

MAJOR DRYSTONE RUINS

Issued 24th February, 2015

(Extracted from Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 1 of 2015)²

There are literally hundreds of madzimbabhwe, ruins built from stone blocks to be found across the Zimbabwean Plateau. They were the settlements of the elite in the pre-colonial Shona states that date to between AD 1300 and 1830. Most have not been scientifically described, let alone excavated and there remains much for future generations of archaeologists to discover.

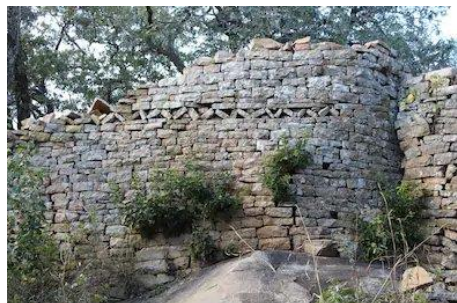
The southern portion of the Zimbabwean Plateau, northern Botswana and northern South Africa were once controlled by one of the early Shona States. The Torwa State as it became known, once dominated South Central Africa from the 10th to 19th Centuries AD. Initially it was centred at Khami, just west of the city of Bulawayo.

Although probably not a single, centralised state with one authoritarian leadership, the king and his advisors influence would have been unquestionable.

The principal development was a modified form of drystone architecture. Rather than the earlier style of freestanding structures, these walls were terraced faces, modifying or even creating artificial hills. This we call Khami-style walling. It was on these raised platforms that the ruling elite lived.

These walls were often profusely decorated; a feature which distinguishes them from those of Great Zimbabwe. Khami-style walls are often a mass of designs - checked, cord, herring bone, chevron and lines of darker stone.

- Stone walls were not defensive, they were prestige symbols.
- Sites were part of a hierarchy of importance
- The stone walls were not bonded; the individual blocks were balanced on each other without cement
- The blocks were quarried from local granite, heated, and then cooled rapidly to exfoliate slabs. These slabs were then shaped by means of a cobble hammer to create standardised stone 'bricks' which were positioned by specialised craftsmen.



40c: Chisvingo

This ruin is situated in the Masembura area off the Dombashava road. It occupies a saddle in a range of hills known as Marizi. It consists of a girdle wall roughly circular. On the outside wall, facing west there is a short section of chevron pattern with herringbone pattern directly below it.

The stones are laid in the style of Great Zimbabwe Ruins.

Directions: Leave Harare on the Borrowdale Road until you reach Masembura Township. Proceed for about 5km and you will reach Mutaravai School. Turn left and proceed for approximately 4km and you reach Chisvingo Ruins.



Postcard. Photo © Nego

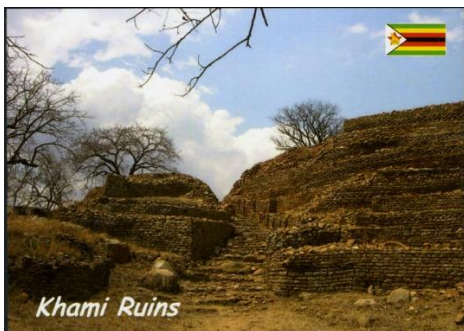
85c: Dhlo DHL

Danan'ombe was the capital of the Rozvi state from about 1693 to the early 1800's.

Dhlo Rizvi was Khami's successor capital and retains many of the features seen at Khami.

Dhlo Khama's is situated on a high site in sparsely wooded open country. A feature of the citadel on the north and north western sides is a rampart of three walls rising one behind the other in tiers, these walls are built of small granite slabs with very regular size and shape.

Directions: The monument is accessible on a gravel road which branches off the Gweru - Bulawayo highway at Shangani from Gweru and at Insiza from Bulawayo.



Postcard: Images of Africa

85c: Khami

Khami was the capital of the Torwa elite of the Butua State who ruled here from about AD1450 until a civil war and intervention by a Portuguese warlord who came from the lower Zambezi valley which led to its destruction and abandonment around 1644.

Khami is dominated by a series of terraced stone ruins, often highly decorated. Sited on the banks of the Khami River, there are 14 groups of ruined walls. The principal group stands on a steep cliff on the west bank of the river built on three levels.

The highest level has tiered walls with the appearance of a fort. The Precipice Ruin was a ritual centre and has the longest decorated stone wall of its kind. The main passage way and stairs were once roofed as can be seen from the niches in the wall which once held wooden poles.

Directions: Take the Old Khami Road out of Bulawayo. About 20km from town there is a sign pointing to the right to Khami. Follow the dirt road, taking the right-hand fork at the entrance to Elite School.

\$1: Nalatale



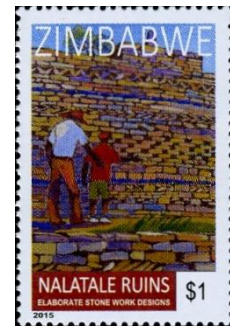
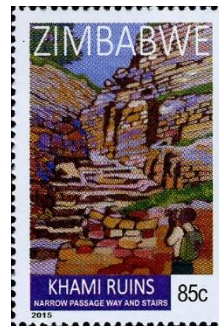
Postcard: Die Karawana

Nalatale was suited for only occasional residence. It was a very exposed position and all water had to be carried uphill from a stream afar off. The population cannot have been very large.

Easily the prettiest stone ruin in Zimbabwe located on the apex of a stone granite dome. It consists of an elliptical enclosure built of granite blocks balanced on each other without cement. The main wall facing west has four monoliths. Walls of the main enclosure rise in tiers and are elaborately decorated with impressive patterns in the stone.

Directions: Approximately 40km from Gweru travelling towards Bulawayo on the main highway, turn left at the Daisyfield School sign. Cross the railway line. The gravel road curves round the school, proceed approx. 25km. Nalatale ruins on the right.

The Stamps



(Reduced to 50% of actual size)

Catalogue Listings

SG	ZSC ¹	Value	Description
1387	787	30c	Chisvingo
1388	788	75c	Dhlo Dhlo
1389	789	85c	Khami
1390	790	\$1	Natatale
MS1391	MS34		Miniature sheet with stamps in se-tenant block

Technical details

Stamp size: Sheet stamps: 42 x 28 mm
 Miniature sheet 88 x 135 mm

Sheet Size: 50 stamps (5 rows of 10 stamps), two panes per printed sheet

Artist: Leslie Johnson

Paper: ZSC paper type J: paper described by Zimpost as “Chancellor Litho PVA Gummed Postage Stamp Paper”. This paper is produced by Tullis Russell Coaters of Glenrothes, Fife, Scotland. Under UV there is no fluorescence either front or back, the stamp appears to be very dark

Print colours: Cyan, magenta, yellow & black

Perforations: SG 14½; ZSC 14¼
Sheet stamps
Top margin: Perforated through
Other margins: Imperforate
Miniature sheet Imperforate margins

Printer: NatPrint, Harare, Zimbabwe

Printer’s Imprint: Sheet stamps only - bottom margin, below Row 5 Columns 5 & 6.
Imprint printed in black

Cylinder numbers: Sheet stamps only - bottom margin below R5/1. Colours from left – cyan, magenta, yellow, black

Colour register: Sheet stamps only - Type TL 4– round boxed – left margin opposite R5/1. Colours reading down – cyan, magenta, yellow, black

Sheet Value: Sheet stamps only - bottom margin, below R5/10, printed in black

Sheet Number: Sheet stamps only - Type SN 7 with printed ‘ZIMPOST’ prefix, right margin opposite R5/10 reading down

Bar codes: Sheet stamps only - Opposite R1/10, printed in black, numbers:
40c 2 009113 000165
75c 2 009113 000172
85c 2 009113 000189
\$1 2 009113 000196

Print numbers:

30c	400,000	75c	10,000
85c	10,000	\$1	10,000
Miniature sheet	2,000		

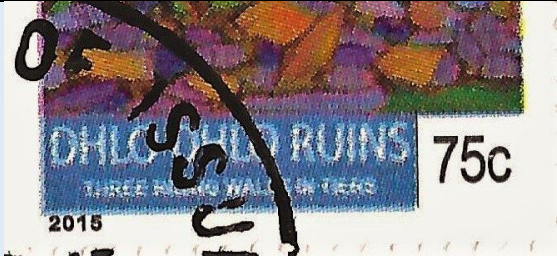
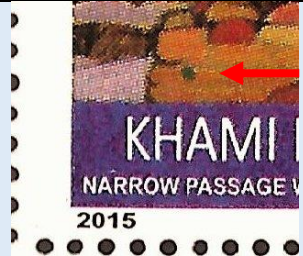
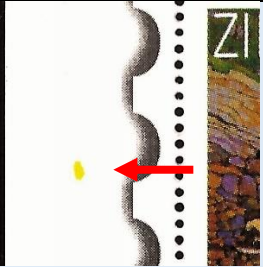


Issue date: 24th February 2015

Listed varieties

No listed varieties have been reported.

Unlisted Varieties

There are numerous small dots and specks in the printing of these stamps, particularly in the backgrounds which are more noticeable with the solid colours

 <p>75c: Shift in printing plates giving stamp a very blurred appearance (Courtesy Narendhra Morar)</p>	 <p>Miniature sheet – 85c: green ‘brick’ aobe ‘HA’ of Khami. (Courtesy of Narenfhra Morar)</p>
 <p>Miniature sheet: Large yellow spot in lft margin opposite 85c stamp. (Courtesy of Narendhra Morar)</p>	
 <p>Miniature sheet: No horizontal perforations</p>	 <p>Miniature sheet: Horizontal perforations through right margin (Courtesy of Jefferson Ritson)</p>

First Day Cover

No first day covers were made available by the Philatelic Bureau, covers can, however be found with the Harare First Day of Issue canceller on plain covers and Bureau manila stationery.

Bibliography:

1. "The Zimbabwean Concise Postage Stamp Catalogue", published by Harare Stamp Company, edited by Ken Allanson, Mike Amos and Geoff Brakspear. The catalogue continues to be updated and expanded by Geoff Brakspear, and is now published on the Rhodesian Study Circle website.
2. Zimbabwe Post, Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 1 of 2015