

December 2012 | Issue 149

Editorial

The newsletter will reach a milestone of 150 issues in 2013. The society's journal will also see its 30th issue in 2012. Is it time for reflection on the future and relevance of the Prehistory Society of Zimbabwe? It is getting ever more difficult to find suitable articles and notes to include in both the journal and newsletter, while in the six (!) years I have been newsletter editor I have only ever received six letters and/or enquiries about the newsletter. Does anyone read it? If so, what do they find to be of interest? And why? Have we become over-saturated with information in this digital era? Why is there a lack of communication about ongoing research projects in the country?

At present the newsletter is the only medium for Zimbabweanist archaeologists to publicise their findings to a local and international audience. I still, however struggle to find material to fill the newsletter. By my count, there are at least 40 archaeologists and anthropologists active in Zimbabweanist archaeology, and this is without counting students or fresh graduates. The newsletter is distributed to a mailing list of around 150 people, most of whom are not members of the society but have an interest in the archaeology and history of Zimbabwe. I also ensure that excerpts are reproduced in the *World Archaeological Congress Newsletter* and occasionally *The Digging Stick* in South Africa.

There are several important issues facing us in the year 2013, not least the anticipated general elections that will define the course of Zimbabwe's future for at least a generation. Our natural and cultural heritage is under threat from several sources, most seriously the proposed mining activities in the Mana Pools World Heritage Site (see http://www.zambezi.co.uk/mana_pools.htm and http://www.zamsoc.org/ for details) and ongoing mining in Hwange National Park (see http://www.wildlifeextra.com/go/news/hwange-mining.html#cr). Wanton development projects across the country (like the encroachment into Harare's wetlands) as well as unrestricted mining activities, including gold panning, do not bode well for the preservation of Zimbabwe's cultural and natural heritage. Additionally, tighter budgets for the National Museums and National Parks authorities mean less capacity to investigate and deal with such threats and breaches of the legislation protecting all heritage in the country.

It is not all doom and gloom though. One of the most encouraging developments to my mind, is the increasing involvement of local communities in the management and protection of heritage in the country. A massively important test case is the current court case against telecoms giant Econet for disturbing graves without care or respect for both the law and the customs, feelings and attitudes of local people (see article below). As more people take action against such flagrant disregard for the law and their heritage, we shall be able to preserve more of it for our descendants' benefit.



Arm Ring of an African Leader

FROM: http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/a/arm-ring-of-an-african-leader/

This brass arm ring was originally amongst the possessions of a southern African leader. A letter pasted into the Victoria and Albert Museum's accession register reveals how it made its way into the collection. The letter reads:

'69 Eaton Terrace / Jan. 18 1898 / Dear Mr Clarke, I am sending by the bearer who brings this a small



parcel, containing a bangle, the history of which is that it was taken off the skeleton of Moselekatze (I think that is how the name is spelt) when his grave was opened. Some buttons which were recently exhibited in the Museum of Bulawayo were found at the same time. The bangle contains a certain percentage of gold and I was told resembled the metal used for ornaments by the Phoenicians; of this you will be a better judge than I am. I can vouch for the authenticity of the bangle as it was given me when I was at Bulawayo in [18]96 by the man who opened the grave. I shall be very glad to give it to the Museum, if you consider it worthy. / Yours truly, F.A. Fortescue.'

Mzilikazi (also spelt Moselekatse) was born in what is now northern Zululand, South Africa, some time in the 1790s. He was the son of Mashobane, chief of a Khumalo subgroup. The period through which Mzilikazi lived witnessed great political and social upheaval in southern Africa. Drought, famine, the rise of military rulers and their kingdoms, and the invasion of European settlers and consequent slave-trading prompted the movement of people around the region on a large scale. Mzilikazi and the Ndebele 1 nation he founded were one of the products of this migratory era.

Mzilikazi's early military career was spent commanding a Khumalo regiment for the famous Zulu ruler Shaka. Around 1820 Mzilikazi rebelled against Shaka's authority and escaped with a few hundred followers. They first trekked across the Vaal River into what is now the northern part of South Africa before continued enemy attacks pushed them south west, to establish themselves on the Transvaal. They moved north again in 1827, to an area above the Magaliesberg mountain range, near modern Pretoria. Here Mzilikazi and his followers founded a settlement called Mhlahlandlela.

In 1838 the group moved northwards again into present-day Zimbabwe where they carved out an area which is now called Matabeleland in the west and south west of the country (Bulawayo is its major city). Here Mzilikazi founded his last settlement, also called Mhlahlandlela. While his journey had begun with a few hundred followers, under Mzilikazi's leadership the group's numbers had risen to, at their peak, some 20,000 people as conquered peoples were absorbed. Mzilikazi's greatest success was infusing his diverse population with a sense of common nationhood, one shared by the Ndebele community today.

Mzilikazi died in 1868 following a period of ill health. According to custom his death was kept secret for a period of time. His body was then placed in a wagon and, with a second wagon loaded with his possessions, taken to a hill named Entumbane in the Matopo Hills. Mzilikazi's body was placed inside a granite-walled cave which was sealed with stones. His possessions, which included clothes; utensils; sleeping mats; beads; ornaments and brass rings such as this arm ring, were placed in another cave with the wagon which had transported them.



During the period of his reign, Mzilikazi had regularly encountered Europeans, including Captain William Cornwallis Harris who made this sketch of him on the right. Mzilikazi tolerated missionary activity within Ndebele territory, largely as he viewed missionaries as a means by which he might gain access to European goods such as guns and horses. However, his relationship with other Europeans was less cordial. One of the reasons for Ndebele movement was violent clashes with the Boers, descendants of the first Dutch settlers at the Cape. Many Boer families had become frustrated with the British administration which ruled the Cape Colony and left in search of new lands. Their searches frequently brought them into conflict with local African rulers like Mzilikazi.

Following Mzilikazi's death, his son Lobengula (ca.1845-ca.1894) assumed power. In 1888 the mining magnate and politician Cecil Rhodes negotiated a land treaty with Lobengula. Known as the Rudd Concession, the treaty permitted British mining and colonisation of Matabele lands between the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers. As part of the agreement, the British agreed to pay Lobengula 100 pounds a month, as well as 1,000 rifles, 10,000 rounds of ammunition, and a riverboat. However it soon became clear that the treaty was part of a British strategy to take control of the region. The British South Africa Company established by Rhodes in 1889 set up its own government and made its own laws, as well as seeking more mineral rights and territorial concessions. The outcome of these colonial activities was the First Matabele War in which some 1,700 soldiers from Lobengula's most battle-hardened regiments were decimated by British firepower. The Company then carved out a territory called Zambezi, and later, Rhodesia, which now covers the area now occupied by the republics of Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In 1896 the Ndebele rebelled again in the Second Matabele War (celebrated in Zimbabwe as the First Chimurenga or War of Independence). It was this conflict which drew Major Francis Alexander Fortescue (1858-1942), the donor of the arm ring, to the area. Fortescue was a professional soldier who served in India, Afghanistan, Egypt and South Africa. He was posted to the latter on at least four occasions; in 1881, 1896, 1899-1900 and 1908-10. As he tells us in his letter, it was in 1896 that he acquired the arm ring. It is unclear why Mzilikazi's grave, which remains within the large granite outcrops of the Matopo Hills, was opened. Today the hills continue to be a place of great spiritual significance to the Ndebele community and were designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2003. Fortescue also collected other items made by Zulu-speaking peoples, largely beadwork. These he donated to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, in 1935.

References

1. Mzilikazi and his followers called themselves Zulu yet were known to others as 'Ndebele' or 'Matabele'. 'Ndebele' is an Anglicised form of the Nguni word 'Amandebele', which in turn derives from the Sotho word 'Matabele'. The original meaning of the word 'Matabele' is unclear but it may have been used by Sotho speakers to mean 'strangers from the east'. Other intrusive groups in this period were given the same name by the Sotho.

ASAPA 2013 Conference, Botswana: Second Call for Papers

The Local Organising Committee of the 2013 Association of Southern African Professional Archaeologists is honoured to announce the call for abstracts for the upcoming conference. Participants are invited to submit abstracts for oral and poster presentations under the following themes:

The realm and practice of archaeological heritage management in SADC Metals and other minerals: mining manufacture, trade and use New advances in the application of theory in southern African archaeology In conversation with stakeholders: applicability of indigenous knowledge system to



archaeological research and heritage resource management
Progress in stone age archaeology, dating and paleoenvironment studies
Landscape archaeology in southern Africa
Outreach for public understanding of archaeology and Paleoanthropology
Southern African Rock Art
Southern African archaeology in the digital age
Burial Archaeology and osteoarchaeology
The archaeology of farming communities
Historical archaeology

Abstracts should be submitted in word (MSdoc or docx) through the secretary at asapa2013@mopipi.ub.bw or via the ASAPA website www.asapa.org.za

The deadline for abstract submissions is 29th March 2013.

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Econet Sued for Grave Disturbance

LOVEMORE CHIKOVA

Summarised from The Herald, October 15, 2012

Two Masvingo chiefs have taken Econet Wireless to court for allegedly defiling a traditional shrine by exhuming human remains and destroying relics while installing a base station at a local hill. Chief Murinye (Ephias Munodawafa) and acting Chief Mugabe (Matubede Mudavanhu) said in their urgent chamber application that Econet workers scattered the human remains after excavating tombs.

They want construction of the base station stopped forthwith.

The chiefs pleaded with the courts to issue the urgent interdict, saying Sviba Hills where Econet was installing the base station was a burial site and a place of ancestral worship for the Duma people.

They argued that the traditional customary rights preserved at Sviba Hills had become exposed to desecration as a result of Econet's construction activities.

"Without regard for the authority of the traditional leaderships and contrary to the construction industry's best practice and ethics, Respondent (Econet) in 2011 intentionally destroyed parts of the sacred site, excavating tombs, scattering human remains, destroying relics and artifacts," said Chief Murinye in his founding affidavit.

"I am also advised that at general law, as at customary law, it is an offence to violate a grave. The construction that Respondent is carrying out is in violation of a burial site."



Chief Murinye said Econet's actions were a violation of the rights of the Murinye and Mugabe people and the entire clan of the Duma. "Construction ought to be stopped to protect our customary rights and to prevent further desecration of the sacred site," he said.

"It is extremely urgent that the exposed human remains should be properly buried by second applicant (acting Chief Mugabe) and myself, the descendants of the people who are buried at Sviba." Acting Chief Mugabe concurred with the arguments raised by Chief Murinye.

The two chiefs were represented by Mr Lispen Zinyengere of Mutumbwa and Mugabe partners who said the matter should be treated as urgent.

The case sucked in National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe executive director Dr Godfrey Mahachi who instructed Econet to rehabilitate the vandalised shrine. This was after NMMZ carried out a cultural heritage impact assessment study which confirmed the cultural and spiritual importance of the Sviba Hills, including its significance to the community under Chief Murinye.

"The said recommendations as submitted in our report were discussed with the community leadership and I am advised that there is concurrence on the matter," said Dr Mahachi.

"However, we find it difficult to comment on Mambo Murinye's letter dated 22 November 2011 and copied to yourselves that requests Econet to build the chief's homestead." Dr Mahachi's letter to Econet was attached to the court papers.

Econet's lawyers Mtetwa and Nyambirai argued that the matter should not be treated as urgent because the chiefs knew since July 2010 that the company was granted permission by the Masvingo Rural District Council to put up the base station on the site, but did not take any action to stop construction. But they concurred that Econet's activities at Sviba Hills resulted in human remains being exposed.

"Excavation work started in 2011 and continued till November 2011 when it stopped after human remains in question were exposed as the Respondent's constructors were picking stones for use during construction," the lawyers said.

"The exposure of the remains is quite unfortunate. It was never foreseen nor intended. I repeat that Respondent did not know that when it commenced work that the hill was sacred.

"It had no reason to believe that it was sacred as it was never advised so. Respondent does not accept that it is guilty of any offence."

The lawyers said the chiefs would not suffer irreparable harm if the remedy they sought was not granted. They implored the court to grant an order for construction work to continue, arguing that the chiefs had not shown any regard or care for the exposed remains.

Econet attached a lease agreement it entered into with the Masvingo Rural District Council to establish the base station at the hill. The company also attached a letter written to Chief Murinye last year asking for permission to resume work at the site and undertaking to restore the vandalised graves.



Alexander (Alec) Colin Campbell (1932-1912)

Dr. Alec Campbell, co-founder of The Botswana Society, died on Saturday, 24 November 2012. He was 80 years of age.

Alec was one of Botswana's foremost experts on the country's people, their history and pre-history, and the nation's physical heritage. Born in Cheltenham, England, he entered the British South Africa Police in Southern Rhodesia at the age of 19 and three years later joined the agricultural department as a tse-tse fly officer. In 1959 he entered university at Rhodes, where he graduated in Sindebele and Social Anthropology. In 2nd December 1961 he married Judith Merial Styrachan and the following year he joined the Bechuanaland Protectorate administration as a district officer in Maun. In 1962-1963, with independence talks underway, Campbell organised and ran the country's first house-to-house census.

He became recorder of customary law, senior field officer for famine relief operations and on the eve of independence a senior officer both in the ministries of Local Government and of Home Affairs. For his contribution to the transition he was awarded an MBE in 1966. At independence he held the dual posts Gaborone district commissioner and senior warden in the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, of which he became director in 1971. He and Judy became Botswana citizens in 1972. Meanwhile, Alec originated the National Museum and Art Gallery, which was opened 30 September 1968, and served as its curator until it was formally established, in 1974, when Alec was appointed its first director, a position he held until 1987. In 1977 he also became Commissioner of National Monuments.

During this period, Alec helped to found The Botswana Society, in 1969, which he served for the next ten years as chair and vice chair of the executive committee. Alec helped launch the Society's banner journal, Botswana Notes and Records, of which he was lead editor for three decades.

After retiring from the Museum, Alec turned to the archaeological research and the study of rock art, the results appeared in numerous publications, capped by the appearance in 2010 of *Tsodilo Hills: Copper Bracelet* by Alec, Larry Robbins and Michael Taylor, the summation of decades of patient research. He and the late Thomas Tlou published *The History of Botswana* by Macmillan Botswana, since appearing in many editions and still the standard work. He and Mike Main published two classic guides, *Guide to Botswana* and *Guide to Greater Gaborone* (still in print).

Alec has supported and inspired countless individuals in their endeavours to broaden knowledge and understanding of Botswana. Alec was predeceased by his children Clare and Ian, and is survived by his wife, Judy, and sons Colin and Niall.

With Acknowledgement to the Botswana Society.

New Publications on Zimbabweanist Archaeology

Brisch, G. (ed.) 2012. *The Travel Chronicles of Mrs. J. Theodore Bent. Volume II: The African Journeys Mabel Bent's diaries of 1883-1898*. Oxford: 3rd Guides.

"At last we reached a circular enclosure among the grass and scanty trees. We rushed in and it was like getting into a tropical greenhouse with the roof off. There were tall trees and long creepers making monkey ropes, large flowers hanging, great cactus trees, aloes and all sorts of beautiful things crowded together, so that one could hardly squeeze through. I should have liked to stop and stare at the vegetation but on we rushed, over walls and



to the tower we had heard of, which is close to the outer wall. We did not stay even to walk round the tower but out we rushed again, like people who were taking a stolen look into an enchanted garden and were afraid of being bewitched if we remained... It was quite dark and we had to be guided by shouts to our camp and got home in a state of great wonder and delight and hope of profitable work and full assurance of the great antiquity of the ruins. Theodore was not very well and had to take quinine." [M.V.A. Bent, 4 June 1891]

Thus a few lines from Mabel (Mrs J. Theodore) Bent's 1891 African travel diary on her arrival at 'Great Zimbabwe', written for her family, serve to evoke the romance and hardships of colonial exploration for a Victorian audience. Of particular importance are Mabel's previously unpublished notebooks covering the couple's arduous wagon trek to these famous ruins, in part sponsored by the ambitious Cecil Rhodes. Theodore Bent's interpretations of these wonderful monuments sparked a controversy (one of several this maverick archaeologist was involved in over his short career) that still divides scholars today. Mabel Bent was probably the first woman to visit there and help document this major site.

Hubbard, P. & Burrett, R.S. 2012. A Clash of Ideologies: Zimbabwean Archaeology at the Fringe. In *From Archaeology to Archaeologies: the 'Other' Past*. Simandiraki-Grimshaw, A. & Stefanou, L. (eds), 45-55. Oxford: BAR International Series 2409.

The debate regarding the origins and development of the Zimbabwe Culture dramatically shaped archaeological practice in southern Africa. Like many fringe archaeologies, the debates have advocated a state of worldwide archaeological, cultural and governmental conspiracy to keep the 'truth' hidden. The flimsiest of 'evidence' has been invoked to deny the fact that the ruins are the product of an indigenous African society. Few of the authors have been professional archaeologists or historians, but all have challenged professional findings and conclusions. The paper discusses the main actors, their ideas and their intended audience. The proponents identify themselves through established national symbols, drawn from a global context, that mean different things to different people. The agendas behind the representation and edification of some pasts and not others are explored in a southern African context. Finally the relevance of such a debate to current archaeological practice in Zimbabwe is evaluated.

Huffman, T.N. 2012. Historical archaeology of the Mapungubwe area: Boer, Birwa, Sotho-Tswana and Machete. *Southern African Humanities* 24: 33-59.

In the Mapungubwe area, nineteenth-century Venda capitals housed virtually the entire chiefdom, totalling only some 350 people. This was in marked contrast to the earlier, and related, Khami period, largely because of different climatic conditions. Although sparsely populated, interaction of the Venda-speaking Machete chiefdom with Birwa and Sotho-Tswana created a heterogeneous social landscape. Before Machete moved to Leokwe Hill, Bambandyanalo was the Birwa capital under a Kalanga chief. In addition to ethnic interaction with Birwa and Sotho-Tswana, internal politics, the purchase of farms in the 1870s, the Anglo-Boer War and the search for diamonds affected the Machete chiefdom. When Mapungubwe was re-discovered in the early 1930s, the chiefdom had already disintegrated, and the people spoke Sotho.

Moyo, N.E. 2012. The Rebirth of Bukalanga: A manifesto for the liberation of a great people with a proud history. Part 1. Bulawayo: Mapungubwe News Corporation.

This is indisputably a book that belongs on the fringe of current archaeological and historical thinking. The central thesis of the book is that the Kalanga people have been deliberately marginalised by all sectors of society, and their history "stolen" by the "Shona, Ndebele and Tswana, groups to which Bukalanga does not belong" (back cover). Claiming the Kalanga were responsible for the entire stone-building Zimbabwe Culture, the book is a return to the antiquarian pastiche of the Zimbabwean Controversy albeit with black nationalist bent. The Kalanga are falsely argued to have settled in Zimbabwe and Botswana 2000 years ago and intermarried with a people of Jewish origin who settled in the land around the same time. With its curious mishmash of historical and archaeological data, this book holds no promise that Part 2 of the liberation manifesto will have much of interest for the thinking scholar.



van Waarden, C. 2012. Butua and the End of an Era The effect of the collapse of the Kalanga state on ordinary citizens. An analysis of behaviour under stress. Cambridge: Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology 82

The Kalanga state Butua, which had dominated the Zimbabwe plateau (south central Africa) for four centuries, collapsed in the 1830s due to repeated *difaqane* invasions, and its population became subject to Ndebele invaders. This work is a study of how the farming population coped with the stresses brought by these events and how this is manifest in the archaeological remains. A model of group behaviour under stress suggests that, with increasing stress, group solidarity at first increases, but later decreases: a series of hypotheses based on this model guides this study. The first section of the research presents a reconstruction of the 'Butua' state based on oral and documentary evidence as well as archaeological research in Botswana. The second part combines information from historical sources with archaeological evidence from two villages at Domboshaba to reconstruct events and conditions in northeastern Botswana during the turbulent 19th century.

Various Contributors. Zimbabwea 10: Innovative Insights into Zimbabwean Archaeology. Harare: National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe.

The six papers in the latest issue of the flagship humanities journal of the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe are, happily, almost as eclectic as in previous issues. The sub-title and Chipunza's introduction are ambitious and promise much of the papers within, although only a couple actually excite. Mupira's detailed paper on Kopje House and Chiwaura's discussion on interactions with the communities at Ziwa provoke much thought on the future of heritage management in Zimbabwe, especially because the current outdated legislation does not provide much scope or guidance on this issue. NMMZ and its staff are feeling their way through the difficulties and intricacies of balancing the needs and aspirations of ever more militant local communities together with a narrow legal mandate imposed by the act.

It is a pity that so much journal space is devoted to promoting the controversial work of Anne Kritzinger in the Eastern Highlands. The gold mining hypothesis has been discussed at length in this newsletter and elsewhere and proven to be mistaken at best and deliberately misleading at worst. Regrettably, these criticisms have not stopped NMMZ from being seen to endorse the research, proving Joseph Goebbels right once again: "The most brilliant propagandist technique will yield no success unless one fundamental principle is borne in mind constantly - it must confine itself to a few points and repeat them over and over."

The journal is rounded off with a paper by Manyanga, updating readers on his groundbreaking research in the Lowveld which challenges the traditional narrative behind the creation and development of the Zimbabwe Culture. Zharare's discussion of a Sedan Chair in the Mutare Museum holds important implications for refining local understandings on how objects in a museum can acquire multiple and conflicting narratives as to their use, meaning and significance.

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