

# Later Holocene Africa

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## 8.1 Introduction

The Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM) holds an assorted range of post-‘Stone Age’/later Holocene archaeological materials from Africa. Overall, the PRM database indicates that the total possible number of later Holocene archaeological objects from Africa is *c.* 7,419 (*c.* 69% is currently confirmed as archaeological on the database and *c.* 31% is possibly archaeological). In all, only 11 countries are definitely represented, if one includes Egypt and Sudan (see also Chapters 5, 6 and 7), by a total of *c.* 5,112 items. With the exception of Cape Verde and Algeria, all of these were either former British colonies or subject to periods of shared British rule. A further *c.* 2,307 items that are probably of a post-Stone Age archaeological origin are recorded as possibly ‘archaeological’ on the PRM database. These derive from 22 countries, with the largest collections (> 50 objects) being from Zimbabwe (*c.* 4,484 artefacts), South Africa (*c.* 961 artefacts), Sudan (*c.* 693 artefacts), Ghana (*c.* 318 artefacts), Nigeria (*c.* 286 artefacts), the Canaries (*c.* 217 artefacts), Egypt (*c.* 212 artefacts), Tanzania (*c.* 142 artefacts) and Cape Verde (*c.* 59 artefacts) (*Figure 8.1*). Of these 22 countries, 13 were either former British Colonies or subject to periods of shared British rule, and it is material from these territories that dominate.

The colonial origins of the collections are thus as much a part of their overall significance as the substantive aspects of each object or assemblage. The piecemeal nature of the collections from particular countries underlines this. Only in a few cases (notably the assemblage from the Webster Ruins in Zimbabwe, see 8.5.2 below) are the assemblages large enough to draw meaningful archaeological or historical conclusions. Instead, many of the smaller collections provide more insight into the activities of the collectors and prevailing archaeological concerns at the time the items were recovered. This said, it also needs to be recognized that each individual item holds some information about the past in the locality from which it was derived. Indeed in several cases, because of minimal subsequent research in these areas (Sierra Leone is an obvious example), the objects can tell us about the archaeological potential of such localities and they may even warrant further research.

The relatively small size of the later Holocene archaeological collection from Africa contrasts with the collection of ‘Stone Age’ material, which at some 17,611 pieces is more than twice the size (see Chapter 2). This difference further underlines the colonial origins of the PRM’s African archaeological collections. Specifically, because archaeology was established in the majority of African countries within

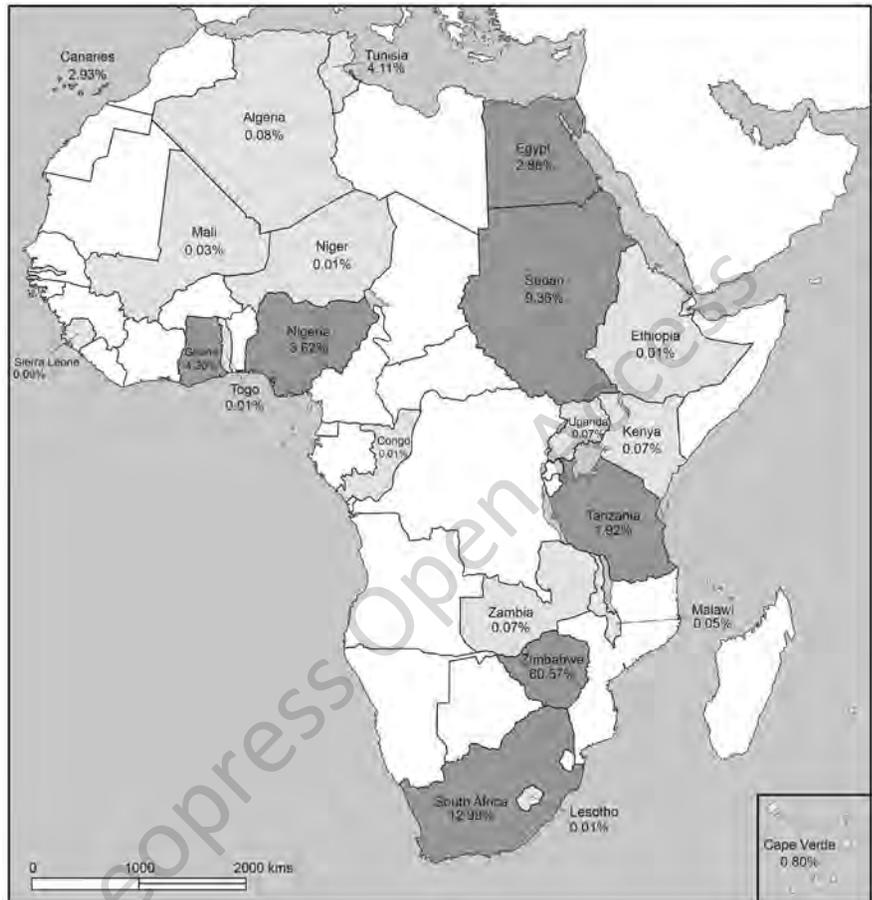


Figure 8.1 Map of Africa showing the proportion of later archaeological material in the Pitt Rivers Museum.

the context of early colonial rule, much of the early archaeological research on the continent was shaped by metropolitan concerns, notably in Britain and France. In the late 19th century, when European expansion into sub-Saharan Africa and colonisation began in earnest, the dominant archaeological concerns in both Britain and France was with the antiquity of humankind (Trigger 1989: 87), and the use of stone tool typology to establish a relative chronology of the Palaeolithic for different areas. Similar concerns were transferred to the African continent, and in many regions the later archaeology was more or less ignored, or given only cursory attention (see the regional histories in Robertshaw 1990a for details). The resultant typologies were often correlated with different environmental conditions – in Europe these were typically the main glaciations and interstadials, while in Africa ‘pluvials’ were seen as the main environmental event and chronological markers (e.g. Nilsson 1949; Wayland 1930).

Moreover, for at least some scholars, ‘archaeology’ meant simply a record of the Stone Age, as for example is implied by the following opening sentence to the section headed ‘Archaeology’ in Wilfrid Hambly’s 1935 account of Nigeria’s cultural areas, and in which he only discusses finds of Stone Age material:

‘Although a considerable amount of systematic archaeological work has been accomplished in Algeria, Egypt, Kenya and south Africa, the stone age of the continent as a whole has not been historically and culturally explained’ (Hambly 1935: 379).

Given these factors, this chapter will first provide a chronological and geographical overview (8.2), before turning to more detailed discussions on a regional basis: West Africa (8.3), Eastern Africa (8.4), Southern/Central Africa (8.5) and North/NE Africa (8.6, with offshore islands included as appropriate). In these regional sections, the broad archaeological significance of the material will be reviewed alongside the historiographic insights the collections provide regarding the collectors and their contribution to the development of the discipline on the African continent. The research potential of each area is summarized in section 8.7, and brief conclusions are drawn in section 8.8.

## 8.2 Chronological and Geographical Overview

Without detailed assessment of individual collections and artefacts it is not possible to offer precise information about the periods of later African prehistory and history represented in the PRM collections. However, it is clear that they span many different time periods: from initial phases of plant and animal domestication and the adoption of metallurgy, to the emergence of complex states and kingdoms and subsequent engagement with European colonialism. In broad terms, therefore, taken together the collections span the period from at least 4000 BCE to the early 20th century CE. One consequence of temporal uncertainty and acquisition method is that until such time as a detailed assessment can be undertaken the numbers of ‘archaeological’ objects noted below remain approximate.

While the temporal detail is more limited, quite precise information about the geographical origins of the material is available. This is summarized in *Tables 8.1* and *8.2*. A few general points can be made. First, it might be expected given the longer history of colonial rule in southern Africa and the creation of settler societies there that those collections would predominate. However, it is material from ‘Southern Rhodesia’ (i.e. Zimbabwe) that dominates numerically, rather than from the Republic of South Africa, which has a much longer record of professional, and even lay, archaeological activity (see Deacon 1990; Hall 1990). This contrasts with the pattern for ‘Stone Age’ material from the continent (see Chapter 2). A further contrast with the pattern for ‘Stone Age’ material is the very low proportion of material from either Kenya or Uganda, whereas material from both of these territories, and especially Kenya, feature prominently in the African ‘Stone Age’ collections largely as a result of the activities of Louis Leakey and E.J. Wayland, respectively (see Chapter 3).

## 8.3 West Africa

### 8.3.1 Overview

The later archaeological material from West Africa is relatively limited, both numerically and geographically. It comprises *c.* 674 objects (97 ‘confirmed’, 577 ‘possible’) from seven countries: Cape Verde, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo. The geographical spread and size of the collection is enhanced slightly by the inclusion of ‘probable’ material – much of which, to judge largely from database descriptions and some direct examination, is probably ‘archaeological’ in nature.

World Archaeology at the Pitt Rivers Museum: A Characterization  
 edited by Dan Hicks and Alice Stevenson, Archaeopress 2013, page 122-168

Table 8.1 Estimated numbers of post-Stone Age/ later Holocene 'archaeological' objects in from Africa in the collections of the Pitt Rivers Museum, by country.

Country	Number of Objects
Algeria	6
Canaries	217
Cape Verde	59
Congo	1
Egypt	212
Ethiopia	1
Ghana	318
Kenya	5
Lesotho	1
Malawi	4
Mali	2

Niger	1
Nigeria	286
Sierra Leone	7
South Africa	961
Sudan	693
Tanzania	142
Togo	1
Tunisia	8
Uganda	5
Zambia	5
Zimbabwe	4,484
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,419</b>

Region	Total
North & NE Africa (Algeria, Canary Islands, Egypt, Sudan & Tunisia)	1,136
West Africa (Cape Verde, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone & Togo)	674
Eastern Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania & Uganda)	153
Central Africa (Congo & Malawi)	5
Southern Africa (Lesotho, South Africa, Zambia & Zimbabwe)	5,451
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,419</b>

Table 8.2 Number of later archaeological objects from Africa in the collections of the Pitt Rivers Museum, by region.

[NB There are no objects, whether confirmed or possible, from Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gabon, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mayotte, Melilla, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Príncipe, Rwanda, São Tomé, Senegal, Somalia. Additionally, all eight entries (1939.6.9.1–2, 1939.6.10.1–2 and 1939.6.11.1–4) originally classified as possibly coming from the Benin Republic (formerly Dahomey), actually come from close to Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. Three glass currency beads (1920.53.1–3) collected by E.H. Lane Poole are counted twice because their provenance is listed only as the Lungwa River thus are included once for Zambia and once for Malawi, and some of the items from the Sudan are duplicated in the entries for Egypt.]

For later material there is probably a degree of overlap with more ethnographic/ ethnohistorical material and contexts. Examples of this kind include two 'prince' manilas (bronze bracelets used as a trading currency) recovered from excavations carried out as part of swamp reclamation project outside the 'native town' at Bonny, eastern Nigeria in 1911 and donated by Edwin Watts (1912.82.4–5).<sup>1</sup> These came from a chief's grave exposed during the project, and at the time of their recovery were estimated as being only *c.* 60 years old. Equally, it is possible that while some items were originally 'archaeological', the context of their collection was clearly among living communities. Good examples of this are the sherds of coarse pottery from Kano, northern Nigeria collected by Charles Kingsley Meek (1922.23.42–45) all said to have been used for 'covering buried corpses'.

The bulk of the West African material derives from either Nigeria (*c.* 286 objects) or Ghana (*c.* 318 objects): both countries where British colonial officials and others were active as collectors and as amateur archaeologists from early in the 20th century.

<sup>1</sup> NB the accession entries state that three such manilas were collected.

Charles Kingsley Meek, for example, after joining the colonial service was posted to northern Nigeria in 1912, eventually becoming appointed to one of the positions of Government Anthropologist. His book *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria* (1925), based on his work in this capacity, was a standard reference work for several decades thereafter. He later spent time in southern Sudan (and several of the photographs he took while there form part of the PRM's southern Sudan collections). He returned to Nigeria in 1929, following his promotion to the post of Resident for the southern provinces of Nigeria. He resigned from the service in 1933 owing to ill health.<sup>2</sup> Another active collector, perhaps better known for his collections of Annang and Ibibio art now held at the PRM (Pratten 2008) and his ethnographic studies in Bamun, Cameroon, was Mervyn David Waldgrave Jeffreys. After obtaining a B.Sc. in Anthropology from UCL, he served for many years as a District Officer in Nigeria and Cameroon (Jones 1974: 285). While in Nigeria he researched aspects of Ibo religious beliefs and practices for the colonial Government (see Jeffreys 1953), and drew on this material for his Ph.D. thesis on the *Divine Umundri Kings of Igbo Land*, for which he was awarded his doctorate from UCL in 1934. But he also took an active interest in the prehistory and archaeology of these areas as evidenced by the archaeological collections of the c. 1,400 artefacts that he donated to the PRM (see Chapter 2), and also by some of his publications (e.g. Jeffreys 1948, 1951, 1957, 1964).<sup>3</sup> Later in his career he became a Senior Lecturer in Anthropology at Witwatersrand University, where he researched, among other topics, various aspects of the history and origins of Khoi pastoralists (referring to them, in common with the times, as 'Hottentots'), and the introduction of maize as a crop to southern Africa (e.g. Jeffreys 1967, 1968). In some of his earlier publications on West Africa he drew parallels with material from Egypt, and his adherence to diffusionist models of cultural change, which had dominated while working in Nigeria, is also evident in his later publications on southern African topics.

With regard to the PRM's later archaeological materials from Ghana, the vast majority of the material was either collected directly by Captain Robert Powley Wild (1882–1946), who made several collections of material during the course of his duties, or was collected by other colonial officers and subsequently included in Wild's donations to the PRM. Born in 1882, Wild attended Repton School in Derbyshire, and then trained at the Camborne School of Mines in Cornwall in 1902. After graduation he worked in various Cornish mines until the outbreak of World War One. Following service with the Gloucestershire Rifles during the war, he was appointed Inspector of Mines in the Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1920, and remained in this post until 1937.<sup>4</sup> While in the Gold Coast he travelled widely around the country as part of his duties. Most of his work, however, was centred around the Ashanti region, which is where most of the mining activity was taking place. Wild developed a particular interest in the history and prehistory of this region and this is reflected in the nature of the collections he donated to the PRM. He founded *The Gold Coast Review*, a local publication which carried articles on aspects of the country's history, populations and archaeological discoveries, among other matters, and Wild was a regular contributor to the journal, especially on archaeological topics (Kense 1990; see also Shaw 1943). He also submitted several short papers on his discoveries to international journals, notably those published by the Royal Anthropological Institute (e.g. Wild 1934a, 1935a, 1935b, 1937) and published reports on his archaeological

<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://southernsudan.prm.ox.ac.uk/biography/meek/>

<sup>3</sup> Details of many other publications on West Africa by Jeffreys can be found here: [http://anthropology.ac.uk/era\\_resources/era/kingdom\\_bum/bib.html](http://anthropology.ac.uk/era_resources/era/kingdom_bum/bib.html). For a full bibliography of his academic publications, see Stone 1972. His private papers are in the Witwatersrand University Archives and these may provide more information about the context and circumstances of his archaeological collections.

<sup>4</sup> Cheltenham Museum Information Sheet 1: *Encounters with Africa: Cheltenham's collections revealed*. <http://www.cheltenhammuseum.org.uk/Docs/Encounters%20with%20Africa.pdf> (Accessed 14 February 2012).



Figure 8.2 Photographic portrait of prolific collector Robert Powley Wild (1882–1946) c.1920s (PRM Photograph Collections 1998.266.33).

finds in another local periodical, the *Gold Coast Teachers' Journal*. As well as donating material to the PRM, Cheltenham Museum also holds a sizeable body of ethnographic, geological and archaeological material, as well as several pieces of decorative art from his time in the Gold Coast. His discoveries also greatly helped a young Thurstan Shaw, who was in his very first archaeological post in Africa, to familiarize himself with Ghana's archaeology and to recognise the archaeological potential of certain areas, such as the Kwahu scarp (Shaw 1990: 209).

The only material from West Africa

collected by a professional archaeologist is that from the Cape Verde Islands, donated by O.G.S. Crawford following a visit to St Vincent Island in 1913, to which he makes a brief reference in his autobiography (1955: 89). While there he made a small collection of artefacts and associated marine shells from a shell midden on the shores of the Bay of João d'Évora on the northern shores of the island. This is one of the main highlights of the West African collections (see 8.3.3 below), even though in his autobiography Crawford seemingly dismissed the material as being 'not very old' (Crawford 1955: 89).

### 8.3.2 R.P. Wild's Archaeological Collections

While serving in Ghana, R.P. Wild (Figure 8.2) collected a considerable body of information about the distribution of polished stone axes (termed *nyamekuma* or *nyame akuma*; 'god axe') across southern Ghana. He collected several of them in person and acquired others from people with whom he came into contact as part of his duties as Government Inspector of Mines, especially from alluvial gold and diamond workings and manganese mines (Wild 1934a: 203). Wild donated 91 of these axes to the PRM over the course of a decade. In this regard, Wild was continuing an earlier tradition and interest among British residents and visitors to the region, and he was no doubt influenced by papers such as that by Balfour (1912) referred to above. Wild also conducted excavations at Monkey Hill, Obuasi where he exposed a metre and a half of occupation deposits, below which he found several stone axes and a pottery type he described as 'archaic'. Examples of this material, 31 artefacts in total, are included in the PRM's collection (1921.40.45, 1922.40.1, 1922.44.12–40, 1923.5.1–

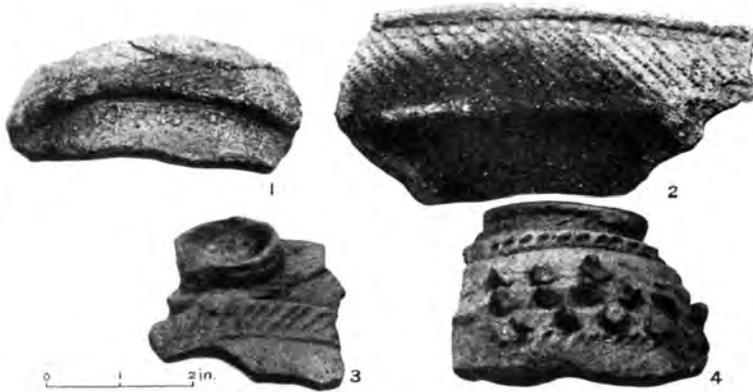


Figure 8.3 Photograph of 'Pottery fragments from Monkey Hill, Obuasi' (Reproduced from Wild 1934a: pl. xxiii, figure 1). The sherds are among a currently un-numbered ceramic assemblage from Monkey Hill, Ghana (PRM Accession Numbers 1922.44.28–40).



Figure 8.4 Photograph of 'Pottery fragments from Monkey Hill, Obuasi' (Reproduced from Wild 1934a: pl. xxiii, figure 2). The sherds are among a currently un-numbered ceramic assemblage from Monkey Hill, Ghana (PRM Accession Numbers 1922.44.28–40).



Figure 8.5 Photograph of 'Pot from a depth of 15 feet in auriferous gravels, at Abomposu, 9 miles NE of Obuasi, height 4½ inches' (Reproduced from Wild 1934a: 212, pl. xxv, Figure 4). This Ghanaian vessel is held at the PRM (PRM Accession Number 1926.37.1).

Figure 8.6 Photograph of 'Stone beads from diamondiferous gravels at Akwatia, Eastern Province, Gold Coast'. Found in a pot at depth of 12 feet' (Reproduced from Wild 1934a: 212-3, pl. xxv Figure 5). The beads from part of an assemblage of 58 beads and 4 bead fragments from this Ghanaian site, all of which are held at the PRM (PRM Accession Number 1936.39.2).



12, 1925.34.4-5, 1932.11.7 and some of the diagnostic pottery in the collection is illustrated in a paper later published by Wild (Figures 8.3 and 8.4) along with a pot recovered from Abomposu (Figure 8.5). Some 58 of the stone beads that formed part of a group of 76 recovered from Akwatia (Figure 8.6) are also held in the PRM (1936.39.2).<sup>5</sup> These finds were associated with pieces of slag-covered tuyères, from which Wild inferred that the remains represented 'a transitional Upper Neolithic-Iron Age culture' (Wild 1927a, 1927b, 1929<sup>6</sup> cited in Kiyaga-Mulindwa 1982: 65). Wild also noted the associations between different types of artefacts at a range of other sites he visited, including that at Nstua, where pottery and quartz flakes were found in association at a depth of about 1-1.5m below ground level (4-6 feet) (1934a: 205).

In his discussion of the later archaeology of the Birim Valley to the south-east, David Kiyaga-Mulindwa provides a useful synopsis of the significance of Wild's discoveries and interpretations (1982: 65-70), which is briefly summarized here. In brief, Wild recognized that these remains could not be attributed to either local Asante or their direct ancestors, on the basis of several observations: local Asante and other groups all regarded the remains as being both 'ancient' and of supernatural or celestial origin; the location of these archaeological sites tended to be restricted to hill-tops, whereas Asante and other groups preferred lower ground and associated hill-tops with malevolent spirits; at Obuasi there was a distinct break in stratigraphy between the upper horizons and those containing the mixed pottery, polished stone axes and iron working debris assemblage; and the pottery found associated with slag, tuyères and quartz flakes was much coarser than pottery made by Asante, as well as being more heavily decorated and having different forms. Wild further noted that the Obuasi pottery was similar to material found on sites on the Accra Plain and with pottery found around Effiduase. Kiyaga-Mulindwa (1982: 70-1) subsequently drew parallels between this material and what he described as 'Earthworks Ware'. The latter's illustrations of 'Earthworks ware' pottery (1982: 68) provides a useful comparison<sup>7</sup> with the material from Monkey Hill and other sites illustrated by Wild (1934a: pls. xxiii-xxv). Other comparative material collected by Wild is in the British Museum (e.g. Wild 1934b; 1935) and Cheltenham Museum.

### 8.3.3 Cape Verde Islands

The PRM holds c. 59 archaeological objects from the Cape Verde Islands. Cape Verde was probably uninhabited prior to the expansion of the Atlantic slave trade and European commercial activity on the west coast of Africa in the late 15th century

<sup>5</sup> The remainder are in the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology and the British Museum (Wild 1934a: 213).

<sup>6</sup> An almost verbatim extract from Wild's 1929 paper is provided in Wild 1934a: 209ff.

<sup>7</sup> See also, Brauholtz 1936.

CE. The Islands are believed to have been discovered between 1456 and 1460 and the settlement of Ribeira Grande, which became the Islands' capital (now named Cidade Velha), was founded in 1462 (Hall 1993).<sup>8</sup> The islands came under the crown administration of Portugal in 1466 and remained an important staging port in the Atlantic slave trade for the next 300 years. The Islands gained their independence from Portugal on July 5 1975. Archaeological research on the Cape Verde islands has been limited, partly because it was only settled comparatively recently. With the growing rise of interest in historical archaeology and the archaeology of slave and maroon societies, this is now changing, as exemplified by ongoing research on the archaeology and heritage of slavery on the island by a team from Cambridge University (Evans *et al.* 2011).

In 1913 O.G.S. Crawford set out for Easter Island with the Routledges (see Chapter 27), but following quarrels with them he disembarked at St Vincent (van Tilburg 2002). It was here that he made some investigations of middens at the Bay of Joao D'Erora (Figures 8.7 and 8.8).<sup>9</sup> The finds made by Crawford now in the PRM (1913.34.1–29) comprise a large sample of pottery (which from fabric types, rim forms and other physical characteristics clearly represent several different vessels), a few iron objects, and a large collection of marine shells all with a wide distribution along the West African coast. The latter include examples of *Spondylus powelli*, *Thais haemstoma* and *Patella lugubris* (limpet).

Further excavations were carried out at a shell-midden in the same locality in 1998 by M. Conceição Rodrigues (2001), who also studied the material collected by Crawford. She suggests that the site was most probably occupied sometime between the end of the fifteenth and middle of the 17th century CE (Rodrigues 2001: 264). Given the history of human colonisation of the islands, it is possible that the shell midden could have been associated with either a population of freed slaves or maroons (runaway slaves). The sea off Cape Verde is extremely rich in fish, as two streams of the Canary Current flow past the islands, bringing with them large quantities of plankton. Nevertheless, for much of the Islands' history the Portuguese colonial officials and plantation owners actively prohibited boat ownership except among the elite, so as to prevent escape by slaves, political detainees, exiled criminals and disaffected soldiers (Brooks 2006). The poor soils on the islands also limited the scope for agriculture and the population often experienced severe famine, resulting in the loss of many lives. The extent of Portuguese control has prompted the historian George Brooks to liken their rule of the islands to that of a gulag (Brooks 2006). Under such circumstances, the population of St Vincent island may well have had to rely heavily on what they could gather from the foreshore,<sup>10</sup> although some of the shell species represented may have been used for other purposes (dyeing cloth in the case of *T. haemstoma*, for instance). Crawford's collection thus provides helpful insights into how such groups survived.

### 8.3.4 Benin Republic

At the beginning of the Characterization project, 8 artefacts (1939.6.9–11) were recorded in the Accession Register as having come from the Benin Republic, all collected and donated by R.H. Hide who in 1939 was a Forestry Officer with the Nigerian Forest Department based in Ibadan.<sup>11</sup> A detailed supplementary note with

<sup>8</sup> See also <http://www1.umassd.edu/SpecialPrograms/caboverde/cvchrono.html>

<sup>9</sup> From a set of three photographs and a map kept in the Related Document Files (RDF) for 1913.34.1–29.

<sup>10</sup> Note also that only very fragmentary fish and terrestrial animal bones were recovered during the 1998 excavations.

<sup>11</sup> Hide was stationed at Nikrowa at least between 1936 and 1938, if not longer, and erected the first

Figure 8.7 Photograph labelled as 'View of the midden-site looking east across the dry torrent-bed'. The midden site is located near to the bay of João d'Evora on the island of São Vicente (Saint Vincent), Cape Verde Islands, taken by O.G.S. Crawford 1913 (PRM Photograph Collections 2011.11.2).



Figure 8.8 Photograph of 'near view of midden with exposed sherds'. The midden site is located near to the bay of João d'Evora on the island of São Vicente (Saint Vincent), Cape Verde Islands, taken by O.G.S. Crawford 1913 (PRM Photograph Collections 2011.11.3).



items 1939.6.9 .1–2 (two small pottery crucibles used in brass manufacture) suggests that these at least were relatively ‘modern’ at the time of their collection. Other items include a metal knife and ring, pot sherds and a sample of glass beads. These are all said to have been either dug up by R.H. Hide from a ‘house mound’ in ‘virgin bush’ at Nikrowa, Benin, or found along the bank of a nearby stream. Nikrowa is an Ijaw fishing village situated in the southern part of Okomu Forest Reserve,<sup>12</sup> which is a block of land about 40 km across between the River Siluko (which in the 1930s formed its western boundary) and the River Osse (which formed its eastern boundary). The reserve is situated c.40 km west of Benin City in the south-western part of what was Benin Province and is now Edo State, Nigeria. The Forest Department had a rest house situated on a small river at Nikrowa about 8 km south of the village of Udo and 3 km from the Osse River, close to a logging camp used by the United Africa Company (Richards 1939: 5–6).<sup>13</sup> A scale map of this area in E.W. Jones’s report on some of the results of the ecological survey carried out by a Cambridge University team in 1938–1939 (of which Richards was one of the leaders) and of a second survey conducted in 1947–1948, shows the location of the rest house and other features (Jones 1955: 567). Jones also notes in his report that the majority of the soil pits dug as part of the later expedition contained:

‘fragments of charcoal and of pots .... Generally speaking, the charcoal was in the form of minute flecks, though large pieces were sometimes present, and it was thinly scattered from about 10 in. (25 cm.) downwards. In many pits it was recorded as extending down to about 20 or 24 in. (51–62 cm.), but in several pits it extended to 34–40 in. (86–100 cm.) and in one exceptional pit, to 47 in. (119 cm.)’ (Jones 1955: 570).

He goes on to observe that:

‘Fragments of pot were recorded in seventeen pits, and may have been overlooked in others, as they were sometimes present in very small amounts. Usually only small fragments were found, but some large pieces were recovered; they have been deposited with the Department of Antiquities at Lagos. Except in one pit (0.31) which is unique in other respects, it was never nearer the surface than 10 in. (15 cm), and it extended down to 24 in. (61 cm.); it was thus in the lower part of or below the compacted horizon II’ (Jones 1955: 570).

Taken together with a note from E. D. Jones to Thomas Penniman that reads, ‘Forest Assistant Akpata, a native of Benin, says that the two pots from the Nikrowa Rest House site are like the crucibles now used by the Benin brass-workers’ (on the Accession entries for 1939.6.9.1–2, dated 25 October, 1948), it seems fairly clear that Hide found this material in this area and not in the Benin Republic. This is further confirmed by Jones (1956: 102):

‘When the Forest Rest House ... was being built in 1936, two very nearly complete pots (now in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford) and a curved iron knife<sup>14</sup> were

proper house for Forest Officers there (Pauline von Hellermann, pers. comm. 8/8/2010). He published an interesting paper on the skills of members of the local Bini ethnic group as botanists (Hide 1943).

<sup>12</sup> A small part of which is now Okomu National Park, while other sections have been turned over to oil palm plantations or for subsistence agriculture. See von Hellermann and Usuanlele 2009.

<sup>13</sup> The forest was an important source of mahogany (*Khaya*, *Entandophragma* spp., *Guarea* spp.) during the colonial era. For detailed information about the more recent history of forest management and exploitation, and associated environmental narratives, see von Hellermann and Usuanlele 2009, and von Hellermann 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Presumably 1939.6.10 .1.

found, and it seems probable that they were associated with one of these mounds, though the evidence is not quite conclusive. The knife was unlike anything now in use in the district; the nearest match was a Hausa reaping-knife from northern Nigeria'

The database entries for these items have therefore been changed to identify their country of origin as Nigeria. Therefore, no Holocene-period archaeological objects derive from the Benin Republic.

These discoveries are important as they have the potential to shed some light on the longer-term historical ecology of this forest. Jones recognized that the evidence for human settlement indicated that much of the Okumu Forest Reserve was not virgin, primary tropical forest as had been presumed, but was secondary forest. He proposed that the forest had regenerated after a phase of fairly dense human settlement in the area, and that the secondary forest was perhaps some 200–300 years old (Jones 1956: 106).<sup>15</sup> A recent re-investigation attempted to reconstruct local forest histories using a combination of radiocarbon dating of buried charcoal horizons and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  isotopic analysis to assess vegetation change (White and Oates 1999). In this study, no pottery or charcoal was found between the surface and 20 cm below ground level. At *c.* 20 cm there was a concentration of pottery and charcoal in a *c.* 5 cm thick layer, and more scattered distribution of both charcoal and pottery up to *c.* 34 cm, with charcoal flecking but no pottery extending up to a depth of *c.* 60 cm in some test-pits. Two radiocarbon dates were obtained on charcoal, including a sample from one of Jones's study plots. This was dated to  $760 \pm 50$  BP (1177–1378 cal. CE); the second sample yielded a date of  $700 \pm 60$  BP (1230–1300 cal. CE). The soil  $^{13}\text{C}/^{12}\text{C}$  isotope ratio also indicated that there had been no significant input from  $\text{C}_4$  grasses (White and Oates 1999: 356–7). The authors suggest that the area was used for a relatively short-lived phase of settlement and oil palm production associated with the rise of Udo (*c.* 15 km distant) around 1300 CE. The latter settlement was first settled in the early first millennium CE and has traces of a large earthen town wall on its outskirts. This has also been dated to *c.* 1300 CE (Darling 1976). The town was destroyed by the rulers of Benin City probably in the early 16th century (White and Oates 1999).

### 8.3.5 Nigeria

The database records *c.* 260 archaeological objects from Nigeria (20 'confirmed', 240 'probable'). The majority of the 'probable' material is, to judge from the database entries, of an archaeological nature. Ten individuals are responsible for creating these collections. The material comes from at least six states (Katsina, Bauchi, Kano, Benue, Cross River and Rivers), with the bulk of the collection being derived from Cross River State. The latter material (*c.* 125 artefacts) was collected and donated by M.D.W. Jeffreys, and is mostly pottery artefacts (1942.13.753–762). Archaeological research in Cross River State during the period of British colonial rule is perhaps most closely associated with the work of Kenneth Murray (who eventually became Nigeria's first Surveyor and subsequently Director of Antiquities) and the studies by Philip Allison of a series of anthropomorphic stone monoliths – subsequently designated as 'Cross River Monoliths' (Ray 2004). Jeffreys' research in the region is nevertheless important: both because there has been relatively limited archaeological

<sup>15</sup> Jones was less precise about the date of the archaeological remains, and reviews several possibilities (including the possibility that the mounds in which the artefacts were found were actually fossil termitaria – see his postscript on 117) (1956, 101–5). Additional information may be in his original field notes, which are in Rhodes House, Oxford.

study of domestic settlements in this area (from which much of the material Jeffreys collected seems to have been derived), and also because of its pioneering nature, pre-dating the work by Murray and Allison.

Among the other areas of Nigeria represented in the collection, several metal objects, including some tin beads (1915.19.3–4) and an iron adze (1922.23.30) are from the Bauchi and Jos Plateaus central Nigeria. These metal objects could well be associated with the Nok Culture. This high (average *c.* 1,280 m), grass-covered tableland (and remains) the centre of Nigeria's tin (alluvial cassiterite) and other deposits,<sup>16</sup> which have been actively mined commercially since the early 20th century. Many of the items in the collection were discovered as a result of mining activities or associated infrastructure works. Scholarly interest in the area, however, was initially prompted by the discovery of finds of polished stone axes or 'celts', some of which were donated to the British Museum (Smith 1919). In common with many other parts of West Africa, local populations considered these to be thunderbolts and as having a supernatural origin. Henry Balfour, among others, took a particular interest in this artefact type, their distribution in the region and their meaning to local populations (1912) and there are many examples from the region in the PRM's African archaeological collections, notably from both Nigeria and Ghana (see Chapter 2). However, the Bauchi Plateau is also where, in 1928, the first example of a Nok culture terracotta figurine was discovered. At its height, the Nok Culture encompassed an area of about 500 km in length and 170 km in width on the Bauchi plateau, and has been dated to between *c.* 900 BCE and 200 CE (Fagg 1969). Given the rich mineral deposits on the Plateau, it is perhaps unsurprising that some of the earliest evidence for the emergence of iron smelting in West Africa, dated to *c.* 500 BCE (Tylecote 1975), also comes from the Nok culture zone. More recent work by Breunig and colleagues (Rupp *et al.* 2008), has also demonstrated that it was an early centre of pearl millet cultivation and the beginnings of sedentary farming in central Nigeria. The discovery (in 1922) of the tin beads that are now in the PRM pre-dates the discovery of Nok figurines. They were found in the Bisichi district during the winning of cassiterite. As Justice and Johnston reported in 1922,

'a considerable number of curious perforated cylindrical tin beads have been dug up from a depth of from 12 to 16 feet. The beads are about a quarter of an inch in length. In the same way, in winning tin at Ropp, curious spirals half an inch in length are frequently recovered in dressing the cassiterite. These spirals are of pure tin and could scarcely have been formed by other than human agency. Whereas these ornaments are found at considerable depths, stone implements are commonly found all over the surface, but chiefly where there are any stonework erections and earth mounds' (1922: 3–4).

### 8.3.6 Ghana

The *c.* 318 later archaeological objects (45 'confirmed', 273 'possible') from Ghana encompass a diverse range of material, including polished stone axes, pottery, iron slag, stone beads and metal objects. Judging from Accession Register entries and some visual inspection, all of this material can be legitimately considered archaeological, although some items may have been less than 100 years old when initially collected. Some, although archaeological in origin may have been collected from ethnographic contexts. This especially applies to the polished stone axes which are widely found

<sup>16</sup> The world's largest deposits of columbite occur here, for instance.



Figure 8.9 A soapstone *nomoli*, collected by Stanley Monk Despicht in Sierra Leone (PRM Accession Number 1934.24.2).

in religious shrines both in Ghana and elsewhere in West Africa. In terms of its geographical range, much is derived from districts within the Ashanti kingdom or from elsewhere in the southern part of the country. The bulk of the collection derives from donations made by R.P. Wild who, although working as a geologist and mines inspector, was one of the pioneers of archaeological research in the country, thereby giving this material an additional historical significance. Five other individuals (Bulwinkle, Walker, Haviland, de Bushnell and Sinclair) were also active collectors, although in some cases they donated their material to Wild who subsequently passed it on to the PRM. Of these none appears to have published any papers on their discoveries, although G.E. Sinclair whose donation comprises a selection of different types of beads, did write a brief paper on his observations of contemporary bead making in Ashanti (Sinclair 1939).

### 8.3.6 Other Territories

Only two other West African territories are represented in the collections – Sierra Leone, by seven objects: a clay spindle whorl, 2 soapstone *nomoli* anthropomorphic figures (1934.24.1–2, Figure 8.9), and 3 similar figures made of steatite (1931.82.1–3); and 2 from Mali: comprising a large pottery sherd and a blue glass bead. The *nomoli* and *nomoli*-like figures are of particular significance, especially as the origins and chronological range of this category of African figurative sculpture is still only poorly known (Hart and Fyfe 1993).

## 8.4 Eastern Africa

### 8.4.1 Overview

Like the West African material, the East African component of the collection is uneven, both geographically and chronologically. Later archaeological material from four countries in Eastern Africa – Kenya (8.4.2), Uganda (8.4.3), Ethiopia (8.4.4) and Tanzania (8.4.5), including material from Pangani on the north Tanzanian coast (8.4.6) – is represented.

### 8.4.2 Kenya

Somewhat surprisingly, given the early establishment of protectorate and then colonial status, the size of its European settler population, and the pioneering ethnographical, historical and archaeological activities of individuals such as Sir Charles Hobley, Rev. Walter Owen, G.W.B Huntingford, E.J. Wayland, and Louis Leakey (on the activities of the latter two, see Sutton 2006, 2007 and Chapter 3), as well as those of numerous colonial officials, the material from Kenya is limited to just four ‘confirmed’ items and one ‘probable’ (which is almost certainly of an archaeological nature rather than

an ethnohistoric one). All but one item (1967.19.52 a sherd of Islamic pottery found along the Tana River), are from the central part of the Rift Valley, between Lake Baringo (an iron object, 1930.87.1, probably of 18th- or 19th-century origin, said to be from a site along a historic trade route) and Lake Nakuru (parts of a large broken pot 1928.25.2). The small size of the later archaeological material from Kenya contrasts with the scale of the 'Stone Age' collections held by the PRM (Chapters 2 and 3 above), and is perhaps indicative of the preoccupation with the early phases of prehistory rather than Kenya's later archaeological past among the pioneers of the discipline in the country: a preoccupation which continued throughout much of the colonial era (See Robertshaw 1990b: 78–85).

#### 8.4.3 Uganda

There is even less material from Uganda, again somewhat surprisingly given the interest shown by colonial administrators and others in the history of the various Great Lakes kingdoms, such as those of Buganda and Bunyoro (Schmidt 1990). The only recorded items comprise five iron ore samples from a cave site at Kyagwe Kyeitabya in Buganda, donated by the Reverend W.E. Owen. Owen is better known for his 'discovery' of 'Dimple-based' or Urewe tradition ceramics (Leakey *et al.* 1948), used as the type fossil for marking the start of the Early Iron Age, the beginnings of settled agriculture and arrival of the first speakers of Bantu languages (Oliver 1966). He is also noted for his work on defining local occurrences of ESA and MSA assemblages (e.g. Leakey and Owen 1945). According to the database entry (2007.93.1 .1–5), these pieces of iron ore were found 'mingled with stone tools of early type and flakes', but these do not seem to have been collected or at least did not form part of Owen's donation to the PRM. It is difficult to tell, therefore, whether the iron ore and lithics were *in situ* or whether (as seems more likely) the association with stone tools was simply due to post-depositional mixing of deposits. Recent research has shown that the organisation of iron production in the Buganda kingdom, contrary to previous assumptions, was often on an industrial scale, resulting in large blocks of slag (in some case more than 100 kg in weight) and associated scatters of furnace walls, slag and tuyères (Humphris *et al.* 2009). Earlier Iron Age settlement of this area, by contrast, appears to have been rather more diffuse (Reid 2003). Without further information about the context of these discoveries, these pieces of slag could range in date from c. 250 BCE to the 19th century CE.

#### 8.4.4 Ethiopia

Ethiopia is similarly poorly represented, with just a single 'possible' object listed; a potential Coptic textile (1939.5.7), although its provenance is unclear and it may be from Egypt. This is perhaps less surprising given that the country was only briefly colonised following an invasion by Italian forces in March 1935, and the subsequent creation in June 1936 of an administrative territory known as *Africa Orientale Italiana* (Italian East Africa). This ceased to exist after the liberation of the country in late 1941 by a combined, British-led military force. Although foreign explorers, including some of British origin visited the Ethiopian kingdom,<sup>17</sup> systematic archaeological research did not begin until the early part of the 20th century and was mostly dominated by German- and Italian-led expeditions (Brandt and Fattovich 1990). Hence, British involvement in researching the country's archaeology only really began after 1941.

<sup>17</sup> Notably the Scot James Bruce who visited Aksum in 1769 and the then capital Gondar in 1770, and the English Egyptologist Henry Salt, who conducted the first 'archaeological' reconnaissance of the country in 1805.

#### 8.4.5 Tanzania

The largest element of the East African portion of the collection derives from Tanzania (*c.*142 objects). The bulk of this material is comprised of imported Chinese, and to a lesser extent Islamic ceramics recovered from surface collections from around the town of Pangani at the northern end of the Tanzania coast. Other material of approximately the same date includes 4 'Arab' coins (1940.12.547–550) from Kilwa donated by C.G. Seligman, and 2 complete glazed Ming Dynasty pottery snuff bottles (1958.1.3–4) also from Kilwa, which is located at the southern end of Tanzania's coastline. The latter are particularly fine examples of their type and are on permanent display at the PRM. They were bought on the open market by R.E. Tanner, who also donated the material from Pangani and a collection of lithic artefacts and pottery collected from the south side of Ngorongoro Crater, northern Tanzania. There is also material from Singida in the centre of the country, from close to the border with Rwanda in the north-west, and from the western side of Lake Victoria.

The chronological range of the Tanzanian material is even broader than its geographical range. Although the bulk of the material can be attributed to the later phases of the 'Swahili era' (*c.* 1300–1700 CE), the collection also includes 3 ostrich egg-shell beads (1988.39.71–73) of likely Later Stone Age (LSA) date from Olduvai Gorge (donated by the prominent Pleistocene geologist Bill Bishop). The material from Ngorongoro Crater (1958.11.34–37) collected by Tanner comes from two separate sites. Both are likely to have been associated with pastoralist populations, and in view of their association with flaked stone artefacts of obsidian and other raw material including jasper and chalcedony, they could be of Pastoral Neolithic date (*c.*1200 BCE–1200 CE), although the use of red slip and impressed cord decoration points more to a Pastoral Iron Age date (post *c.* 1200 CE). Despite being small in number, this material certainly warrants more detailed study.

Early levels at Kilwa Kisiwani date to around 800 CE, and the town grew to prominence from *c.* 1100 CE to 1500 CE as a major political centre, initially under the Shirazi dynasty (Chittick 1974). During this time it was major port on the Swahili coast linked to the Indian Ocean trade network and with Great Zimbabwe in the interior. Major exports were ivory and gold, both obtained from the Zimbabwe Plateau and beyond. One of its better-known visitors was the Moroccan trader Ibn Battuta, who visited in 1331 CE during the reign (1310–1333 CE) of Sultan al-Hasan ibn Sulaiman Abu'l-Mawahib, who was part of the Mahadi dynasty. The town had its own mint, and finds of copper coins minted at Kilwa are relatively common. These have a relatively uniform size (20–25 mm) and weight (1.50–2.50 gm), and 'are characterised by the rhyme between the two sides: the obverse affirms the ruler's faith in Allah ... [this] is followed [on the reverse] by an epithet of Allah chosen to rhyme with the ruler's name' (Brown 1991: 1).

The coins donated by Seligman are probably of this type; they could be usefully compared with other known examples from the Kilwa mint.<sup>18</sup> Coinage made from precious metals is rare. Silver coins may have been minted in the Pemba area further north, and it is also known that gold coins were minted at Kilwa as at least three examples naming Kilwa as the mint are known (Brown 1991), although how common this practice was is uncertain. The Ming pottery snuff bottles date to a period of Kilwa's later history during which the town was in decline as it began to lose its importance in the Indian Ocean trade network following the arrival of the Portuguese and other European powers in the region.

<sup>18</sup> Further references relating to coins from Kilwa and other Swahili sites can be found in Brown 1991.

In addition to this clearly archaeological material, the Tanzanian collections also contains material that might be more correctly described as ethnographic or ethnohistoric. Much of this is listed in the 'possible' category. The brass torque (1995.27.2) from the Pare Mountains is a good example of this – although it certainly has value for understanding the capabilities of Pare blacksmiths in the 19th century in addition to its historical and ethnographic significance. Also, only a few examples of these are known from other museum collections. The pottery vessel recovered from close to the Rwandan border (1964.6.3) could well be archaeological. That it has roulette decoration indicates that it can be attributed to the Later Iron Age, and unlikely to be older than *c.* 1300 CE when this decorative technique came into use in the region.

Along with the torque from Pare, the 12 wooden objects (1929.30.1–12) from Singida District, central Tanzania (found by A.O. Flynn, but donated by A.T. Culwick), are probably the most significant items of more recent date. They were probably no more than 100 years old when collected, possibly even less than this. Culwick was an administrative officer in Tanganyika. He is best known perhaps for his publications on the Bena with his wife, the anthropologist G.M. Culwick, who he met while they were students at Oxford, and also their later work on population, food and health in colonial Tanganyika (e.g. Culwick and Culwick 1935; Culwick *et al.* 1994). He also published several papers on ethnographic material culture from different parts of Central Tanzania and provided the first comprehensive account of rock paintings in the Singida District (Culwick 1931a; 1931 b). Although these occur in caves and rockshelters, he makes no mention of any wooden artefacts being found in the ones he visited. The main ethnic group in Singida are the Nyaturu or Turu, among whom the American anthropologist Harold Schneider conducted extensive research (e.g. Schneider 1966) and he noted that Turu are accomplished wood carvers. Moreover, carved wooden objects attributable to the Turu, including some shields, periodically feature on websites of dealers in African Art.

Mention also needs to be made of the three slabs of rock with painted motifs in red ochre (1933.67.1–3). These were collected from Nyamiji rockshelter in Bukoba District by R.D.H. Arundell (1936: 115). Nyamiji is one of several rockshelters and caves with painted rock art in the area of northern Kagera and *c.* 90 separate localities are now known. The best known are those around the village of Bwanjai, *c.* 25 km north-west of Bukoba, where there are many shelters, the largest of which has several hundred paintings. The Bukoba rock art differs from the better studied art from around Kondoa, and lacks naturalistic imagery. The paintings are executed predominantly in red, and overlays are rare. Geometric motifs, mostly blocks of red dots and what have usually been interpreted as stylised human 'stick' figures dominate (see Arundell 1936: pls. xii–xvi), although some probably also represent stylized cattle (Mabulla 2005: 21). The art has usually been regarded as of relatively recent origin, perhaps originating in the 16th century, and to have been produced by Bantu-language speaking farming populations.

#### 8.4.6 Pangani

The PRM holds a significant assemblage of Chinese export ceramics collected by R.E. Tanner from near Pangani, located *c.* 45 km south of Tanga on the northern Tanzania coast. The modern town was probably established toward the end of the 18th century CE, or even in the early 19th century (Freeman-Grenville 1962). By the 1840s it had become a prominent entrepôt for the burgeoning ivory trade. During the latter part of the 19th century several plantations were established in the vicinity farmed by slave labour brought down from the interior. The town gained later prominence as the site of a rebellion against German occupation at the end of the

century (Glassman 1995). Owing to a lack of commercial development, much of the 19th- and early 20th-century architecture associated with the merchant classes and early German colonial administration survives, and a local NGO *Uzikuwasa* is actively promoting the conservation and rehabilitation of these buildings. From July 2010, the Department of History and Archaeology at the University of Dar es Salaam has begun to run one of its field-schools in archaeological and historical methods at Pangani, with the aim to document and research the surviving archaeology around the town.<sup>19</sup>

There has been some previous archaeological work at and around Pangani, and initial work, at least, was in part motivated by the belief that the town of Rhapta may have been located in the general vicinity (e.g. Baxter 1944; Datoo 1970; see also Kirwan 1986). Rhapta is named after the sewn boats (*rhapton ploiarion*) used on this section of the East African coast and was mentioned by Ptolemy in his *Geography*. It is also described in the 1st-century CE text *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (Casson 1989) as the 'very last market-town of the continent of Azania' and as a major emporium and source of ivory and tortoise-shell. The early focus was thus on the ruins of a small settlement with stone built houses, mosques and *ngoma* (or protective wall) situated on a bluff about 2–3 km north of Pangani in an area known as Muhembo. The bluff is almost certainly part of a fossil shoreline that once overlooked the mouth of the Pangani River. Deposition of stream-bed material, however, resulted in this area gradually silting over and the mouth of the river moving southwards to the opposite bluff. Local oral traditions also name Muhembo as the settlement site that preceded the town of Pangani and that in the mid-17th century a man known as Waziri bin Pangani was the chief (Pangani District Book). In 1728, the then king, Mwinyi Makuma is documented as having made a visit to Mombasa to offer his allegiance to Portugal (Strandes 1961 [1899]).

G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville visited the site during the 1950s and placed the foundation of Muhembo at *c.* 1540 CE and the date of the move from Muhembo to Pangani at around 1820. He identified a mosque 15 feet wide and 30 feet long with a room 7 feet wide running down the whole of the west side, noting that the *mibrab* was similar to those in the mosques at Tongoni (north of Muhembo and *c.* 17 km south of Tanga) and Toten Island off Tanga harbour (Freeman-Grenville 1962). Peter Garlake also visited the site sometime between July 1962 and March 1964, and published drawings of two mosques in his *Early Islamic Architecture of the East African Coast* (1966). The second mosque was much smaller than the one already recorded by Freeman-Grenville. Garlake attributed the style of the *mibrabs* of both mosques to his 'early classic type', a simple and relatively plain style of *mibrab* with finely cut stonework which in other places he dates to the late 14th or 15th centuries.

Further investigations around the site and more generally in the vicinity of Pangani were carried out in the late 1970s by R.M. Gramly (1981). His survey located a range of archaeological sites dating from the Late Stone Age (LSA) to the 19th century. He failed to locate any sizeable settlement remains, however, and concluded that had Rhapta existed it was probably not situated near Pangani. With regard to Muhembo, he felt the settlement would have been comparatively modest and poor relative to neighbouring contemporary Swahili stone-towns. He dated its main occupation to the 15th century, and suggested that the main mosque may have been destroyed during a punitive expedition by the Portuguese in 1635. Most recently (early 2000s), Jonathan Walz has conducted extensive surveys around Pangani and excavations at Muhembo as part of his doctoral research at the University of Florida, Gainesville (see Walz 2005, 2010). Full details of the results of this work have yet to be made publicly available. Daniel Rhodes also conducted

<sup>19</sup> *Pers. comm.* Thomas Biginagwa, 20 June 2010.

surveys around Pangani in the late 2000s for his doctoral research and recorded several surface scatters. Most of his work, however, concentrates on the 19th-century evidence and especially the remains associated with the implementation of German colonial rule (Rhodes 2010).

Tanner's finds of Chinese ceramic sherds (1958.1.3–68) are a useful addition to this archive. They do not seem to have come from Muhembo itself, as Tanner's notes indicate that he collected the material from a beach about half a mile west of Pangani. It is quite possible that the site from which they were derived has been relocated during subsequent surveys – perhaps even several times. Analysis of the material in the PRM and comparison with the records from previous surveys and also the new research being conducted by the University of Dar es Salaam team might help provide a better provenance for Tanner's finds.

## 8.5 Southern and Central Africa

### 8.5.1 Overview

The vast majority of the PRM's later archaeological material from Africa – c. 5,453 objects – comes from southern Africa. This includes material from Lesotho, South Africa, Zambia, but most of it (c. 4,484 objects) is derived from Zimbabwe, and much of this comes from a single site – the 'Webster Ruin'. Although a sizeable amount of material, as might be expected, was also collected in South Africa, only a very few of these items can be associated with Bantu-language speakers, who make up the majority of the country's ethno-linguistic mix. The near absence of such material from South Africa is perhaps unsurprising given the preoccupation of early professional and lay archaeologists in the 'Stone Age' cultures of the country, with 'Bushmen' and 'Hottentots' (or 'San' and 'Khoi' to use more recent terminology), and the widespread belief that Bantu-language speaking African farming populations only moved into South Africa around the same time as the first Dutch settlers arrived at the Cape and trekked inland (see Deacon 1990; Hall 1990; Marks 1980 for historiographic overviews). Additionally, many of the entries for South Africa can be regarded as relating to the 'Stone Age', albeit derived from later Holocene contexts. This particularly relates to ostrich eggshell beads, examples and copies of rock art, and worked stone tools and flakes. Most of the rest of the material is probably associated with Khoi pastoralist and so-called 'strandloper' communities. The latter term came into use during early colonial settlement of the Cape and was widely used to refer to Khoisan populations who lived along the coast, obtaining their subsistence through a combination of hunting, gathering and the exploitation of coastal marine resources, the archaeological manifestations of this activity typically surviving on the coast in the form of shell middens. Examples of these sites occur from the Eastern Cape to at least as far north as the Skeleton Coast of Namibia, although the term has also been used with reference to similar shell midden sites in Angola (see Parkington 2006 for further discussion). Based on the available records, the 'strandloper' material in the PRM minimally consists of the following:

- 139 Khoisan objects sent by F.W. Fitzsimons while he was Curator of Port Elizabeth Museum (1910.34.1–34);
- About 27 potsherds from shell middens near East London donated by Henry Balfour (1910.36.1);
- 14 ostrich eggshell beads (1929.43.1–14) found on the Cape Flats and donated by A.J.H. Goodwin in 1929; and
- pottery sherds (1928.68.343–379) collected by John C. Rickard near Port Elizabeth, some of which came from shell middens, given to John Evans in 1880, and donated to the PRM in 1928.

The only possible Iron Age material is seemingly the small collection of 24 sherds of pottery donated by C.G. Bliss in 1926 (1926.41.11–15 and 1927.34.101–117). All are said to come from ‘Slang Spruit, Pietermaritzburg’, and were found with stone tools (also part of the PRM collections). Slangspruit is a small perennial river on the south side of Pietermaritzburg. There are records of early Stone Age Acheulean material having been found in this area and evidence from elsewhere in KwaZulu/Natal indicates that early Bantu-language speaking farming and metal using groups began settling in the area around 200 CE. However, very limited archaeological research seems to have been conducted around Pietermaritzburg itself (Maggs 1998). This assemblage, therefore, may benefit from more detailed study.

The work of various individuals responsible for much of the South African collections, such as E.J. Dunn, J.A. Swan, Henry Balfour, H. Kingston and F.W. Fitzsimons, is discussed by Peter Mitchell in Chapter 2 (above), and need not be reiterated here. The rock art records from southern Africa in the PRM have also been researched and information about these published (Hobart *et al.* 2000; 2002), as have the collections by E.J. Dunn and his contribution to the development of archaeology in the country (Ellerby 2003). Peter Mitchell (in prep.) is also undertaking further research on the PRM’s South African archaeological collections. Accordingly, this material will not be discussed further in this report. Suffice to say, however, that while the virtual absence of any ‘Iron Age’ material is a limitation, the considerable quantities of Khoi ceramics and associated material culture and ecofacts certainly warrant further study by an appropriate specialist.

Regarding the other southern African countries, the collections are quite limited. The single object from Lesotho is only a copy of a rock art image (1913.47.2) and as mentioned above 3 large glass beads (1920.53.1–3), likely to be 19th-century trade beads, are entered under both Zambia and Malawi, presumably due to uncertainties as to their exact provenance. The other entry for Malawi concerns a mixed string of 34 glass and stone beads from the northern end of Lake Nyassa/Malawi (1930.2.1). This was a major caravan and slave-trading route in the 19th century and it is likely that at least some of the glass beads date from this period. The stone beads may be older, but appear to have been deliberately combined with the glass beads to make a necklace prior to the collection of the object.

Apart from the Malawi material, central Africa is represented by a single object from the Democratic Republic of the Congo: a ground tear-drop shaped axe made of haematite donated by J.E.T. Philipps in 1929 (1929.13.1).

Overall, with the exception of the Khoi/‘strandloper’ material from South Africa, the southern African later archaeological material is limited and certainly does not provide much in the way of insights into the archaeology of the farming and metal-using populations of the last *c.* 2000 years in these areas. This is not the case with the material from Zimbabwe, however, which is explored in 8.5.2, before a more detailed discussion of the material from the Webster Ruin is provided (8.5.3 below).

### 8.5.2 Zimbabwe

The collection from Zimbabwe (formerly Southern Rhodesia) is not only the largest group of later archaeological material from a sub-Saharan country held by the PRM, but also its most important. Most of the material was collected and/or donated by five individuals (*Table 8.3*), all of whom published on this material and in many cases made significant contributions to the development of later archaeological studies in the region. The material thus not only has significance owing to the substantive information it can provide about Zimbabwe’s later Holocene archaeology, but also has historiographic value with regard to the development of archaeology as a discipline on the African continent.

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 edited by Dan Hicks and Alice Stevenson, Archaeopress 2013, page 122-168

Donor	Field collector	Site	Estimated number of objects	Type of objects
Andrews	Andrews	Webster Ruin	133	Glass beads, pottery
		6 miles east of Sabi [Save] River	7	Glass beads, copper/iron ornaments
Arkell	Arkell	Renders Ruin	3851	Glass beads
Balfour	Balfour?	Zimbabwe	38	Copper bracelets, shell beads
		[Renders Ruin]	11	Glass beads
	Andrews and Balfour	Khami Ruin	582	Copper/iron bangles and objects, glass beads, iron fish hooks, pottery sherds, pottery spindle-whorls, agate pieces, stone tools
	Andrews and Balfour	Umtali Ruins (Mutare area)	134	Daub, stone figurines, stone tools, pottery sherds
Gardner	Gardner	Gokomere Hill	6	Ochre
Summers	Randall-MacIver	Khami Hill Ruin	9	Pottery
		Dhlo-dhlo Ruins	1	Pottery
		Zimbabwe	3	Pottery
		Near Bulawayo	3	Pottery

*Table 8.3 Principal collectors, sites and objects from the Later Holocene archaeological collections from Zimbabwe in the Pitt Rivers Museum.*

The main collectors were as follows:

- Henry Balfour, the PRM's first curator who made several trips to southern Africa, including a visit to Southern Rhodesia in 1905;<sup>20</sup>
- Edward M. Andrews, who excavated at the Webster Ruin in 1906;
- Reverend Anthony J. Arkell, an archaeologist and former colonial administrator in Sudan and Egypt who was best known for his work at Khartoum, Meroe and on trade beads found in Africa;<sup>21</sup>
- Reverend Father Thomas Gardner, who was the first to excavate at the Tunnel Site, Gokomere and to report on the rock art and Early Iron Age material there;
- Roger F.H. Summers, a Zimbabwean archaeologist who worked for the National Museums and Monuments Commission from 1947–1970. Among other accomplishments, he laid the foundations of many stone tool and pottery typologies for Zimbabwe, as well as conducting important excavations at Great Zimbabwe and Nyanga in the eastern Highlands.<sup>22</sup>

Other collectors include W.W. 'Bill' Bishop (donation of worked stone tools and flakes from the Khami Waterworks site), Frederic P. Mennell (donation of worked stone tools and flakes from Matopos), and Claude P. May (pottery from Lion's Hill kopje).

<sup>20</sup> For details of his trips to Africa, see <http://england.prm.ox.ac.uk/englishness-Balfour-African-stone-tools.html> (accessed 25/7/2010).

<sup>21</sup> For an obituary summarising Arkell's career and contributions see Smith 1981.

<sup>22</sup> For an obituary summarising Summer's career and contributions to the discipline, see Soper 2003.

The material collected by Balfour – roughly 766 artefacts – derives from four localities: Great Zimbabwe (this includes material from Renders Ruin<sup>23</sup> which is part of the Valley ruins complex), Khami, from Umtali/around Mutare (the town of Mutare<sup>24</sup> is situated in the east of the country *c.* 8 km from the border with Mozambique), and the Zambesi River in the Victoria Falls area. Only a single artefact, a piece of iron slag, derives from the latter area, although Balfour did recover stone tools from here and published a short report on these (Balfour 1906a). The finds from Great Zimbabwe<sup>25</sup> include glass and ostrich eggshell beads, a twisted iron amulet and 3 copper bangles. Some of this material is recorded as having come from Renders Ruin, one of the Upper Valley complex of enclosures.<sup>26</sup> These enclosures were principally occupied during Period IVa (late 13th to early 14th centuries CE). Renders Ruin is best known for the spectacular hoard of ‘gold wire, iron spoons, a lamp stand, copper box, two finger rings, several hundred thousand glass beads and several kilograms of wire, cowrie shells and coral’ (Chirikure and Pikirayi 2008: 988) discovered there by Richard Hall (1905). It is quite possible that the 11 glass beads donated by Balfour formed part of this hoard – conceivably some or even all of the other material that he collected from Great Zimbabwe also came from this enclosure.

Balfour’s collection (1906.16.1–200) from the Khami Ruins (*Figure 8.10*)<sup>27</sup> comprises various glass and ostrich eggshell beads, around three dozen or so iron objects (including iron axes, a spatula, bangle and other miscellaneous pieces), more than 125 copper objects (mostly bangles or parts thereof), a few pieces of agate that might have been worked, and some 157 sherds of decorated pottery. Balfour published a short paper on this pottery, the main feature of which is his discussion of the possible use of stone tools to engrave designs onto the pottery (Balfour 1906b). The paper carries several illustrations of examples of this pottery, which could well include the examples now in the PRM; the rest of the material remains unpublished, however. As Balfour notes in this report, during the same visit to Southern Rhodesia he spent three days with E.M. Andrews at Umtali and it seems probable that all of the material entered as being from Umtali or Mutare donated by Balfour derives from that visit or at least his contact with Andrews.<sup>28</sup>

Among the items from Mutare donated by Balfour are a soapstone carving of a crocodile (1906.39.6, *Figure 8.11*), a ‘harpoon-shaped’ carving which might be the head of a bird (1906.39.7), two other pieces of carved soapstone (1906.39.8–9) which may well be unfinished. Other material includes pottery, quartz flakes, pottery spindle whorls and part of a clay crucible with traces of molten gold adhering to it (1906.39.13). Andrews excavated the Umtali ‘Altar Site’ in 1905, and found there celadon pottery ‘probably associated with a unique series of human and animal figurines carved in soapstone’ (Garlake 1968: 16). David Randall-MacIver also

<sup>23</sup> Named after Adam Render who came across the site in 1868 during a hunting expedition and guided Karl Mauch to the ruins in 1871.

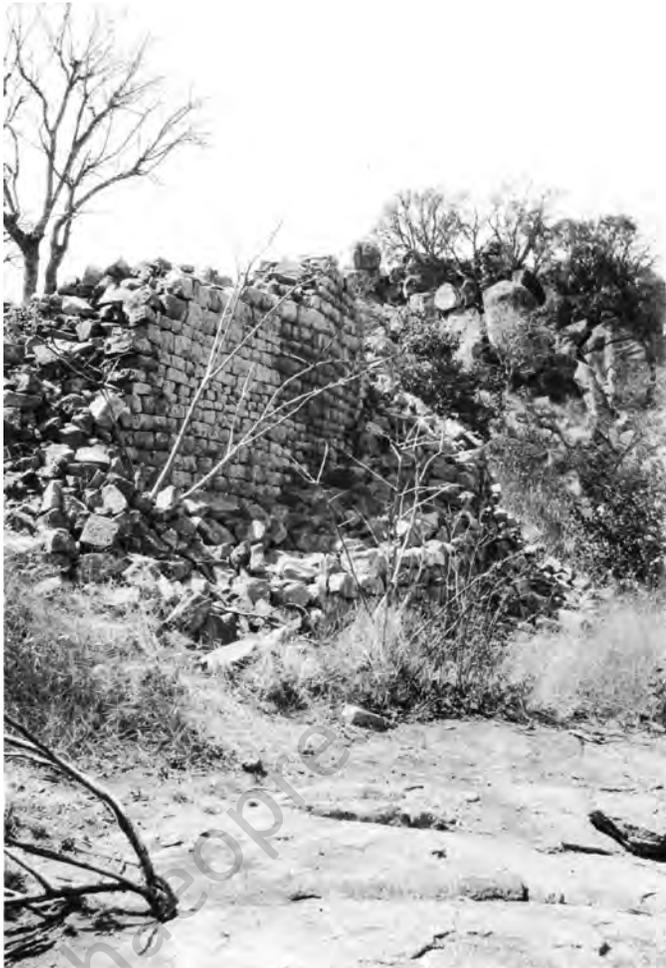
<sup>24</sup> Mutare was formerly known as Umtali until 1982.

<sup>25</sup> The earliest Iron Age material from the site, found on the Hill Complex includes Gokomere, Ziwa and Zhizo pottery dated to the 5th–8th centuries CE. The earliest stone walls were built in the early 13th century, and later in this century had become the capital of the Zimbabwe Tradition empire. Its peak prosperity was between *c.* 1300 CE and 1450 CE, and the site was seemingly abandoned from the mid-sixteenth to early 19th century (Chirikure and Pikirayi 2008).

<sup>26</sup> For a site plan showing its location, see the ‘Site Plan of Great Zimbabwe’ provided in Chirikure and Pikirayi 2008: 978.

<sup>27</sup> Khami is situated north of Bulawayo. It rose to prominence after the decline of Great Zimbabwe and served as the capital of the Torwa State from the 15th century to the mid-17th century CE, when the capital was moved.

<sup>28</sup> This is confirmed by the brief entries in Balfour’s diary for 19 September 1905. See PRM manuscripts collection <http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/manuscripts/balfourdiaries1905.html>



*Figure 8.10 View of the Khami ruins, Zimbabwe, in August 1929. Photograph taken by George R. Carline (PRM Photograph Collections 1998.205.5). Khami became an important centre for trade after the capital of Great Zimbabwe was abandoned in the mid-15th century.*



*Figure 8.11 Soapstone carving of a crocodile found at the Khami ruins, Zimbabwe by Henry Balfour on 3rd October 1905 (PRM Accession Number 1906.39.6).*

reported soapstone carvings at Umtali (Randall-MacIver 1906: 35, plate XIV, XV; Sicard 1943: 104). Those donated by Balfour he found during his visit to the site with Andrews in 1905:

‘Tues. 3rd [Oct. 1905] Went out again with Andrews by the valley route to the camp, visiting several sites on the way. Some apparently villages or residences with hut circles of stone + encompassing walls. So far, no definite kitchen middens found. Saw what appeared to be an ancient smithy. Did some excavating on the slopes of the main Kopje. Potsherds fairly plentiful + hardly anything else found. I found, however, a very roughly carved piece of steatite + close to it about 18 inches from surface a small carved crocodile in steatite, also one worked quartz flake. Stone implements + flake remarkably scarce. Lunched at camp. Saw small musical bow with wire string + at lower end a piece of sheet-tin with jingles attached to it. Mashona instrument. [*sketch*] On lower slopes of Kopje I picked up a hook shaped carved piece of steatite’.<sup>29</sup>

The carvings remain ‘largely anomalous and unexplained’ (Garlake 1968: 16). Andrews never published a report on his ‘excavations’ at the Altar Site. However, M.A. Bordini conducted fresh investigations at the site in the early 1970s (Bordini 1974) and also researched Andrews’s original field notes and related records about other work at and references to the site (Bordini 1978, 1983).<sup>30</sup>

The material assembled by A.J. Arkell is comprised entirely of different types of beads from Renders Ruin, Great Zimbabwe. These include *c.* 700 small green/blue glass cylinder beads (1971.15.1286), 99 orange glass cylinder beads (1971.15.1266.1 and 1971.15.1266.2–99), *c.* 400 small green-blue glass oblate beads (1971.15.1288), and a diverse range of other types and colours. These form part of a much larger collection of beads amassed by Arkell during his lifetime from different parts of Africa and other parts of the world, some 2787 of which are held by the PRM. This entire corpus would be worthy of detailed study. Glass beads occur, often in great quantities, on later Holocene archaeological sites across eastern and southern Africa and much has been published about the beads from Zimbabwe and other areas, including Arkell’s seminal paper on the links with Cambay, India published in *Antiquity* (Arkell 1936). They have also long been recognized as a major indicator of long-distance trade contacts between Africa and other parts of the world as, other than the so-called ‘garden roller beads’ at the site of K2, glass beads were not produced in these parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Various attempts have been made to develop a robust typology of these beads (e.g. van der Sleen’s 1958 study of the beads from Khami), and two major questions have dominated archaeological debates, namely ‘How old are they?’ and ‘Where were the beads made?’ Recent research is starting to provide definitive answers to both of these. On the issue of the chronology of different beads, Merilee Wood’s research provides the best guide to dating beads of different types found in southern Africa (Wood 2000, 2011). On the issue of provenance, the most important advance in recent years has been the study of the chemistry of the glass used to make different types of beads. This has involved the application of both destructive (neutron activation analysis or NAA) and non-destructive (X-Ray Fluorescence or XRF) analytical techniques. More recently laser-ablation inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (or LA-ICP-MS) has also been used (e.g. Saitowitz *et al.* 1996), and a major project aimed at examining glass beads from different later Holocene African contexts is now underway (Robertshaw *et al.* 2003). The results of

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/manuscripts/balfourdiaries1905.html>

<sup>30</sup> It was not possible to consult any of these papers by Bordini while preparing of this report.

recent analyses on southern African beads are especially informative (Robertshaw *et al.* 2010), and attention is drawn here to this particular project as there is clearly considerable scope for research collaboration on the part of the PRM with Professor Robertshaw and his team utilizing the glass beads collected by Arkell and others which are now held by the PRM.

Father Thomas Gardner was a Jesuit priest who joined the staff of St George's School, a private Catholic school for boys in Bulawayo in 1902.<sup>31</sup> In 1927, he excavated at Gokomere Hill about 16 km from Masvingo town (formerly Fort Victoria) where he had located a rockshelter containing later LSA material of the 'Wilton' type.<sup>32</sup> The Cambridge-based prehistorian Miles Burkitt visited the excavations and encouraged Gardner to publish a report, which Gardner duly did (1928). He describes the site as roughly square in plan and measuring about 30 feet (*c.* 9m) along each side and mentions that it contained five rock paintings, although upwards of thirty paintings occur on smaller kopjes in the immediate vicinity. The lithic material, which was also found with ostrich eggshell beads, came from a layer between 0.3–1.0m thick that was sealed by a layer, *c.*0.3m thick, containing later Iron Age material. As well as donating some of this material to John Myres who passed it on to the PRM, Gardner also appears to have deposited some of his original site records with the Royal Anthropological Institute.<sup>33</sup> In 1934, Gardner found a deep deposit at the western base of Gokomere Hill containing Early Iron Age pottery. This site, known as the Tunnel Site,<sup>34</sup> was subsequently excavated and following publication of the material in collaboration with the South African archaeologists J.F. Schofield and L.H. Wells (Gardner *et al.* 1940), the site became the type site for the Gokomere Tradition, an early facies of Early Iron Age pottery in the region (Huffman 1976). The Tunnel Site was re-excavated in 1961 by the Zimbabwean archaeologist K.R. Robinson. As Huffman notes (1976: 31), although the pottery from Gardner's excavations were returned from South Africa after analysis by Schofield and Wells, the collection seems to have subsequently been lost. The material donated to the PRM (listed under 'possibly archaeological') comprises some fragments of red and yellow ochre (potentially used for producing some of the rock paintings in the locality) along with some quartz flakes and stone tools (1946.10.34.19–24, 1946.10.54.1–21). These should be considered as of probable LSA date. They are more likely to be derived from the rockshelter Gardner excavated in 1927, rather than the Tunnel Site – certainly no pottery seems to have been deposited. Myres also donated 2 casts of ground stones axes that he obtained from Gardner – details of the provenance of these is limited to 'found near Bulawayo' and 'found near Emerald Hill, Salisbury (Harare)' respectively.<sup>35</sup>

The material collected and donated by Roger Summers (1956.12.39) comprises 17 sherds of earthenware ceramics from the region used to illustrate local ceramic

<sup>31</sup> The school later moved to Harare and became a college. Some of Gardner's archaeological material is still held there in the school's museum.

<sup>32</sup> The Wilton is a microlithic LSA industry named after the type-site in Cape Province, South Africa. It dates to the last *c.* 8,000 years and is found extensively across southern and eastern Africa in various regional variants. Its main distinguishing characteristics are thumbnail scrapers, crescent-shaped backed microliths, backed blades and adzes. Later variants, sometimes known as post-Classic Wilton can also be found associated with pottery (Ambrose 2002).

<sup>33</sup> These are in the RAT's Manuscript Collection under catalogue number 171, the entry reads: '171. Father Gardner, Drawings to Excavations in a Wilton industry at Gokomere, Fort Victoria'.

<sup>34</sup> The Tunnel Site has been dated to *c.* 530 CE and Gokomere pottery typically dates to between the 5th and the 7th centuries CE. As well as yielding a significant ceramic assemblage, evidence for iron and copper working were recovered from the site.

<sup>35</sup> It is possible that the original artefacts are described or discussed in one or other of the two papers Gardner wrote on ground stone material (1907, 1910). Neither have been consulted for this chapter.

typologies. Most are from around Bulawayo and Khami; others are from 'Zimbabwe' which given the date of the collection probably refers to Great Zimbabwe rather than the country of Zimbabwe, and from Dhlo-Dhlo.<sup>36</sup> At least ten of these are noted to have been formerly part of the 'McIver' collection, most likely David Randall-MacIver who went to Zimbabwe in 1905 at the invitation of the British Association and the Rhodes Trustees to excavate at Zimbabwe and other sites (Randall-MacIver 1906). Although small, this collection provides an interesting insight into Summer's developing ideas about the typology and chronological relationships between different pottery traditions since he presumably selected examples that were most characteristic of each 'type' or tradition.

Mention has already been made of the material collected from Mutare/Umtali that probably derives from Andrews's work there.<sup>37</sup> In addition, there are two entries of material from Khami given by Andrews to Balfour and five entries concerning items Andrews collected 'about 6 miles east of Sabi [now Save] River' and four entries concerning items from Great Zimbabwe. The latter, totalling 12 artefacts in all, comprise a number of gold beads, fragments of gold wire-work, tacks and gold pellets or nodules (1905.41.1-4). The Save River material comprises three boxes of beads, a box of copper and iron ornaments including possible finger-rings, and a box of porcelain and red glass beads (1906.51.3.1-5). This material is poorly provenanced. The Save River rises about 80 km south of Harare and flows for about 400 km more or less in a south-easterly direction along the western side of the eastern Highlands, passing to the west of Mutare, and joins the Runde River close to the Mozambique border. In view of Andrews's activities around Mutare it is likely that this material comes from an area between the town and the Save River; unfortunately there is no further information in the PRM's documentation to provide a more precise location.

### 8.5.3 Webster Ruin, Zimbabwe

Notwithstanding the significance of the other material donated by E.M. Andrews, by far the most important assemblage in the PRM's Zimbabwean later archaeology collection is the collection of finds from his excavations at the Webster Ruin, which he undertook over 24 days from mid-October to early November 1906 (Andrews 1907a, 1907b). The Webster Ruin is situated in the border area of eastern Zimbabwe, approximately 135 km from Mutare and 100 km south of Chimanimani. The site lies on a high plateau overlooking the surrounding countryside and was named by Andrews after Mr W. Webster whose farm adjoined the site and who provided Andrews with assistance while he was staying in the district (Andrews 1907b: 35). The 'ruins' are roughly circular in plan and *c.* 16m in diameter. The main components consist of two broadly concentric terraces, 'built in rough R style walling' (Garlake 1968: 25). At the time of Andrews' excavations these terraces were between 1.8-2.8 m high and already badly damaged by the root action of two large wild fig trees. Other features noted by

<sup>36</sup> Two of the sherds are not actually from Zimbabwe. One (1956.12.39.4) is from near Serowe, Botswana and is decorated with comb-stamping. It thus could well be an example of Toutswe tradition pottery, named after the nearby type site of Toutswe-mogala. The other (1956.12.39.5) is from Mapungubwe, South Africa.

<sup>37</sup> Aside from Andrews's work at the Webster Ruin and the Altar Site, it is perhaps worth noting that he is acknowledged by Randall-MacIver for having taken him to Great Zimbabwe and showing him the site (Randall-MacIver 1971: 3). Andrews discussed Randall-MacIver's coming visit in a letter to Sir Lewis Michell in Cape Town and offered to clear grass and bush at the site ahead of time as well as his services as a guide. The letter, from Mutare and dated 15 February 1905 is now in the Zimbabwe National Archives (File DT 2/8/11). Sir Lewis Michell seemingly took note of this and sent instruction to the Secretary for the Rhodes Estate, Mr B. Woods to make the necessary arrangements and payment. The latter forwarded these instruction on to the Mutare Magistrate, R. Myburgh. *Source:* <http://www.lind.org.zw/treesociety/2005/feb2005> (Accessed 10/8/2010).

Andrews include a series of rough circular or oval stone piles he referred to as 'graves' but which could well be granary bases, and several 'hut floors', although he dismisses several of these as being of quite recent origin and unrelated to the stone terraces. Several standing and fallen stone monoliths are also present, including two that flank the main entrance passage of stone steps (Andrews 1906b: 35–7).

Andrews excavated several trenches aimed at investigating the two terraces, some of the hut platforms and several of the so-called graves. He dug 14 in all of the latter, but found only 'sherds of very common household pottery and bones of antelope', except in one which also produced a piece of green glass and a clay spindle whorl (1907b: 45–6). His daily field notes are appended to his Smithsonian Institution publication and this provides some details as to the range of objects he recovered from different areas and at different levels and their characteristics. Careful comparison of these descriptions with the finds in the PRM collection might generate more precise information about the context from which some of the finds were derived. From Andrews' accounts he clearly recovered local pottery, several iron objects including spear- and arrow-heads, axes and bangles, 2 sherds of blue-and-white Chinese 'Nankin' pottery which is probably of 17th- or early 18th-century date (Garlake 1968: 26), several glass fragments, pieces of worked or utilized wood (he describes the presence of the remains of a wooden platform on one of the terraces), and animal bones. The collection in the PRM provides rather more detailed information regarding what he recovered.

There are 125 Accession Catalogue entries for the site (1907.38.1–125) and the collection comprises the following material: 3 brass objects, a piece of a pottery pipe, seven pieces of glass (mostly bottle glass), 37 iron objects (including axe heads, arrow heads and shaft, hoes and bangles), 4 sherds of porcelain, 2 pieces of glazed blue and white china, 42 sherds of local earthenware, a clay spindle whorl, a bone plug, at least 30 shell beads, and at least 30 blue glass beads. Detailed information about each item is entered on the catalogue cards as a result of work by Gilbert Oteyo (formerly British Institute in Eastern Africa) in 1995, carried out as part of his Postgraduate Diploma Course in Field Archaeology and his report on this work is on file in the PRM archives. This includes scale line drawings of all the ceramics (*Figure 8.12*), many of the metal objects and a selection of beads, as well as descriptions and measurements of each object. Oteyo should be credited for having made such an effective job of organising this material and doing primary research on its origins. He subsequently wrote a paper on the archaeological significance of the finds and the value of material as part of his Master of Studies in Archaeology degree, but this was not published. More recently, in 2000–2001 Innocent Pikirayi (University of Pretoria) examined the Webster Ruin material as part of a broader study of the Khami-period material in the PRM and the origins of 'band and panel' ware. He drew several of the sherds and colour plates (with digital copies) of these were also made, copies of which along with his report are held in the PRM.

## 8.6 North and North-East Africa

### 8.6.1 Overview

The PRM holds later Holocene archaeological material (including items considered 'possibly archaeological') from the following North and North-eastern African countries: Algeria (8.6.2 below), Tunisia (8.6.3), Egypt (8.6.4) and Sudan (8.6.5), including material from Jebel Moya (8.6.6) and Wadi Hawa (8.6.7). The Canary Islands are also discussed in this section (8.6.8) – given the possible Berber origin of some of the islands' earliest inhabitants, this is perhaps not as odd as it might

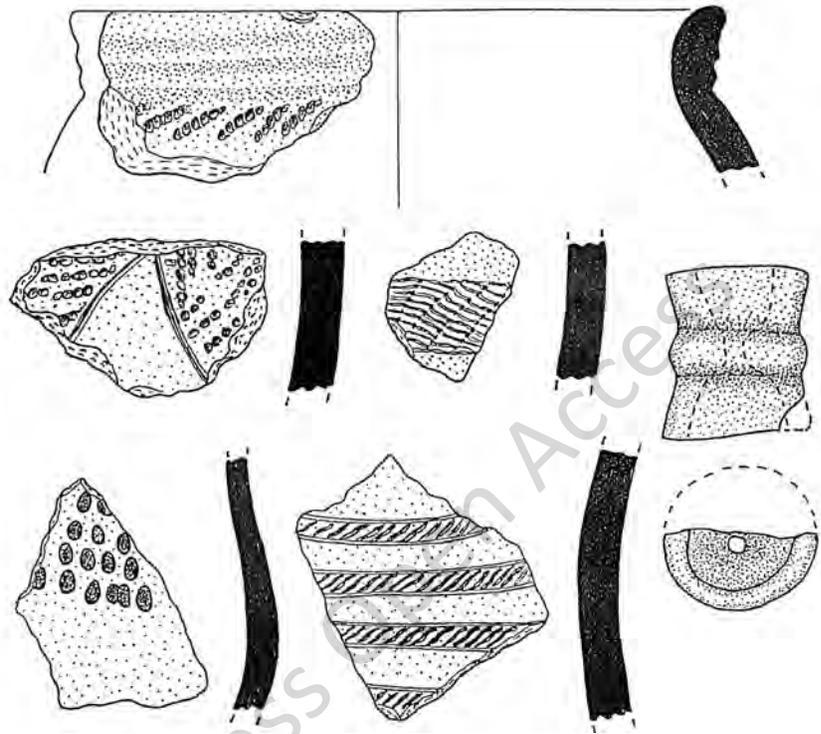


Figure 8.12 Drawings of ceramics from the Webster Ruins, Zimbabwe, excavated by E.M. Andrews (from within PRM Accession Numbers 1907.38.36–80) (drawings by Gilbert Oteyo).

seem at first. The material from the Maghreb is limited: just 14 items from Tunisia and Algeria, and no material from Libya, Morocco or Mauritania. The bulk of the material discussed in this section derives from Sudan (*c.* 693 objects), Egypt (*c.* 212 objects) or the Canary Islands (*c.* 217 objects). The low number of items from the Maghreb is perhaps not very surprising, given that early archaeological research here was dominated by the work of French archaeologists such as Paul Pallary, Jacques de Morgan, Raymond Vaufrey and Marcellin Boule, although, under the auspices of Logan Museum (Wisconsin), American researchers also became quite active from the mid-1920s (Sheppard 1990). Also, Sheppard notes, the dominant research questions during these formative decades of archaeological research in the region related to the 'Stone Age': such as 'How old was the Capsian?', and 'Did the Aurignacian derive from North Africa?' (Sheppard 1990: 174).

### 8.6.2 Algeria

A total of 8 possible later Holocene archaeological items from Algeria are held by the PRM. These include a small copper statuette (1884.67.75) that was part of the PRM founding collection, and a cast bronze axe (1913.17.101) dug up at Timgad by the anthropologist explorer and pioneer anthropological photographer,<sup>38</sup> Melville William Hilton-Simpson. Timgad was a Roman colonial town founded in *c.* 100 CE by Emperor Trajan, initially as a military garrison against the Berbers. It has been inscribed as a World Heritage Site since 1982. Two of the other objects from Algeria in the 'later Holocene' African collection were also donated by Hilton-Simpson. These

<sup>38</sup> Best known for his work in the Kasai River basin in Congo as part of Émil Torday's expedition (see Tayler 1992).

are a human skull with evidence of trepanning (1914.76.146), and a pottery sling-stone (1929.56.2) also from Timgad. All of these items come from Hilton-Simpson's visits to the Aurès Mountains (Hilton-Simpson 1921, 1922a, 1922b, 1925). An objective of his research trip in 1913–1914, during which he was accompanied by his wife, was to study medicine and surgery among the Shawia Berbers (Hilton-Simpson 1921: 180ff., 1922a). From documentation in the PRM it appears that this expedition was partly sponsored by Exeter College, Oxford, and an additional objective of their project was to collect a selection of medical and surgical instruments for the PRM (Hilton-Simpson 1913: 715, 1922a: 145). In all, they collected over 150 instruments, sixty of which were donated to the PRM (Hilton-Simpson 1921: 186). These are described in some detail in a paper published by the RAI, in which Hilton-Simpson (1913) also discusses the method of trepanning used by the Shawia, but makes no mention of any skull he collected. His archaeological contributions included a paper, which today would be described as 'ethnoarchaeological', on contemporary hill-forts in Algeria (Hilton-Simpson 1927). He also wrote short papers on ancient 'water clocks', potting techniques, and hand-mills (see Hilton-Simpson 1922a for more details). This interest in ethnographic parallels may well have influenced his collection of the skull now in the PRM. He died at a relatively young age of 57 in March 1938 (Anon. 1938).

Other material from Algeria includes a copper axe of uncertain provenance (1892.67.116) and a stone arrow-head collected from Ghessi ben Abbou in the southern Algerian desert. Apparently this was one of forty arrow-heads (1914.65.37).

### 8.6.3 Tunisia

There are 9 entries for Tunisia, all under the 'possible' category. Four of these are ostrich eggshell beads collected by P.P. Hasluck from southern Tunisia (1913.49.20–4). Four objects were collected by Capt. F.E.D. Acland, whose father was for a time Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford and Fellow of Magdalen College – these comprise three pottery lamps and a pottery bowl (1943.6.130–133). The remaining item is part of a Punic votive stele from the Temple of Tanit at Carthage (1902.23.4).

### 8.6.4 Egypt

The material from Egypt is both relatively large and diverse. Compared with the material from most other African countries, there is a greater range of types of objects and a broader range of raw materials represented. Also, many more of the objects are complete or nearly so and the chronological range is similarly broad. This diversity makes it difficult to make a complete assessment of potential after only preliminary examination of the available records and a sample of the objects. Accordingly, focus will be placed on a sample of items that best illustrate the range and overall strengths of this part of the PRM's later Holocene archaeological collections, leaving a fuller study to specialists in the fields of Coptic and Islamic archaeology, material culture and art history. Another distinctive feature of this material is the number of items that were acquired by the PRM in the late 19th century, when a great many British archaeologists were actively engaged in field archaeology in Egypt. About half the items in the 'definite' category, for instance, appear to have been obtained during the 1890s. This contrasts with the collections from most of the other African countries, which for the most part were obtained during the first half of the 20th century.

Among the collectors, several well-known pioneer Egyptologists made significant contributions. These include Sir Flinders Petrie, George Willoughby Fraser, Francis Llewellyn Griffith, and Sir Marc Amand Ruffer. Flinders Petrie and Francis Griffiths need no introduction. G.W. Fraser trained as a civil engineer and is best known for his work as a draftsman for Petrie on the latter's excavations at Hawara and Illahun, and

for his descriptions of Fourth–Fifth Dynasty rock-cut tombs 10 km to the north of Al Minya discovered by the German Hienrich Brugsch, and still known as the Fraser Tombs (Dawson and Uphill 1995: 157). Sir Marc Ruffer (1859–1917), by contrast, was a pioneering palaeopathologist who made extensive studies of Pharonic and Coptic mummies, and for a while was Professor of Bacteriology at Cairo Medical School (Sandison 1967). Henry Balfour also made important donations, particularly a collection of pottery lamps<sup>39</sup> (1932.88.323–7, 1932.88.463–5, 1932.88.579 and 1932.88.616–7) some of which are Roman in date (see Chapter 6). The American art collector Walter Leo Hildburgh, who is better known for his donations to the Victoria and Albert Museum (especially examples of English medieval alabasters)<sup>40</sup> and the British Museum, donated examples of several different types of pottery smoking pipes or pipe bowls (1944.12.65–73).

The later Holocene material from Egypt includes Byzantine, Coptic and Islamic items, as well as a few objects (all in the probable category), which are more ethnographic in nature. There are several important pieces among the Coptic elements. Petrie's 1888 excavations concentrated on the pyramid at Illahun (after his work at Hawara), although he also noted the presence of 'rubbish heaps [with] a large amount of Coptic and Cufic papyri' and in the vicinity of the temple 'a large Coptic burial ground, from which many garments and other objects were obtained' (Petrie 1890: 5). Three pieces of these garments appear to have come to the PRM (1889.27.100–101, 107). The Museum also holds a Coptic double clarinet dated to c. 700–800 CE collected by Petrie (1890.25.4), and a range of twenty other Coptic items collected by G.W. Fraser (1890.44.1–17), including wooden combs, dolls and pin-lock keys, bronze and brass penannular bracelets and metal finger rings. The clarinet (*Figure 8.13*) is of particular significance. Specifically, while there is an example of a Coptic double clarinet in the Petrie Museum, UCL, this apparently does not have its reeds. The example in the Pitt Rivers, by contrast, does. Also, there seems to have been some uncertainty about the whereabouts of the 'four double clarinets' that the musicologist T.L. Southgate reported Petrie recovered from Illahun (see Anderson 1980: 320); the example in the PRM could be one of those Anderson referred to.

Among the Islamic items, there are a selection of glazed pottery lamps among those collected by Balfour (1932.88.459–464) and some pieces of glazed pottery possibly from Fustat (or Fostat) (1966.32.58 and 61), the first capital of Arab Egypt, established shortly after the Arab conquest in 641 CE, and which served on and off as the capital for the next c. 500 years. Its peak period of prosperity was in the 12th century (Scanlon 1968; on Mumalak pottery from Fustat, see also Scanlon 1984). Overall, however, this period is not well represented in the collection.

### 8.6.5 Sudan

Archaeological research in Sudan commenced in the early part of the 19th century, and in many ways began as a southward extension of Egyptologically-oriented concerns (Edwards 2007). Initial research was shaped by the then-dominant paradigm of parallel evolution (Trigger 1994), which ranked societies according to their material characteristics, subsistence strategies and levels of technological accomplishment. Coeval differences in material culture and technology were attributed to a combination of ecological differences and the stage of 'civilization' a society had reached, while

<sup>39</sup> On Balfour's interest in lighting technologies, see <http://england.prm.ox.ac.uk/englishness-Lighting-technology.html> (Accessed 14 March 2012).

<sup>40</sup> A copy of Hildburgh's obituary in *The Times* (1955), is reproduced on the Victoria and Albert Museum website [http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/periods\\_styles/features/history/staff\\_obituaries/associated/Hildburgh/](http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/periods_styles/features/history/staff_obituaries/associated/Hildburgh/) (Accessed 14 March 2012).



*Figure 8.13 Coptic double clarinet, dating from around the 8th century CE, excavated in Egypt by W. Flinders Petrie (PRM Accession Number 1890.25.4).*

temporal changes within a particular area were frequently attributed to diffusion of ideas from innovative centres and /or the demic migration of peoples. Given this intellectual framework, it is unsurprising that in Sudan's case the source of most innovations and stylistic changes evidenced in the archaeological record of the country was presumed to be from Egypt. Much subsequent archaeological research in the country has shown that many of these assumptions were in fact incorrect (Trigger 1994). Nevertheless, as Edwards notes, a concern with more monumental remains and the artistic achievements of the country's earlier civilizations has continued to shape the direction of research, as has a 'colonial ambivalence toward non-Arabized (African) parts of the country, notably South Sudan', which as a result has 'left large areas as the preserve of ethnographic investigation rather than archaeology' (2007: 213).

This colonial perspective certainly dominated during the early 20th century when the majority of the Holocene archaeological material from Sudan in the PRM was collected. Nevertheless, this material is undoubtedly one of the major strengths of the PRM's African archaeological collections, aspects of which are discussed in the Egypt and Sudanese chapters that cover material up until the Greek period (see Chapters 5 and 6). Notably, this includes material from Charles Seligman's excavation of three mounds at Faragab (Seligman 1916), Francis Llewellyn Griffith's excavation at Faras and Sanam (e.g. Griffith 1921), and from Henry Wellcome's work at Jebel Moya from 1910 to 1914. Accordingly, emphasis here will be placed on some of the other notable finds and the work and careers of other collectors, although some of the sites discussed by these other authors will also be touched upon here.

Establishing the absolute size of the post-Ptolemaic Sudanese archaeological material is difficult given the multi-period nature of most of the sites excavated, and the undiagnostic nature of many of the finds in the PRM. Many of the *c.* 211, confirmed items are derived from Abu Geili (or Aloa)<sup>41</sup> (about 40 artefacts) and Dar el Mek (about 60 artefacts).<sup>42</sup> These derive from excavations sponsored and supervised by Sir Henry Wellcome between 1910 and 1914 around Jebel Moya. Other later archaeological material includes three pottery lamps (1912.89.223–5) from Francis Llewellyn Griffith's excavations at Faras (1921), the capital of the most northerly of the three early medieval Christian Nubian Kingdoms (Nobatia);<sup>43</sup> 2 Egyptian pottery vessels of *c.* 400–500 CE date from Firka (1951.4.016 and .018); and a box of at least 100 beads of various types and colours collected by Charles and

<sup>41</sup> This was apparently the name Sir Henry Wellcome preferred (Crawford and Addison 1951: 2). At the time of its excavation, and in the finds catalogue, the Abu Geili sites were simply termed 'Site 400' so as to differentiate it from the other sites being excavated – these were the main site at Jebel Moya ('Site 100'), Saqadi (or Jebel Segadi, 'Site 200') and Dar el Mek ('Site 300').

<sup>42</sup> NB, some entries refer to more than one object, and in the case of some bead assemblages can refer to up to 100 individual items.

<sup>43</sup> NB, Griffith's original field records from his work at Faras are in the Griffith Institute, Oxford (Malek and Magee 1994).

Brenda Seligman (1940.12.551). Other material donated by the Seligmans, mostly listed in the 'possible' category, includes a sample of *c.* 110 sherds of pottery from Charles Seligman's excavations at Faragab (1940.12.846), where he investigated three of the four mounds and recovered pottery, stone and bone objects, pieces of worked ivory, ostrich eggshell beads, fresh water molluscs and exotic stone imported from further afield. Based on the latter items, he argued that the site was probably 'Ptolemaic' in date (Seligman 1916).<sup>44</sup> There are also a number of other pottery vessels and sherds from elsewhere in northern Kordofan (1946.8.78/80–82) donated by the Seligmans, although some of these might be more ethnographical than archaeological.<sup>45</sup> The Seligmans also amassed a considerable quantity of beads from other parts of Sudan (1940.12.551, 1946.8.103). These supplement the material in the collections donated by A.J. Arkell,<sup>46</sup> and the sizeable quantity of mostly faience beads, collected and donated by F.L. Griffiths (2001.67.1–130). Also among the items donated by F.L. Griffiths are further strings of beads mostly of either inscribed faience or carnelian from Sanam in Nubia (1945.10.123.2–4). These derive from his cemetery excavation there in 1912. This was a commoner (or at least non-Royal) cemetery dated to *c.* 800–600 BCE. The excavation was never fully written up, although an evaluation of the site based on study of Griffiths's field records and many of the finds in Oxford, although not those in the PRM, has been published very recently (Lohwasser 2010).

#### 8.6.6 *Jebel Moya: Abu Geili and Dar el Mek*

The name *Jebel Moya* covers a complex of several adjacent excavated sites in Sudan, which include material ranging from prehistoric to medieval. The area lies *c.* 160 miles SSE of Khartoum among the folds of an isolated hill-massif. The main *Jebel Moya* site is known as 'Site 100' and has three main phases of occupation from *c.* 5000–100 BCE (Caneva 1991; Gerhartz 1994) and aspects of its archaeology are mentioned in Chapters 5 and 6. The later material derives from two separate areas, *Abu Geili* and *Dar el Mek*.

*Abu Geili* lay on the other, opposite, East bank of the River Nile, over 30 km from Site 100, and this was called 'Site 400'. *Abu Geili* is situated *c.* 3km north of the modern town of Sennar on the east bank of the Blue Nile. O.G.S. Crawford directed the excavations here in 1914 for Sir Henry Wellcome, focusing on two distinct sites; the remains of a village settlement, which proved to date to the early centuries of the first millennium CE, and a nearby cemetery site associated with the post-medieval Funj (or Fung) kingdom, dating to the 16th–18th centuries CE. This was Crawford's first major excavation, yet despite this, he clearly had reservations about some of the recording methods he was expected to follow (see his opening chapter in Crawford and Addison 1951), which as he notes in the final excavation report created some uncertainty regarding the stratigraphic associations of material from the village site.<sup>47</sup> Most of the material in the PRM, some 40 objects in total (1949.12.47–78), comes from the cemetery site and thus dates to approximately 1500–1700 CE. The finds in the PRM include examples of pottery, metalwork (including an axe and ring fragments), beads, several spindle whorls

<sup>44</sup> Charles Seligman's other archaeological excavation in the Sudan was at the 'Neolithic' site of *Jebel Gule* some 300 miles south of Khartoum (Seligman 1910).

<sup>45</sup> Charles Seligman's broad ranging interests are summarized in his Royal Society obituary by C.S. Myers (1941). This also provides a useful list of his varied publications.

<sup>46</sup> Withers (1996) states that Arkell did most of his collecting while based at *El Fasher* in Darfur, between 1932 and 1937.

<sup>47</sup> Crawford's description of the circumstances of his excavations at *Abu Geili*, coupled with Addison's short paper on archaeological discoveries around Sennar (1948), provide interesting insights into Wellcome's style of leadership and their relationship with him – which seems to have been quite tense at times.

and two clay animal figures. Other finds from the site are held in the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University; the British Museum; the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology; the Petrie Museum, UCL; and the National Museum in Khartoum. The human remains are held at the Duckworth Laboratory, University of Cambridge. The items in the PRM were originally donated to the Ashmolean Museum, but later transferred. Some objects from these excavations were nevertheless retained by the Ashmolean Museum. Crawford's report illustrates many of the objects recovered, and the accompanying grave descriptions indicate which objects went to 'Oxford'. It should be feasible to match these illustrations and the catalogue entries – which provide additional information about the provenience of a find (such as which grave it was recovered from) – to items held by either the PRM or Ashmolean Museum.

Dar el Mek or 'Site 300' is situated about 3 km from the main Jebel Moya site (i.e. 'Site 100') on the south-east side of the Jebel Moya massif. It was a terraced village site occupied around 1300–1600 CE. Excavations here were supervised by David Mackenzie, who had previously worked with Sir Arthur Evans on Crete, but it fell to Frank Addison to write up the site from Mackenzie's field records and the surviving finds that had reached the UK (Crawford and Addison 1951: 143–82).<sup>48</sup> Mackenzie opened a number of trenches on several terraces, exposing several circular and rectangular stone hut footings and various pits and other features. The pottery from the site was particularly distinctive (it is mostly characterized by incised cross-hatching, especially on the larger jars), bearing no resemblance to the much earlier material from Jebel Moya, although some parallels do occur in the later assemblages from Abu Geili. The finds in the PRM (1949.12.79–91) comprise a number of beads (including faience and carnelian examples, and examples made from bone and cowry shells), an ivory bracelet, several iron hoops and other iron fragments, and a pottery crucible. There is no other pottery from the site in the collection, however, although some of the illustrated items listed were apparently sent to Oxford (see Crawford and Addison 1951: 170–1). As with the report on Abu Geili, the finds catalogues give an indication of many of the items donated to the Ashmolean Museum when the collection was split up.

Aside from the significance of the excavations to Crawford's own professional development and career as an archaeologist, the material from Abu Geili is important and worthy of further detailed study largely because subsequent archaeological research on the later medieval period (as represented at Dar el Mek), or the post-medieval Funj kingdom (as represented at the Abu Geili cemetery), which was centred on Sennar, has been very limited (Edwards 2004, 2007). Thus, while the stratigraphic associations between different artefact types recovered from the graves and settlement site allowed Crawford and Addison (1951: 39–67) to develop a typological and chronological framework for post-medieval Sudan,<sup>49</sup> the potential this offered for determining the extent of the kingdom or its links with neighbouring polities has never been fully realised. As Edwards notes, we are 'still in no position to judge whether there existed a specific style of "Funj pottery" which was widespread across the Sultanate ... [and] are even more ignorant of the material evidence for the opening of Sinnär to contacts with the 'outside world', a process which has begun to be studied on the basis of historical records' (2004: 16).

<sup>48</sup> NB the complete set of field records from Wellcome's projects at Jebel Moya, Abu Geili and Dar el Mek are in the Griffith Institute, Oxford (Malek and Magee 1994).

<sup>49</sup> Also, on the basis of the material from the village site, for the early Christian period this has been more extensively employed.

### 8.6.7 W.B.K. Shaw's Wadi Hawa Prehistoric Finds

The PRM holds a small collection of 33 decorated pot sherds (1936.62.1 .3–28), 30 stone tools (1936.62.8–14, 1936.62.23–35), and some strings of ostrich eggshell beads (1936.62.2 .2–7) from part<sup>50</sup> of Wadi Hawa (nowadays Wadi Howar) close to the Sudan-Libya border in the Libyan (or Western) Desert. These were collected in 1935 by William Boyd Kennedy Shaw. After graduating from Oxford and taking a course in Arabic, Shaw worked for the Sudan Forestry Department as a botanist from 1924 to 1929. In 1927/28, with Douglas Newbold, he led a camel expedition to the Seilma Oasis across an unmapped section of Egyptian sector of the Libyan Desert (Newbold and Shaw 1928). A few years later, in 1932, he was part of Major Ralph Bagnold's expedition which helped pioneer the use of motorised vehicles in desert exploration (Bagnold 1933), travelling from Cairo to Kharga and then deeper into the desert. This was an era of intense European exploration, perhaps most famously, and, since the publication *The English Patient* and its dramatization as a film, romantically, associated with the discoveries of rock paintings in the Wadi Sura and at 'Ein Dua on the Gilf Kebir plateau by László Almásy. Explorers such as Shaw and Bagnold were equally keen, therefore, to note any rock paintings and archaeological remains they observed en route (see Shaw 1936a: 195).<sup>51</sup> In 1935, Shaw once again embarked on desert exploration (using Model 46 Ford pickups as in 1932), this time venturing into the southern Libyan Desert so as to explore the Wadi Howar. Later that year he was awarded the Gill Medal by the Royal Geographical Society for his accomplishments in desert exploration, and during World War II, with Ralph Bagnold, Shaw helped form the Long Range Desert Group (LRDG) and served with them as Intelligence Officer from the summer of 1940 (when it was established) until February 1943, when the North African campaign was drawing to a close. Undoubtedly, it was his early experiences in desert exploration (and likewise that of Bagnold) that helped make this one of the most successful British commando groups during the war. He later wrote one of the first accounts of the work of the LRDG (Shaw 1945).

During the course of the 1935 expedition Shaw and his team made several archaeological discoveries. The first was at a location he refers to as 'Grassy Valley' between Gebel 'Uweinat and the Selima Oasis, which he had first visited with Bagnold's expedition in 1932. Here, the team excavated a single stone cairn that covered a partially flexed inhumation burial with a string of carnelian beads around its neck and a pot by the left hand (1936c: 47, also 1936a: 197). On the return leg of the expedition, at a location they designated 'Camp 49' the team excavated another burial cairn (believed to be of 'Pre-Dynastic date') also with a partially flexed inhumation. In this instance, however, there were dense scatters of artefacts in the general area of the burial, much as they observed further west (1936c: 48–50, also 1936a: 206). Shaw also collected examples of 'silica glass' objects from the south end of the Great Sand Sea north of Gilf Kebir (1936a: 208). These are also in the PRM and bear similarities to material later collected by Myers in 1937–1938 from the Gilf Kebir-Gebel 'Uweinat region.<sup>52</sup> In Wadi Howar, Shaw's expedition located 'hundreds of stone cairns' on the north bank at longitude 24° 10' and opened two of these exposing a single contracted

<sup>50</sup> c.24°–28°E., 16°–18°N.

<sup>51</sup> In fact, Shaw seems to have had more than a passing interest in archaeology and rock art, publishing two papers on the topic in *Antiquity*. His first was a review of rock art sites found at 'Uweinat (mostly by other researchers, and especially Sir Ahmed Bey Hassanein) (Shaw 1934); the second included a description of additional paintings found during the 1935 expedition around Gilf Kebir (Shaw 1936b).

<sup>52</sup> In 1937–1938, Bagnold led his third expedition to the Gilf Kebir-Gebel 'Uweinat region of the Libyan Desert, and was accompanied this time by a trained archaeologist Oliver H. Myers, who made a series of collections of stone artefacts (see McHugh 1975). This material is now in the Musée de l'Homme, Paris.

inhumation burial in each, both of which lacked grave goods (1936a: 203). East of here the team encountered very few sites. From longitude 25° 15', and especially between 26° and 27°, archaeological sites were common on both banks of the Wadi and in some cases also occurred along the bed. At large sites they found 'the ground covered with sherds, ashes and burnt bones', and observed on the surface 'many polished diorite axes, ostrich-shell beads, querns, grinders etc.' (Shaw 1936a: 203) Cairns seemed to be absent, however, although the team excavated 'two or three skeletons' that had been exposed by erosion, 'round the neck of one was a string of five turquoise beads... and at its waist many coils of ostrich-shell beads' (Shaw 1936a: 203). It is perhaps some of these beads that are now in the PRM (*Figure 8.14*).

The Wadi Howar is 'the largest dry river system in the presently hyper-arid and uninhabitable Eastern Sahara, stretching over 1100 km from its source area in eastern Chad to the Nile'.<sup>53</sup> Recent archaeological and palaeoenvironmental studies conducted under the auspices of the University of Cologne's ACACIA Project and earlier studies (see e.g. Hoelzmann *et al.* 2001; Nicoll 2004; Pachur and Kröpelin 1987) indicate that during the early Holocene a major river flowed the length of Wadi Howar feeding into the River Nile. As the climate became drier, the flow of water reduced and the environment changed to a chain of freshwater lakes and marshes. Rainfall was still sufficient to support a diverse wild fauna and human populations until around 2000 years ago, by which time all the surface water sources had dried up. The ecological richness of the area made it attractive to human settlement and recent surveys have located a diverse range of prehistoric sites (albeit further east of Shaw's finds) and evidence for early cattle and ovicaprine pastoralism (e.g. Jesse 2006; Lange 2005; Pachur and Kröpelin 1987; Pöllath 2007). Studies of local pottery typologies have also been completed indicating a consistent association between particular styles and subsistence strategies. Specifically, dotted wavy line pottery occurs on earlier Holocene hunter-gatherer sites, Laqiya pottery on those of later hunter-gatherers (these date approximately to between 5200–4000 BCE), the Leiterband type on early pastoralist sites (*c.* 4000–2200 BCE) and Handessi pottery on the last recorded settlements in the Wadi (*c.* 2200–1100 BCE) (Jesse 2004; 2006).

Although Shaw's finds are modest by comparison, and his interpretations shaped by an understanding of developments in Egypt, his discoveries are among the first from the area to highlight the archaeological potential of the Wadi Howar. He correctly recognized that in 'order to support settlements of a size indicated by [the sites he located] the climate must have been wetter than to-day' (1936a: 206). Even more presciently, he observed 'no doubt these Wadi Hawa sites will one day be carefully and systematically examined' (1936a: 204). In summary, although the scientific potential of this material may be limited it has a certain historical value and significance for the development of the discipline. It also has broader historical significance since, as mentioned above, these early experiences of desert exploration and the intimate knowledge of the Libyan Desert that he gained from them undoubtedly stood him in good stead when serving with the Long Range Desert Group during the Second World War.

### 8.6.8 Canary Islands

Since their conquest and settlement by the Spanish in the 15th century, the Canary Islands have rarely been considered to be part of Africa. Yet, when the European fishermen and other visitors reached the islands in the 13th century they found them inhabited by a population of cereal agriculturalists with domesticated goats and pigs, who possessed a 'Neolithic' stone technology and supplemented their diet by fishing,

<sup>53</sup> ACACIA A2 PROJECT website: [http://www.uni-koeln.de/sfb389/a/a2/a2\\_main.htm](http://www.uni-koeln.de/sfb389/a/a2/a2_main.htm)

Figure 8.14 Photograph of ostrich eggshell beads in situ in the Wadi Howar, Sudan, found by W.B. Kennedy Shaw (PRM Photograph Collections 2008.63.1). These may include some of the beads from Wadi Howar represented in the PRM collections (PRM Accession Number 1936.62.2 .2).



and gathering plants and shellfish (Onrubia-Pintado 1987). Archaeological research suggests that the first human occupation of the islands was no earlier than during the first millennium BCE (Onrubia-Pintado 1987). Since the closest island (there are seven in all) to the African continent is roughly 100 km from

the Moroccan coast, the origins of the prehistoric inhabitants of the islands, termed Guanche, has preoccupied scholars for at least a century. Much early work focused on the recovery of human remains from the many cave burials on the islands. The collection in the PRM dates largely to this phase of research, although it also includes a small collection of material (pottery, shell beads, stone flakes) found in a cave on La Palma in 1963 by Ray Inskip (1996.14.1–16). The principal collector, however, was the Reverend Cecil Vincent Goddard, an Anglican clergyman based in Wessex who was a long-term contributor to General Pitt-River's collections.<sup>54</sup> The material from the Canary Islands he amassed comes primarily from caves (and perhaps the valley floor) in the Orotava Valley on Teneriffe (there is one human skull from near Canellaria, Teneriffe 1887.33.1), and includes skulls and other human remains, pieces of leather, textile, millstones, pottery, wood (possibly from funeral biers), animal bone, beads (mostly of clay), stone tools and flaked obsidian (1892.31.1–47, 1892.31.3.2, 1892.31.7.2–7, and 1969.34.540–643). The collection also contains additional human skulls and post-cranial material donated by other collectors, including samples sent by 'Herr Wildpret' of the Teneriffe Botanical gardens to Dr G.B. Lonstaff, a fellow of New College and some additional artefacts. All of this appears to have come from near Orotava.

There are similar collections in other Western museums, some of which are considerably larger in scope. The most notable is probably that in the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University (Ley 1979) on which the American physical anthropologist Earnest A. Hooton worked. His book *The Ancient Inhabitants of the Canary Islands* (Hooton 1925) became a classic and pioneering example of the use of biometric methods to answer an anthropological problem – in this case 'Where did the prehistoric inhabitants of the Canary islands come from?' (Ley 1979). Hooton argued

'that the Guanche were comprised of different stocks of people [resulting from for separate immigrations from North Africa] largely exhibiting Mediterranean and Alpine Caucasoid components, supplemented perhaps, by sub-Saharan and other elements. He further proposed that they originated from populations inhabiting southern Morocco, the Atlas Mountains of northern Morocco and Algeria, and the eastern Mediterranean ... Subsequent intermixture among these

<sup>54</sup> For more detail, see <http://web.prm.ox.ac.uk/rpr/index.php/article-index/12-articles/195-swiss-items-from-goddard>

four groups, along with later Arab, Berber, and Carthaginian gene flow, was thought to have resulted in the pre-European Contact peoples of the Canary Islands' (Irish and Hemphill 2004: 9).

At least three other models of the origin of these populations were developed by subsequent researchers (see Irish and Hemphill 2004: 9–10 for a synopsis). Despite their differences, researchers nevertheless agreed that all traces of these original inhabitants had been virtually eradicated as a result of the combined effects of colonial rule, the Atlantic Slave trade, and inter-marriage with European settlers. Perhaps as a result, a kind of mystique began to develop around the origins of the Guanche, as the pre-European inhabitants of all seven islands were now being collectively, albeit incorrectly, termed. Recent research on the mtDNA lineages of the modern population of the islands and archaeological samples from some of the Guanche burials, however, has demonstrated a strong presence of the U6b1 sublineage in both ancient Guanche and modern Canary island populations. This sublineage, however, appears not to be present in north-west African populations,<sup>55</sup> despite the strong probability on other grounds that at least some of the islands' early inhabitants were derived from this area (Maca-Mayer *et al.* 2004). These studies also recorded relatively high genetic diversity in the archaeological samples investigated, with strong molecular indicators of links to Moroccan Berber populations. Both factors seem consistent with settlement models developed on cultural and bioanthropological grounds for several phases of population immigration from different regions of North Africa and the western Mediterranean (Maca-Mayer *et al.* 2004). These issues remain unresolved, however, and there is clear potential for further research, especially an integrated study involving a combination of island archaeology, bioanthropology and genetics, perhaps utilizing the material in the PRM for initial pilot studies.<sup>56</sup>

## 8.7 Summary: Research Potential

### 8.7.1 General Comments

Overall – despite the limited geographical scope of the later archaeological material from Africa, the relatively small size of most 'assemblages' and the shortcomings of some of the records concerning the location and circumstances of their discovery – a few PRM artefacts have already been researched to some extent and many items offer considerable research potential. The scale of potential research will vary. There is certainly scope for several minor studies, perhaps conducted as undergraduate or masters dissertation topics. However, there is also scope for larger collaborative projects involving other researchers in other institutions and for using the existing material in the PRM as the basis for a pilot study that might lead to a bigger project aimed at collecting and analyzing new data. Some of this research could be concerned with enhancing substantive knowledge about specific objects, archaeological traditions or chronological matters. Some might profit more from additional archival research on the collectors and the 'biographies' of the objects as they moved from their context of discovery into the PRM's collections and their subsequent use in the Museum (cf. Alberti 2005). In some cases, a combination of both approaches might be especially productive in terms of research outcomes. The following regional synopses are intended to highlight some of these opportunities, although there are certainly other possibilities as well.

<sup>55</sup> Instead, the U6a lineage is the predominant subgroup here.

<sup>56</sup> It has not been possible to ascertain whether there have been any previous studies of this material, whether as stand alone work or as part of a broader project.

### 8.7.2 *West Africa*

As mentioned above, Wild, Jeffreys and Justice all published short accounts of some of the finds now in the PRM's later African archaeological collection. The Stone Age material collected by R.P. Wild from Ghana and M.D.W. Jeffreys from Nigeria has been studied as part of an undergraduate dissertation (Wharton 2005).<sup>57</sup> The Cape Verde material has also been studied recently (Rodrigues 2001). There remains considerable scope for further work, however, including the application of various analytical and dating techniques. Some of the pottery sherds from Cape Verde, for instance, have charred material adhering to them which could be submitted for AMS dating to help improve the dating of this site. Wild's collection of material could also be re-studied in the light of more recent work on Ghana's 'Neolithic' to 'Iron Age' transition. Equally, if any of the material recovered from Okumu Forest by Hide could be dated, this would help inform a broader debate about the history of settlement here and the longer-term historical ecology of the forest. Similarly, there is scope for the detailed study of the ceramics and other material donated by Jeffreys, especially that from the Cross River area. The soapstone *nomoli* from Sierra Leone is also of particular significance, although it has been the feature of some previous research in connection with its use in various exhibitions and publications on African Art (see Coote and Morton 2000 and references therein).

### 8.7.3 *Eastern Africa*

The main research potential of the Eastern Africa section of the collections is on material recovered from Tanzania, and especially the various assemblages donated by Ralph Tanner. As discussed above, a new landscape archaeology project has recently begun centred on Pangani, and examination of the finds from here collected by Tanner may be of benefit to these researchers. The material from around Ngorongoro, some of which could be Pastoral Neolithic in date, would also repay further study. Although the pieces of rock art from Nyamiji rockshelter in Bukoba District were described and illustrated by Arundell (1936), these could be re-examined by a rock art specialist and more thoroughly catalogued. The brass torque (1995.27.2) from the Pare Mountains is important, historically. As noted by the anthropologist Michael Sheridan in a letter to Jeremy Coote (dated 4/03/2003), it is possible that this item was recovered by Henry Fosbrooke<sup>58</sup> from a bolt hole he excavated in the 1930s. If so, this would provide better historical and geographical provenance for the object. Research on Fosbrooke's papers, which are in the Africana Section of the University of Dar es Salaam Library, could yield additional information of relevance. Similarly, more might be learned about the wooden artefacts from caves in the Singida area collected by A.T. Culwick with further archival research.

### 8.7.4 *Southern Africa*

The greatest scope for additional research lies with the material from Zimbabwe, including that from some of the more extensively researched sites such as the Khami ruins. However, as mentioned above, the diverse examples of possible Khoi material and especially the items from 'strandloper' middens certainly warrant further study by a suitable specialist. Likewise, the small collection of pottery from near Pietermaritzburg donated by C.G. Bliss is probably also worth further examination by someone familiar with the Iron Age pottery typologies from the region. Of the

<sup>57</sup> Unfortunately, this was not available for consultation as part of this study.

<sup>58</sup> Former sociologist for the colonial government of Tanganyika and an active lay archaeologist.

material from Zimbabwe, the finds from the 'Webster Ruin', as mentioned above, have already been investigated by two researchers. It would certainly be helpful if one or both of these could be encouraged to write up their results for publication. There is still scope for additional research, for example on the samples of metalwork and wood from the site. The metal finds from Khami could also repay further study, particularly if this involved archaeometallurgical study (as this has proved beneficial for similar material from the region) and perhaps also identification of the vegetable fibres used as cores for some of the bracelets and armlets. Mention has also been made of the enormous potential offered by the bead collection amassed by A.J. Arkell now in the PRM, and especially the material from southern Africa, through collaboration with Professor Peter Robertshaw's ongoing archaeometric study of the origin of glass beads imported into southern and eastern Africa over the centuries.

### 8.7.5 Northern and North-eastern Africa

With a few notable exceptions, many of the discoveries and excavations that generated the collection of later archaeological material from north and north-eastern Africa were written up and published by the original collectors. This material thus is perhaps more of value in terms of what it can tell us about the careers and interests of these individuals. Nevertheless, there is also scope for additional substantive research on many of these items. It would be beneficial, for instance to know more about the finds and human remains from Guanche caves in the Canary Islands. As mentioned above, a study of this kind could be used to develop a pilot project for further investigation of the history of settlement on the islands and the different phases of population migration that recent genetic and bioanthropological studies seem to indicate. The material from Crawford's excavations at Abu Geili, and also the slightly earlier material from Dar el Mek, could also be restudied with an aim to develop a larger (and much needed) study of the later medieval and post-medieval archaeology of the Blue Nile region. Similarly, in the light of recent work on pottery typologies and their chronological associations by Jesse (2004, 2006), it could be worthwhile re-examining Shaw's material from Wadi Howar so as to provide a better indication of its chronological range.

## 8.8 Conclusions

In conclusion, there is obviously considerable potential for both small scale and large studies of the later archaeological material from Africa held in the PRM. Making information publicly available about this collection should also stimulate further research. It will also be beneficial to archaeologists, heritage managers and other scholars in the African countries from which this material is derived, since there is a strong probability that the majority of these remain unaware of its existence. This may result in some requests for repatriation of material – perhaps especially the human remains from the Canary Islands – but in this author's opinion despite possibly creating ethical challenges, the benefits for all concerned would be richer.

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