The Zimbabwe Temple, and the Discovery of Nanking China, etc

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Apianus' Map of Bavaria;" Dr. J. Müller, of Nürnberg, on "The Nürnberg Reichswald, its surface features and economic development from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century." Among the educational papers, one by Dr. Max Eckert on "Scientific Cartography as a University Subject," and another by Dr. E. Blank on "The Importance of Geological Maps in relation to Agriculture, and their employment in Schools," may be mentioned. Finally, among papers of the fourth group, we find dissertations on the "Climatic Conditions at the opening of the Neolithic Period" (by Prof. W. Götz), and on "The Geography of the temporary Settlements of the Alps" (by Prof. R. Sieger).

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Zimbabwe Temple, and the Discovery of Nanking China, etc.

ON my return from Great Zimbabwe just recently, my attention was called to a statement made by Prof. J. L. Myres in his review in the *Journal* of Prof. MacIver's *Mediaeval Rhodesia*, in which he says I might have found the Nanking china "in the cement mass [under the hut] which stands upon that floor."

Probably Prof. Myres' conjecture may rest on a statement made by Prof. MacIver: "Mr. Hall states that he found in enclosure 15, and therefore necessarily within the same cement which I dug (for its foundations can be traced even now, and occupy the entire enclosure), mediæval Arabic glass and Nanking china;" and further on, "The date of the elliptical temple, then, is not earlier than the fourteenth or fifteenth century."

Briefly the facts are these: (1) Almost three years before Prof. MacIver visited Zimbabwe I found small pieces of Nanking china and Arabic glass at the east end of No. 15 enclosure. These were found almost at the top of a layer (about 3 feet deep) of old Kafir *débris* of the usual midden type, at about 1 foot or 18 inches on the east side, and 2 feet above the top of the opening of the drain which passes right through the north divisional wall of this enclosure, the drain being slightly above the foundations of the wall. The point where I made the "find" is at least 8 or 9 feet from the nearest point of the cement (not a cement, but a *daga* of veld soil clay) foundation on which the hut stood, which *daga* foundation has well-defined sides, the hut and the foundation having been, as photographs show, partially ruined, not by any spade-work, but by a large tree growing out of the clay foundation.

Two years before Prof. MacIver's visit, I had published the fullest particulars as to the exact location of the "find," and in my 'Great Zimbabwe,' I showed the spot in a section of the enclosure (p. 103).

This 3-feet depth of Kafir *débris* contained no soil, or cement, or clay work, but consisted entirely of wood ashes, charred wood, decayed ivory, ox, buck, and bird bones split open Kafir fashion for marrow, and a mass of broken pottery. The trench I originally made was but a small one, and was directly up against the face of the wall, and it was only just large enough to reveal the opening of the drain and 2 or 3 feet on either side of it. This trench was left open for almost 18 months, and during that time it was inspected by many visitors, who were all satisfied that the glass and china could not have got into that position until long after the drain had been blocked up and buried for 3 feet at least in Kafir *débris*, which blocking up and burial had for an exceedingly long time rendered the drain altogether useless. I was led to make my trench in that position because I had found the other opening of the drain on the opposite side of the wall.

(2) The clay mass on which the hut stood did not extend to within at least 8 feet of the drain. It most certainly did not "occupy the entire enclosure." An examination of the face of the walls shows, particularly in their courses and joints, and in their ash *débris* stainings and discolorations, that this was not the case. But supposing it had done so—and there are overwhelming evidences still existing that such was not the case—what object could the two drains through the walls have possibly served, for they are still 4 or 5 feet below the level of the present top of the clay structure? The drains were intended to drain the floor of the enclosure, which, according to Prof. MacIver, was originally filled in with clay to a height of some feet above the drains, and this clay-work occupied the entire enclosure! Had it done so, as he suggests, the drains would have been buried to a depth of 3 or 4 feet in clay.

(3) But right under the centre of the clay structure I obtained, and Prof. Doncaster, and several other visitors also obtained, in Prof. MacIver's own trench which he cut through the cement structure, without finding either glass or china, or and buck teeth and pieces of wood, which it would be most preposterous to suggest as being of the age of the main walls of the temple.

Prof. MacIver but substantiates my case, which was stated over three years before his visit, that the clay mass and the hut upon it are of far more recent date than the erection of the main walls of the temple. The hut was obviously built by later occupiers. In my forthcoming 'Ancient and Mediæval Rhodesia,' I show this to be the case.

One other matter as to the discovery of Nanking china at the temple can be explained. It was reported two years ago that Nanking china had been found by Prof. MacIver under the foundations of the main walls of the temple. This, from examinations made of the foundations of the main walls of the temple, is, of course, impossible. But a piece of china was found by Prof. MacIver in No. 5 enclosure at 18 inches below the level of the foundations of the south main wall, but at 37 feet north-north-east (practically at right angles from the wall), and in soil which had been deeply double-trenched during 1892-4 by prospectors for relics and gold, whose handiwork at this spot I had described in 'Great Zimbabwe' two years before Prof. MacIver's visit there. These vandals in their illegal quest had broken up the original floors and all structures both of stone and cement, and had hopelessly mixed soils, deposits, and *débris*. It was in this disturbed soil the piece of Nanking china was found, and at a still lower depth I had already stated in 'Great Zimbabwe' that a soda-water bottle, the brown glass and wire-netting of a cognac bottle, a clay pipe, and an umbrella-frame, were also found. Nanking china discovered under these conditions can provide no possible "valid chronological data" to determine the time when the main walls of the temple were erected.

R. N. HALL.

Kenilworth, Cape Town, April 8, 1907.

MEETINGS OF THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, SESSION 1906-1907.

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT.

April 19, 1907.—Major C. F. CLOSE, C.M.G., R.E., in the Chair.

The paper read was:—

"The Origin and Influence of the Chief Physical Features of Northumberland and Durham." By David Woolacott, D.Sc., F.G.S.