

CHAPTER 8

Prehistoric Hunter/Farmers of The Mid – Zambezi Valley: Faunal Remains from Kamukombe, a Multi-component Village Site in Northern Zimbabwe

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An analysis of faunal remains recovered from the multi-component site of Kamukombe in the mid-Zambezi valley, northern Zimbabwe shows that the Early Farming Communities (EFC) of the Kadzi Tradition and the Later farming Communities (LFC) of the Musengezi tradition relied on a mixed meat economy based on hunting and herding, with a bias towards hunting. In comparison to other excavated sites in the area, these communities seem to lack clear evidence of cattle herding. Equally important is the absence of evidence for the increased emphasis on domestic animal herding (especially cattle) that seems to characterise the transition from the EFC to LFC elsewhere in the region.

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of faunal remains recovered from the site of Kamukombe, a farming community village in the mid-Zambezi valley, northern Zimbabwe (Fig. 1). The site was excavated in 2005 as part of an ongoing archaeological research project in this area. The details of the excavations and the results were presented in Katsamudanga and Pwiti (2006a, 2006b). A separate report on the ceramic analysis was presented in Soper (2006). In this chapter, the faunal material from the excavations is presented and discussed in relation to some of the results and conclusions that we made in the previous publications. We also draw upon previous studies carried out on faunal remains from other sites in the mid-Zambezi valley (Mawoko 1995; Plug 1997; Pwiti 1994, 2002, 2006; Pwiti and Mawoko, 1997).

The Mid-Zambezi Valley: Archaeological Background

The mid-Zambezi valley is archaeologically known to have been settled by early farming people of the Kadzi ceramic tradition by 500 AD which is replaced by the Musengezi tradition around the 12th/13th-14th centuries (Pikirayi, 1987, 1993; Pwiti, 1996). Later, we see the manifestation of the Zimbabwe stone building culture from around the 15th century AD. This represents the northward expansion of the Zimbabwe culture from the southern parts of the country (Sinclair and Lundmark, 1984; Sinclair, 1987; Pwiti, 1996; Pikirayi, 1993, 2001). The people of the Zimbabwe culture found the Musengezi tradition populations already settled in northern Zimbabwe, including the mid-Zambezi valley and the two appear to have