

# 11

## PRELIMINARY REPORT ON EXCAVATIONS AT KAMUKOMBE, A FARMING COMMUNITY VILLAGE SITE IN THE MID-ZAMBEZI VALLEY, NORTHERN ZIMBABWE

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The paper presents the results of archaeological excavations at the multi-component village site of Kamukombe in the mid-Zambezi valley in northern Zimbabwe. The excavations aimed at among other things recovering data that would contribute towards our understanding of the transition from the Early Farming Communities (Early Iron Age) to Later Farming Communities (Late Iron Age). Pottery on the surface indicated the presence of both communities at the site. Three trenches and two Test pits were excavated. Two of the trenches produced sherds that combine motifs and vessel shape of both periods, suggesting that the transition was most probably a result of local developments without involving displacement as previously thought. Aspects of economic organisation, crafts and indications of external contacts also suggest continuity.

Le présent article présente les résultats de fouilles archéologiques du site de village multi-complexe de Kamukombe dans la moyenne vallée de Zambezi dans le nord du Zimbabwe. Les fouilles ont visé à retrouver entre autres des données pouvant contribuer à notre compréhension du passage des Premières Communautés Rurales (Ancien Age du Fer) aux Communautés Rurales tardives (Age du Fer Tardif). Les poteries de surface indiquent la présence des deux communautés dans le site. Trois tranchées et deux sondages ont été ouverts. Deux tranchées ont fourni des tessons de poterie associant motifs et forme des récipients des deux périodes, suggérant que la transition était probablement un résultat de développements locaux sans pour autant impliquer un déplacement comme précédemment supposé. Les aspects de l'organisation économique, l'artisanat et des indications de contacts avec l'extérieur évoquent aussi cette continuité.

### INTRODUCTION

The site of Kamukombe, in the mid-Zambezi valley, was excavated in July 2005 within the context of the African Archaeological Network (AAN) research program which is funding archaeological research in the lowveld of Zimbabwe, among other parts of Africa. Archaeologically, the mid-Zambezi valley is known to have been settled by early farming communities of the Kadzi tradition by around 500 AD. The Kadzi tradition was succeeded by the Musengezi tradition around the 12th/13th centuries AD (Pwiti 1996). The northward spread of the Zimbabwe culture around the 15th century AD (Sinclair and Lundmark 1984, Pwiti 1996, Pikirayi 1993) found the Musengezi tradition people already in the Zambezi valley. The disappearance of the Musengezi culture seems to have occurred during the Portuguese period (15th – 17th century), having existed side