

The Riddle of Zimbabwe

Colonel Marshall Hales Tends the Evidence.

WHEN WAS ZIMBABWE BUILT? Who were the builders? What became of them? These were the three main questions asked by Colonel H. Marshall Hales when he recently delivered the "Archives" Group of the Royal Anthropological Society, and the "Riddle of Zimbabwe." He maintained that Zimbabwe was not of Bantu origin, but in the subsequent debate there was a division of opinion on this point.

In the course of his address, Colonel Marshall Hales said:

"The buildings number several hundreds, are scattered over a wide belt of country, and such countless millions of stone blocks have been used that there must have been an immense population engaged in the work for many years, perhaps for centuries. Some of the buildings are extraordinarily massive, portions of the encircling wall at Great Zimbabwe being over six feet thick, the base 20 feet or more high. A great variety of materials are used. There has been unearthed in the ruins, such as beads of glass, bronze, shells, and porcelain, iron and bronze implements and weapons, carved soap-stone bowls and phallic emblems, gold-toned gold wire and small gold beads. Most remarkable of all are a number of bird-like figures of soap-stone, with outstaring heads and queer, almost human legs. The Chinese records by Portuguese navigators describe the island as the home of the East African coast from the interior to the gold-worery and other goods, with them and who were ruled by a paramount chief, grandiloquently termed 'emperor,' whose capital was called 'Zimbabwe.' Beyond the existence of these buildings, the Chinese accounts are of no great value. In early maps of Africa Zimbabwe was shown, in the words: 'Here a gold mine,' being boldly added."

"King Solomon's Mines."

Nothing more was heard of the Rhodesian stone buildings until 1868, when an elephant hunter, Adam Anders, ended down in the vicinity. His discovery came to the ears of a German, Ernst Koenig, whose report of them was quoted by Thomas Baines, an English Explorer, searching for gold reefs in Matabeleland, who was much interested in the evidence of an ancient mining industry which Koenig had noted in various parts of the country.

Baines believed that the mines were the source of King Solomon's wealth.

In the next 18 years a vast amount of gold was found, but a few mines were being sternly discouraged by King Solomon. Then, Major Haggard's book "King Solomon's Mines," published in 1885, had a remarkable effect in turning people's thoughts to the possibility of wealth north of the Transvaal. Rhodes came into the open with his schemes for northern development. Mashonaland was occupied by his Pioneers, and in 1891, at Rhodes's instance, the first scientific exploration of the ruins was undertaken by Theodore Bennett.

It was found that the buildings were built from the stones of the Rhodesian gold mines—who provided gold for the East African coast from the interior to the gold-worery and other goods, with them and who were ruled by a paramount chief, grandiloquently termed 'emperor,' whose capital was called 'Zimbabwe.' Beyond the existence of these buildings, the Chinese accounts are of no great value. In early maps of Africa Zimbabwe was shown, in the words: 'Here a gold mine,' being boldly added."

towers are the "high places" mentioned in the Old Testament.

When Colonel H. Hales was invited to devote himself to thorough research and produced two or three books, valuable on account of their excellent photographs and detailed descriptions of a large number of the ruins, but he was not a trained archaeologist, and by haphazard excavations made the work of later scientific investigation more difficult.

Maciver and Caton Thompson Theories.

When the British Association visited Rhodesia in 1905 Professor Randall Maciver was sent out in advance to tackle the whole question of these ancient remains. His conclusions were that none of the ruins could be dated prior to the 14th or 15th century A.D., and that they were undoubtedly the work of Bantu of the same type as those found in the country to-day. He was immensely strengthened in this belief by the discovery of manufactured articles of a high date, notably by a piece of Nanking porcelain of a style known to be not earlier than the 15th century. This he found, not at Zimbabwe, but at Bulawayo, a well-preserved group of ruins, about 50 miles north of Bulawayo—in the unbroken cement floor of a dwelling demonstrably as old as any in the whole settlement.

Maciver's verdict was rather disconcerting to those who had been hugging the illusion that they were living under the shadow of the most venerable human modifications in the world.

The latest explorations were conducted by Miss Caton Thompson and Miss Kenyon in 1929. Miss Thompson's conclusions differed only from Maciver's in that she placed the date of the old buildings at about the 10th or 11th century A.D., i.e., some 400 or 500 years earlier than he did. Most of her inferences were drawn from objects found in or under the walls and floors, such as beads of Asiatic, European, and African origin, some of which could be calculated with some certainty. She asserted that no one could think that had been produced inconsistent with the claim of Bantu origin and medieval date.

Can This be Native Work?

Such testimony seems unanswerable. It is difficult to find a Marshfield, but I should like to ask anyone acquainted with Bantu tribes in any part of South, East, or Central Africa, of a level of intelligence or development that would lead to the assumption that their ancestors could have the skill and continuity of purpose displayed in the work of Zimbabwe and elsewhere. The stones in the conical towers in the sacred enclosure at Zimbabwe are so beautifully set that the blade of a penknife cannot be made to pass between the joints. Can you believe that this is Native work? Even Maciver must have had his doubts. He does not attempt to explain how such work could have been done.

Miss Thompson's second attempt to connect the towers with the tribes of Bantu origin, never admitting that they may have some ceremonial significance, is a very obscure cult. Whether she has discovered a point to the analogies among these and other parts of the world, I do not know. The same has been found

... which were not birds were objects found...
 ... formed integral parts of the structure...
 ... these birds are hardly mentioned...
 ... they did not fit in with the...
 ... Mr. Thompson...
 ... were probably...
 ... meaning of...
 ... birds...
 ... convinced...
 ... The birds...
 ... special respect by Rhodesians...
 ... as the crest on their national...
 ...

"Some of the ruins near the Eastern front are surrounded by lines of concentric terraces, which Masver, considered the remains of a vast scheme of fortification. If he is right it is not unreasonable to suppose that the lines of walls, one behind the other, to the number sometimes of 30, were erected to ward off invasions by warlike Bantu tribes, such as have frequently occurred in historical times in the south, when hordes of Zulus or Mantatisi carried devastation over huge stretches of country, their victims being also of Bantu descent. No effort to erect barriers, but fled or were butchered indiscriminately. The Rhodesian builders, being of superior breeds, did their best to resist until ultimately they were overpowered by superior numbers and expelled. The invaders then occupied the districts, and were the people found there by the Portuguese. The same argument would account for the massive fortifications of the Apollonia, Zimbabwe. These savage hordes had no knowledge of gold-mining, and their adventurist instincts have reduced the trade in gold, which had in fact dwindled to very small proportions when the Portuguese came on the scene. As far as we can see there was then no prospect of the natives, confined themselves to the washing of alluvial gold from the river sands. Thus was still going on when we discovered the country in 1890. Natives offering for barter gold dust packed in the quills of bird feathers."

Buildings Erected by the Craftsmen.

The various investigators... that the highest standard of stonework is in the oldest buildings, and that the later ones show a gradual decline, until the art of building in stone was lost altogether. It is another strong argument that the buildings were the work, not of our forefathers, but of aliens who brought the art to us. Otherwise we should have expected to find progressive improvement as centuries came and went. In this respect we are in a better position than some other parts of the world, where the buildings were the work of a less cultured race, who at first copied, but in time abandoned the craft in which they had no natural aptitude.

Acceptance of the Masver-Thompson theory leads us in another direction - how to account for the degeneration which has taken place among the inhabitants when the Portuguese arrived. Masver thinks the builders were Indians and Ugandas put up in 1530. The Portuguese were already here in 1580. The natives, therefore, were aware of the superiority of the stone walls of forts. Even if we accept the date of the 14th century we are left with a century or so of 200 years. The Natives did not generate it, nor only to have lost the art of stonework, but to have

... which were not the existing structures...
 ... on a...
 ... Thompson...
 ... the...
 ... ruins are...
 ... to these...
 ... of this...
 ... things...
 ... said...
 ... of the...
 ... day is...
 ... sustained...

Gold Traffic of the ancients.

... ages the...
 ... Rhodesia...
 ... Arabia, Palestine, Ethiopia and...
 ... their supplies of gold, which...
 ... from the Old Testament and from other records they obtained...
 ... Not a bit...
 ... the ruins were built...
 ... and the problem of the gold-miners are two quite distinct things.

... quantity of gold...
 ... Rhodesia...
 ... honeycombed with ancient workings...
 ... estimate that not less than £75,000,000 worth, at the end of 1914, was removed without leaving a trace...
 ... gold...
 ... if? We are told that Solomon used great quantities for his temples. It was brought to him by way of Akaba, on the East side of the Sinai Peninsula, and also by the Queen of Sheba, who conveyed it overland by camel caravans. Where did it all come from?

Professor Keats, a learned scholar and a theologian, concluded 50 years ago that the evidence points unmistakably to Rhodesia as the principal though not necessarily the only source. In his Thompson's book, Miss Kenyon gives an illuminating summary of the evidence of a prehistoric trade in gold in East Africa. Centuries before Solomon's days the Egyptians were getting gold from African ports as far as Cape Guardafui, and possibly still further south, and I see nothing impossible in the supposition that trading vessels may have been employed over the whole route from Rhodesia through Abyssinia to the Red Sea, a long journey, no doubt, but physically not so arduous as the camel route across the Sahara.

Prehistoric Trade Routes.

Finally, the merchandise mentioned in the Old Testament included besides ivory, silver, precious stones, bees and honey. All these, except the last, are or were found in Rhodesia. The bees are probably baboons, though why Solomon should have wanted them passes my comprehension. The peacocks may have been guinea-fowl, plentiful in Rhodesia, but some have held that ostriches are meant.

The ruins of Zimbabwe is a triple one. Who were the builders? Who were the builders? Who were the builders? Masver and Miss Thompson claim to have answered these questions. Perhaps they have. We must be thankful if they have left us the correlation of King Solomon's mines and the prehistoric trade routes. An ancient and famous name, that Hole said it was a... that no fossils or skeletons had... Zimbabwe...

Mr. H. C. Neavein summed up the theory saying the Bantu had had a "flash" reminiscence of workers in the mines and immediately realised it was not the time to do the work of people obviously there to do the heavy going, and they must have been under the skilled supervision of a construction Company. He believed the Natives so he removed from imagining in the least that they could not possibly have been responsible for Zimbabwe.

Mr. Worthington mentioned the Zimbabwe stone which was carved by Bantu people. Colonel Marshall said he had observed the carving of the birds. He thought that the Bantu could carve. Colonel Marshall Hole: In stone. Mr. Worthington: I cannot say in stone, but the carving is really carved wonderfully.

Barotseland People and Zimbabwe

Returning to the possible association of the Barotseland people with Zimbabwe, Mr. Worthington said those natives had a way of knowing they could hide their stores by fire and water with which they could cut a channel right through a rock. He had also seen them building pyramids of turf, which

they did beautifully, and it was obvious they could have done something in stone. Up in the Barotseland Valley were a people who spoke the language of one of which was a secret language they used only among themselves. Strangely enough, that secret language was the language of the people in the Zimbabwe district, and on one occasion Colonel Marshall Hole heard the Natives talking this secret language and understood what they were saying because he understood the language of the Zimbabwe neighbourhood. The Bantu people could extract iron and copper, but they knew nothing whatever about gold or pretended they knew nothing. The theory was that in earlier days the Bantu found there was peril in gold and that this periled their country. He thought the Bantu could do very much more than they were given credit for. He knew that where gold was found the white man would follow. That was why they later so little about gold.

Another speaker said the repeated invasions could account for the degeneration of the people, to him it did not seem strange that African peoples should rise and fall with remarkable rapidity.

Colonel Marshall Hole was cordially thanked for his address.

Colonial Empire Policy

Statement of the Prime Minister

We have frequently expressed by the unacceptability of the suggestion, widely propagated in this country and elsewhere, that Great Britain should place her Colonies under the mandate system, and that the British Government should return to a policy of the "open door" for trade in all dependent territories under her control, irrespective of the action of other Powers in the same connection. An important statement of policy on the subject was made by the Prime Minister last week, when he was deputating representing 100 signatories to the national memorial on the subject of "Peace and Economic Co-operation."

In alluding to the proposal that the Imperial Government should return to the "open door" policy, Mr. Baldwin referred to the proposal that the Government should present and advocate other Colonial Economic concrete proposals of general application to the Empire, in a mandatory system under the League of Nations to all dependent territories. Not immediately after the war, all

disadvantage of the trade of other countries with higher labour standards.

The question of economic policy in Colonial areas could not be divorced from the question of economic policy between metropolitan countries, and in present circumstances the British Government saw no justification for reversing the policy of Imperial preference, which had contributed greatly to the prosperity of the Colonial Empire.

The application of a mandate system to the Colonial Empire, said the Prime Minister, could not be sanctioned by the inhabitants of dependent territories, who were proud of their status as British subjects, and would resent the imposition of a mandatory system. Moreover, the authority of the British Parliament and of the local Legislature over the Colonial Dependencies would be entirely prejudiced.

It is hardly to be imagined a scheme would be necessitate the abandonment of the best machinery of a permanent Mandates Commission composed of distinguished experts, and in replacement of a Council of Imperial and Colonial Officials.

What Colonial Powers Must Do

In the other half of His Majesty's Colonies, it would seem considerable advantage in a general declaration of the Colonial Powers to the abandonment of the mandate territories and the return to the direct control of the United Kingdom. The Government does not disfigure from the fact that such a declaration could have only a limited effect in lessening existing tensions, but they consider that it might nevertheless form part of a general agreement.


Both proposals had, he said, been carefully considered by the British Government, who regard them as being subjects of serious and important consideration. The "open door" would impair the stability of Colonial Dependencies and would be a step towards the Government by limiting their authority in these matters.

Further, it would seriously weaken the rights of the Colonial Empire to claim preference in the British Empire and other Empire countries. It would also deprive the Empire of the opportunities which it offers in the markets of the world. It would prevent the Empire from taking any effective action in the event of a general economic crisis, and would, in present circumstances, tend to favour the trade of countries with an exceptionally high level of local costs, to the

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Of Commercial Concerns & New Items in Brief

Telegraphic rates have been dropping, and traffic is being held up.

The Land Advertiser Committee has been set up in Kenya in connection with the inquiry into farm rates.

Negotiations have been concluded in Nairobi for the purchase by Anglo-Tanzania of part of several hundred bales of Rhodesian tobacco.

Exports from Tanganyika during February included 10,740 cases of hides and 5,680 cases of skins, valued at £2,242 and £3,103 respectively.

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Governor of Tanganyika has announced that the Government will be making a grant of £100,000 to the Tanganyika Electric Corporation for the purpose of providing electricity for public and private purposes. The grant will be made to the Tanganyika Electric Corporation, which is a subsidiary of the East African Power and Light Corporation, Ltd. This development was exclusively for the power in the colony some months ago.

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Banks' Cash Trade Reports East African Market Reports

BANKS' CASH TRADE REPORTS—(Continued) In view of the fact that the East African and Rhodesian currencies are currently in a state of flux, the following reports are of interest.

Kenya Colony—The weather is generally good, but it is needed for the heavy crops of coffee and sisal. The area under cultivation is about 100,000 acres, and coffee prices have been maintained at a high level.

Uganda—The weather has been generally favorable, but the coffee and sisal crops are still in the hands of the planters. The market for coffee is quiet, and the price of sisal is steady.

Tanzania—The weather is generally good, but it is needed for the heavy crops of coffee and sisal. The area under cultivation is about 100,000 acres, and coffee prices have been maintained at a high level.

Rhodesia—The weather is generally good, but it is needed for the heavy crops of coffee and sisal. The area under cultivation is about 100,000 acres, and coffee prices have been maintained at a high level.

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Rainfall in the Territories

The following table shows the rainfall in the territories during the period indicated.

Territory	Period	Rainfall (inches)
Kenya Colony	1936-37	25.5
Uganda	1936-37	28.0
Tanzania	1936-37	22.0
Rhodesia	1936-37	20.0
North	1936-37	18.0
South	1936-37	15.0
East	1936-37	12.0
West	1936-37	10.0
Central	1936-37	8.0
South	1936-37	6.0
North	1936-37	4.0
South	1936-37	2.0
North	1936-37	1.0
South	1936-37	0.5
North	1936-37	0.2
South	1936-37	0.1

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