor of Sofala, Captain Vicente Pegado, pointed to the masonry of the fort there, with a view to comparison with the buildings up country, the Moors (Arabs) who had been at the ruins observed that the latter structure was of such absolute perfection that nothing could be compared to it; and they gave their opinion that the buildings were very ancient, and erected for the protection of the neighbouring gold mines. From this, De Barros inferred that the ruins must be the Agizymba of Ptolemy,<sup>1</sup> and founded by some ancient ruler of the gold country, who was unable to hold his ground, as in the case of the city of Axume, in Abyssinia.

In criticising this account, it is at once apparent that it was written by a person who had never seen the ruins; the fortress is round, not square; the blocks of stone are all small and not of 'marvellous size;' the

<sup>1</sup> According to Ptolemy, the Romans penetrated from the north through the heart of Africa to a nation called Agizymba, south of the equator.



tower is wrongly placed on the heights above instead of in the ruin on the plain. But at the same time De Barros is candid, and as good as tells us that his account was gathered from 'the Moorish traders who were there.' That is to say, all the wonders of the upper country we get second hand from an Arabian source. Legends of inscriptions on stone are common to all mysterious ruins in every country. Possibly the decorated soapstone pillar gave rise to it, as it did to the subsequent account of the 'Zimbabwe cryptogram,' which ran through the papers shortly after the visit of the first pioneers of the Chartered Company. At all events, now there is no sign of anything over any gateway or any trace of such a stone having been removed.

Alvarez gives us an account even vaguer than De Barros. The following is Pory's translation, published in London in 1600: 'For here in Toroa and in divers places of Monomatapa are till this day remaining manie huge and ancient buildings of timber, lime and stone being singular workmanship, the like whereof are not to be found in all the provinces thereabout. Heere is also a mightie wall of five-and-twenty spannes thick, which the people ascribe to the workmanship of the divell, being accounted from Sofala 510 miles the nearest way.'

*Pigafetta* copies this account in pretty much the same strain, as also does *Dapper*, whose account of this country is a tissue of exaggerations. He says: 'In this country, far to the inland on a plain

in the middle of many iron mills, stands a famous structure called *Simbaœ*, built square like a castle with hewn stone, but the height is not answerable. Above the gate appears an inscription which cannot be read or understood, nor could any that have seen it know what people used such letters. . . . The inhabitants report it the work of the devil, themselves only building in wood, and aver that for strength it exceeds the fort of the Portuguese at the seashore, about 150 miles from hence.'

We could quote several other allusions to the ruins from Portuguese, Dutch, and English sources, copied one from the other, and all bearing the stamp of having come from the same fountain-head, namely, the Arabians, who told the Portuguese about them when they first arrived at Sofala. Our examination of the ruins confirms this in every respect. In our excavations we found Celadon pottery, Persian pottery, and Arabian glass, similar to the things found at Quiloa, where the Arabs also had a settlement. These objects represent the trading goods brought by the Arabians and exchanged with the inhabitants who lived in and around these ruins in the middle ages; but at the same time we found no trace whatsoever of the Portuguese, which would have been the case, as in other places occupied by them in Arabia and the Persian Gulf, had they ever been there. From these facts I think it is certain that we may remove from the Portuguese the honour claimed by them of being the modern discoverers of the ruins,

an honour only claimed in the face of recent events, for De Barros is candid enough in telling us that his information came 'from the Arabs who were there.' Clearly to settle this question it is only necessary to quote a letter which I saw in the library at Lisbon, dated April 17, 1721, from the Governor of Goa, Antonio Rodrigue da Costa, to the king. East Africa was included then in the province of India, and the governor wrote as follows:—

'(1) There is a report that in the interior of these countries many affirm there is in the court of the Monomatapa a tower or edifice of worked masonry which appears evidently not to be the work of black natives of the country, but of some powerful and political nations such as the Greeks, Romans, Persians, Egyptians, or Hebrews; and they say that this tower or edifice is called by the natives Simbabóe, and that in it is an inscription of unknown letters, and because there is much foundation for the belief that this land is Ophir, and that Solomon sent his fleets in company with the Phœnicians; and this opinion could be indubitably established if this inscription could be cleared up, and there is no one there who can read it. If it were in Greek, Persian, or Hebrew, it would be necessary to command that an impression be made in wax or some other material which retains letters or figures, commanding that the original inscription be well cleaned.

'(2) At the same time it would be suitable to examine whether in that land is a range of mountains

called Ofura, what distance it is from the coast or seaport, and whether it contains mines of gold or silver.

‘(3) In the same way it would be as well to inquire into the most notable names of those parts, mountains, chiefdoms, and rivers.

‘(4) To learn if the lands of Sofala are high or low, or marshy, or if they have any mountain ranges.’

Hence it will be seen that, even as late as 1721, it was only rumoured that there were ruins, and that the Portuguese sphere of influence went very little inland. Needless to say, the expedition was never sent, and that the reports were of the vaguest and most contradictory character. Bocarro and Corvo both testify to the fact<sup>1</sup> that the Portuguese, after the disastrous campaigns of Baretto, advanced but little into the country, and were confined almost exclusively to the littoral. Taking the map of this district, and looking at the spelling of the names, it is easy to see how far Portuguese influence extended. They spell the common prefix *Inya* with an *h* instead of a *y*: for example, they write it Inhambane. Also they spell the name Gungunyama, Gungunhama; other nations spell such names with a *y*, for example, Inyagowe. Hence the *h* for *y* clearly marks the Portuguese sphere of influence.

These reports of an Eldorado northwards continued, and produced periodical excitements amongst

<sup>1</sup> Chap. IX.

the young colonists of South Africa. The Boers were everlastingly getting up *treks* with a view to reach it; the vague mystery about King Solomon's mines existing there, and the palace of the Queen of Sheba, whetted their appetites when they heard these rumours; but still nothing was definitely done until a German traveller of more than ordinary energy penetrated as far as the Zimbabwe ruins in the year 1871. This man was Karl Mauch: he examined them carefully and wrote an accurate account of them, but, unfortunately, he ventured on a speculation as to their origin which at once cast discredit on his discoveries in the eyes of unbelieving archæologists. He maintained that the fortress on the hill was a copy of King Solomon's temple on Mount Moriah, that the lower ruins were a copy of the palace which the Queen of Sheba inhabited during her stay of several years in Jerusalem, and that the trees in the middle of it were undoubtedly almug trees.

The result of this was that the subject of Zimbabwe ruins was in abeyance for nearly twenty years after Mauch's visit, and was rather accredited as a traveller's tale until the British Chartered Company took possession of the country and enabled research to be satisfactorily made. Nevertheless to Karl Mauch is distinctly due the honour of being the first to investigate the ruins in modern times.

**PART III**

**EXPLORATION JOURNEYS IN MASHONALAND**

## CHAPTER VIII

### *DOWN TO THE SABI RIVER AND MATINDELA RUINS*

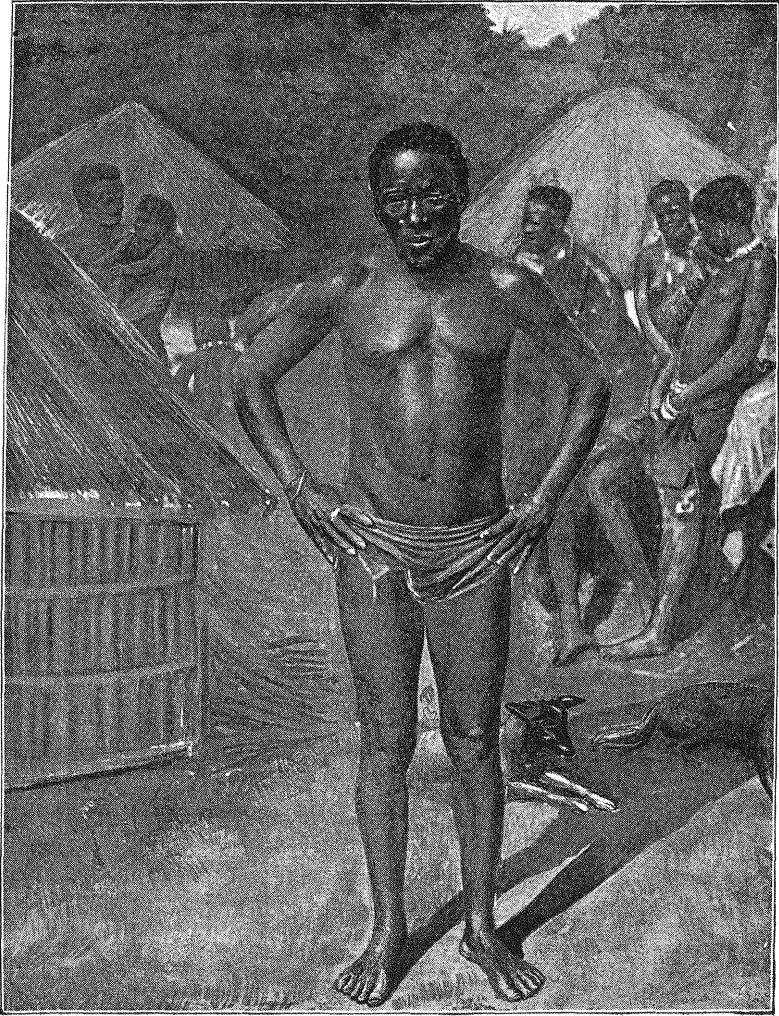
IT was the report of extensive ruins, 'larger,' said a native, 'than those of Zimbabwe,' which induced us to make an expedition involving considerable hardships and unknown risks down in the direction of the Sabi River. Our waggons, of course, could not go, as our way would be by the narrow native paths. Previous experience had warned us against depending on the native huts, so for the transport of our tents, bedding, and provisions we had to make considerable preparations.

At Fort Victoria we borrowed seven donkeys from the Chartered Company, and we engaged a few natives of reputed respectability under the command of a man called Mashah, quite the most brilliant specimen of the Makalanga race we came across during our sojourn in the country. He, his father and his mother and his wife, a sister of our old friend Umgabe, had been captured some years ago by the Matabele and spent several years in servitude, during which time he had learnt the Zulu tongue and the

more energetic habits of this stronger race. Eventually, after the death of his father and mother, he and his wife had escaped and returned to Umgabe's kraal, and on the arrival of the Chartered Company's pioneer force Mashah placed his services at their disposal. He greatly distinguished himself by saving the lives of a band of the pioneers when on a wild prospecting trip, for which service he received a present of a Martini-Henry rifle, of which he was naturally very proud.

Mashah's Makalanga brethren call him 'the white man's slave,' from his devotion to the new race, and he constantly affirmed that if ever the white man left this country he would go with them, for he was heartily sick of the petty jealousies and constant squabbles of his countrymen. He was a strange object to look upon with his tawny B.S.A. hat with an ostrich feather in it, his shirt with a girdle round his waist, and bare legs. He never once grumbled at anything he had to do, he was never tired, and kept our other Kaffirs in excellent order. As for the rest of them, they were as naked as God made them, save for the insignificant loin-cloth. A man called Metz-wandira was told off as our body-servant, to wash the cups and plates and spoons, which latter treasures he counted carefully over to us after every meal. We got greatly attached to this individual, his manners were so gentle and courteous and his voice so soft and silvery. One and all of them were delighted to become possessed of our rejected milk tins, &c., with which





**METZWANDIRA**