

Missing Links To Ancient People of South Africa

*By Eileen Davis, Reuter Correspondent in
Johannesburg*

EXCAVATIONS to be started at the port of Kilwa, some 200 miles south of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanganyika, may reveal hitherto unknown customs of the ancient peoples of Rhodesia and South Africa.

MR. F. A. Mitchell-Hedges, British explorer and author, hopes to discover at Kilwa the remains of a culture dating back to before the Persian civilisation which began in the 10th Century A.D.

These are expected to be of great importance in tracing the history of pre-medieval and even pre-historic South Africa.

Authorities believe that the same pre - medieval races who sailed with the monsoon from the Mediterranean basin to the east coast of Africa, came south to the Transvaal and South-West Africa.

Kilwa now is a forgotten port with a poor harbour. But it had a romantic beginning. The sultanate of Kilwa was founded in 975 A.D. by Hasan Bin Ali, a Persian prince from Shiraz.

The son of a negress, a concubine in his father's house, he fled to escape the ridicule of his brothers and sisters. He sailed down the Persian Gulf and from there the monsoon winds carried him past Zanzibar to Kilwa.

About the same time, the great temple and acropolis of

great temple and acropolis of Zimbabwe were being built some 17 miles south-east of the modern town of Fort Victoria, in Southern Rhodesia.

Early Portuguese writers described Zimbabwe as "the Great Palace of the Chief." To-day the name is generally accepted to mean "stone houses."

No record remains of this race of bricklayers, who were probably swept away in the maelstrom of migration as the Bantu race moved south.

That they are an indigenous Bantu people is borne out, in the opinion of archaeologists, by the fact that potsherds and other relics found at Zimbabwe are very similar to those

used by African natives to-day.

At the time of Zimbabwe, the exploitation of Africa for gold, ivory, ambergris and slaves was in full swing. Enterprising traders came from the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Gujurat and even the Far East.

East.

The Abbe Breuil, French archaeologist, believes that he has detected Egyptian influence in pre-historic rock paintings in the Brandenburg Mountains of South-West Africa. These paintings are similar to those near Fort Victoria, but much older than those at Zimbabwe.

The Abbe believes that the figures on this frieze have an Egyptian origin and that the story told is yet another edition of the Ancient Egyptian legend of Isis, Osiris and Horus. One animal-headed god is, he thinks, the wicked set who killed Osiris—the figure of a youth who follows him with bow and arrows, the avenging Horus. Osiris' son—and the "White Lady" none other than the goddess Isis, wife of Osiris.

Weight is lent to the Abbe's belief by the fact that an Ushabti figure, a small statuette of a dead man which the Egyptians buried with him to ward off evil spirits, bearing the name of Thotmes III, was found 300 miles from the mouth of the Zambesi River. As the figure of this VIIIth Dynasty Pharaoh was found in the moist earth, the idea that it might have been an Egyptian one was discarded.

Several other theories support this belief.

It is thought that the "Sanga," the small-boned cattle of Rhodesia, are of Egyptian origin.
